

A Contextual History of the Emily Kimbrough Historic District

An Honors Thesis (HIST450)

by

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Abstract

The years between 1890 and 1910 were a time of hope, growth and confidence in the United States. New technologies, new states, growing interest in political equality, and the progressive movement were changing the face of the nation.

Muncie, Indiana, was not immune to the times. It was during this period that the “gas boom” brought increased commerce and travel to the Hoosier state.

Muncie’s early prosperous citizens left a beautiful, lasting mark on the town.

Today, their legacy remains in the form of the Emily Kimbrough Historic District, what remains of the once-stylish East End.

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The years between 1890 and 1910 were a time of hope, growth, and confidence in the United States. New technologies, new states, growing interest in political equality, and the progressive movement were changing the face of the nation. The Wright brothers took flight, gold was discovered in the Yukon, and western expansion added Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, and Oklahoma to the still young United States. Women's suffrage, prohibition, and purification of the government were at the forefront of an active political agenda. Theodore Roosevelt's "New Nationalism" speech epitomized these beliefs and demonstrated the changing times and worldview in the United States (Roosevelt, 1910).

These changes took place during the heart of the Progressive Era, a time of social, political, and economic reform. The goal of progressives was to cure the nation of the societal ills that had developed during decades of industrial growth. Progressives attacked a broad range of social issues and believed that extending the reach of the government was a major part of solving the nation's problems. Progressives were behind many of the social reforms and legislation of the time, including the Interstate Commerce Act, the Gold Standard Act, and the Dingley Tariff (Bowling Green State University, 2000). These changes in national policy were indicative of changes in the worldview of the American citizen.

Muncie, Indiana, was not immune to the times. It was during this period that the "gas boom" brought increased commerce and travel to the Hoosier state. Located in the Trenton Natural Gas field, Muncie was able to capitalize on its natural resources and become the self-proclaimed "City of Eternal Gas" (Muncie

Natural Gas Land Improvement Company, 1889). Businessmen flooded into Muncie to take advantage of the seemingly never-ending gas supply and Muncie's population increased rapidly in the years leading up to the turn of the century. After doubling from 1886 to 1890, the population soared from 11,345 in 1890 to 27,000 in 1900 (*Story*, 1887). As the population grew and diversified, ethnically and socially similar groups created their own neighborhoods; the Emily Kimbrough Historic District was one of those early neighborhoods.

Investments in business and the expansion of the job market also led to a diversification of Muncie's citizens. In line with national trends, the African American and immigrant populations increased significantly in the years surrounding the gas boom. In a four-year period, 204 Muncie residents became citizens of the United States, nearly half of which were from non-English speaking nations. African Americans represented 3.7% of the town's population by 1890 and continued to move into the area through the turn of the century (Historic Muncie, 2011). Factory jobs that provided difficult to find employment opportunities for both immigrant and African American populations were in great supply in industrialized Muncie (Historic Muncie, 2011). These population changes impacted more than the demographics of Muncie's citizens. It led to a stratification of the town's citizens geographically.

During this population increase, African Americans often lived in the neighborhoods of Industry and Whitely, on the south and east sides of Muncie, near the factories and industrial centers. The upper class citizens created their own upscale neighborhoods. The socially elite of Muncie, including industrialists,

businessmen, and lawyers, built what was then known as the East End. Elegant homes in the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Free Classic styles cropped up in the neighborhood that would soon be home to famed Hoosier writer, Emily Kimbrough. This group of citizens is responsible for not only the creation of many of Muncie's early businesses, but an architectural legacy.

Today, their legacy remains in what has been saved of the once-stylish East End; today the area is known as the Emily Kimbrough Historic District. In December of 1976, the Muncie Historic Preservation and Rehabilitation Commission was formed to "preserve and protect the historic or architecturally worth buildings, structures, streetscapes and neighborhoods of the historic districts" (East Central Neighborhood Association). The first district on their agenda was the Emily Kimbrough neighborhood, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. There are now 11 historic districts within the Muncie city limits (East Central Neighborhood Association).

Despite it's listing, many Muncie residents and Ball State University students are unaware of the architectural history preserved in the Emily Kimbrough Historic District. There is a general lack of knowledge, and perhaps interest, in the topic. To combat this, the "Historic Muncie" immersive learning project gathered students from diverse disciplines to create an online, digital museum and library of two National Register Historic Districts in Muncie. By bringing the history and architecture of the Emily Kimbrough and Riverside Historic Districts to the world's fingertips, recognition and interest in the areas will be peaked and information will be readily available.

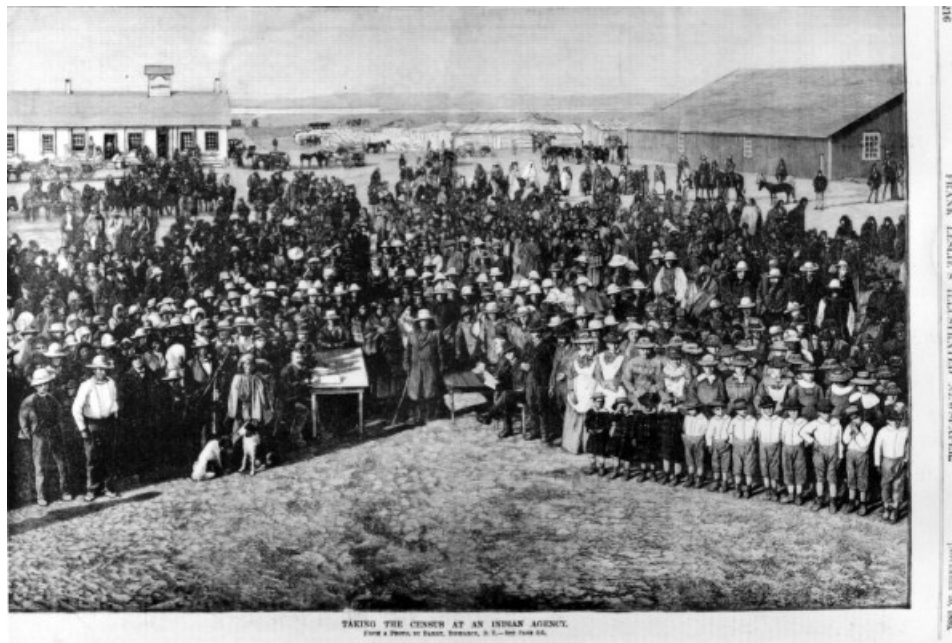
This paper will supplement the museum by contextualizing the construction of one of the districts: the Emily Kimbrough neighborhood. It will outline trends in politics, technology, society, and other topics of importance during the decades of the district's construction. These topics will be analyzed at the national, state, and local levels. By studying the political, social, economic, and cultural trends of the time, we will better understand the motives behind the creation of the neighborhood and be more qualified to assess the architectural legacy left to us by the early industrialists of Muncie, Indiana.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

POPULATION

As formerly mentioned, the years between 1890 and 1910 were ones of rapid change in the United States. The many technological advances and political movements altered the lifestyle of the average American. The first machine tabulated national census in 1890 mapped this as the first “measured” period in the United States and made statistical analysis available for the first time (PBS, 2000). For the first time, minority populations were surveyed nearly fully and detailed demographic information was obtainable. As pictured below, the census was even taken by Native Americans that had been forced into reservations. The 1890 census took only 6 weeks to produce population figures and one year to produce a complete analysis, compared to the eight years it took to analyze the 1880 census. This quick return on census results is a prime example of how

changing times and technologies impacted everyday life during the turn of the century.



Taking the census at an Indian Agency, Denver Public Library Digital Collection

Although the majority of the analyzed data was lost in a fire in 1920 or later destroyed by the government, the significant findings of the 1880 census are still known. After decades of westward expansion and frontier settlement, the Census Bureau declared that the nation had been so widely settled that a “frontier” no longer existed. The Bureau also reported that, due mostly to this westward expansion, the number of Native Americans living in the United States had decreased from 400,764 in 1850 to 248,253 in 1890. By 1900, Native Americans had been forced onto reservations and the buffalo were virtually extinct (PBS, 2000). The discovery of gold in the Yukon’s Klondike further sped up the settlement of west and Idaho, Wyoming, and Utah were added as states between 1890 and 1900. This discovery added yet another new industry to the

rapidly industrializing United States and impacted the direction of the nation for years to come.

Review of the census data showed that the population of the United States underwent drastic changes between the years of 1890 and 1910. The nation's population increased 27% between 1880 and 1890 and another 21% for the next two decades. While the 1880s population increase consisted of more than one million Germans, French Canadians, British, and various Slavic speaking people made up the largest portion of immigrants surrounding the turn of the century. In 1891, the first federal law on immigration was passed, establishing a Commissioner of Immigration in the Treasury Department (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1999).

As the number of ethnicities and immigrants in the United States increased, so did hostility toward change and African Americans. Between 1890 and 1908, the majority of Southern states adopted policies that severely limited the rights and freedoms of African Americans and immigrants. Poll taxes, literacy tests, and increased residency requirements were used as legal methods of discrimination. African Americans and other minorities were repressed and disenfranchised through legal segregation and a social pattern of lynching. Mexicans, Chinese immigrants, and African Americans were lynched at unprecedented rates in the late 1800s. Southern states were responsible for the majority of lynching, with the peak death toll occurring in 1892 (University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law). Perhaps the draw of a safer life influenced an influx of African-Americans to northern states at the turn of the century.

INDUSTRY

Westward expansion created a new industry in the United States: oil. The world's first oil well had been drilled in Pennsylvania in 1859, and by 1900, major fields occupied states across the west. Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma were rapidly providing what seemed like an endless supply of oil. Standard Oil, owned by John D. Rockefeller, took the global stage with the majority of the world's petroleum and made a monopoly controlling more than 90% of the United States' refineries. (Bowling Green State University). With the new industry was a new business empire- the impressive Standard Oil Building in Chicago is pictured on the following page. It was one of the largest buildings in Chicago, impressively scaled and constructed. This ostentatious show of wealth can also be seen in the Emily Kimbrough Historic District.

Along with oil, the steel industry became one of the nation's largest sources of wealth. Andrew Carnegie had constructed a massive steel mill in Pittsburgh, the world's largest, in 1880. Carnegie Steel Company was formed in 1892 and, with major technological innovations, led the United States to the forefront of the steel industry. The nation was turning out more than 10,000,000 tons of steel each year by 1900 (Misa, 1995). Control of the steel industry positioned the United States as a global force, especially in the years of World War to come. As the gas boom bolstered the Hoosier economy, the steel industry provided the nation as a whole with a new financial capital.

Other technological discoveries were also changing day-to-day American life. By the turn of the century, telephones were widely used across the country

and cities were beginning to be electrified. Henry Ford built the first gasoline engine car in 1892 and by 1903, Ford Motor Company had been established and the age of the automobile had begun. At the same time, the Wright brothers were hard at work on the airplane and moving pictures were a new found wonder (Krause, 1992). This sense of wonder and pride in the works of Americans can be seen in many aspects of American culture, including the attention to detail and fine craftsmanship in the homes constructed during that time.



View of the Standard Oil Building at 910 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago Daily News

POLITICS

During this time of change in the United States, there was great debate on what the future of the nation held. The presidential election of 1896 epitomized

the differing opinions held by Americans. The two candidates, Democrat William Jennings Bryan and Republican William McKinley, fought a fierce battle for presidency. Bryan wanted to continue expansion of the west and focus on agriculture and farming. McKinley favored big business and eastern industrial interests. Although known to be a weak man, McKinley was elected and ushered in an era of progressive presidents (Bowling Green State University, 2000).

Following McKinley as president were Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, two of the nation's most progressive presidents. Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson, under whom Franklin Roosevelt worked, first brought the ideas later laid out in FDR's New Deal to the national scene. Prior to this era of Progressive presidents, capitalism had grown out of control, leaving cities filled with slums and politics filled with corruption. Although several important issues including women's suffrage and racial issues were not at the forefront of public policy, the groundwork for reforms was laid. Roosevelt regulated railroads and pushed conservation of the nation's natural resources. After publically criticizing big business, Roosevelt's "Square Deal" regulated industry for the first time through employee liability and work hour laws (The White House). It seems that the nation was developing a corporate conscious long before "corporate social responsibility".

WORLD VIEW

In addition to politics, American interest in the world also increased. World's fairs, museum openings, and films of the time all demonstrated this

interest. Buffalo and St. Louis hosted the world exposition in 1901 and 1904, respectively. The Pan-American Exposition held in 1901 spanned more than 350 acres and featured “The Electricity Building”, the “Temple of Music”, and “The Court of Fountains”, pictured on the next page. More than 8,000,000 people visited the event, which cost more than today’s equivalent of \$184 million (Arnold, 1901). This extravagance again demonstrates the pride and attention to detail so common to time, and that were demonstrated in the Emily Kimbrough Historic District. The wonder and optimism generated by new technology is also apparent. It must have seemed like the United State’s was on the verge of changing life as it had always been.



Pan-American Exposition, Court of Fountains, The Library of Congress

While the world's fair seemed to imply a desire of Americans to broaden their horizons, the popularity of books such as "Who's who in America" demonstrate what could be characterized as the starts of ethnocentrism (Leonard & Marquis, 1903). As "The Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Men and Women of the United States", the book outlined marriage, education, birth, and death statistics of thousands of citizens of the highest social class (Leonard & Marquis, 1903). The white, wealthy, protestant, male domination of the book demonstrates the sexual, racial, and social inequalities of the day in a clear, concrete way and is particularly insightful into the worldview of the turn-of-the-century American (Leonard & Marquis, 1903). It was this type of prejudice and separation of class and race that led to the development of the Emily Kimbrough Historic District. It was Muncie's own version of the "Who's Who" book in the East End.

WOMEN

The Progressive Era ushered in a new generation of politically ambitious women. After years of being denied political freedoms offered to men, women like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton took the national stage by storm and supported educational reform, abolition of slavery, temperance, and women's suffrage. Anthony campaigned vigorously for women's suffrage and equal education rights and served as vice-president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association under Stanton. (Susan B. Anthony House, 2009).

The spirit of the era was alive and well in the women of the day. For the first time, women were taking an active role in political reform.

Women activists also took the stage in media and industry. “Muckracking” journalists sought to uncover the harsh conditions suffered by factory workers and in tenement slums. In 1904, Ida Tarbell published a paper on the unfair practices of one of the nation’s largest corporations, the Standard Oil Company. Her paper reported on the many ways in which the company violated anti-trust legislation, and led to government prosecution of the business (Tarbell, 1904).

Despite the increasing number and activity of suffragettes in the nation, women still had relatively few rights in 1900. The most common job for women was still domestic service, although many women began to choose factory work over service. Wealthy families that could afford to keep their female children in school might be able to place her as a secretary, teacher, or sales clerk. Low wages and opportunities turned nearly 5 percent of all young women to prostitution, where they could make six or seven times the wages made as a sales clerk (The Life of the Victorian Woman). This seems to indicate that although the role of the woman was changing slightly, gender prejudice was still a major obstacle for women of the day.

LITERATURE

As women became stronger a force in politics, they also began took a greater role in the literary scene. Emily Dickinson’s poems peaked in popularity in the 1890s, a decade after her death. Sarah Orne Jewett penned several novels

at the end of the 1890s, and Kate Chopin's once scandalous The Awakening received national recognition in 1899. Along with these female authors, Mark Twain, Henry James, and Jack London were popular names in the literary scene (Washington State University, 2010).

The entrance of women into the literary scene allowed for the Emily Kimbrough Historic District's namesake to take the national stage. Without her fame, the district might not have caught the interest of preservationists or achieved its position of the National Register of Historic places.

HOOSIER CONTEXT

POPULATION

The Hoosier state was not immune to the changes occurring at the national level. Population numbers increased an average of 300,000 residents each year. After years of Civil War had pushed the population in a northern direction, the "gas boom" drew people further north into Indiana. Many small towns in Indiana, including Muncie, were impacted by this increase in population, growing and changing dramatically.

INDUSTRY

In 1976 the Trenton Gas Field was discovered in east central Indiana. Stretching from the eastern state line to the state capital, the field was the largest natural gas discovery to date. Beginning in 1886, more than 105 million barrels of oil and 1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas were produced in the Trenton Gas Field,

impressive figures in 19th century commerce (Glass & Kohrman, 2005). This financial stability led to increased investments in the area and a new pride and gallantry. This is evidenced by the grand neighborhoods constructed across the state during the Progressive Era.

With the common belief being that the natural gas supply was virtually endless, the field became a sort of sensation. Pride and fascination got the better of many businessmen, and the resource was used for amusement and spectacle. According to “Indiana history: a book of readings”:

“The bringing in of a well was a spectacular event, especially when it was accomplished by dropping nitroglycerin down the drilled out hole and igniting it. When the result was a roar of pressurized gas, belches of smoke, and flames taller than elms, Sunday afternoon audiences went home delighted... At Anderson a flaming archway spanned the street near the train depot” (p.13).

Today we know that the Trenton Oil Field was far from never-ending. Due to the above-mentioned mismanagement of the resource and inefficient practices of the day, the natural gas boom lasted only a quarter of a century and left the state pock-marked with innumerable abandoned wells. Many towns, including Muncie, were left struggling to keep their industries alive when the gas boom came to a quick end. The natural gas supply was exhausted by 1910, although only 10 percent of the oil had been removed. Without adequate pressure developed through gas removal, the oil was left in field. The Indiana Geological Survey

estimated that nearly 900 barrels of oil were left behind when the Trenton Field was deserted (Indiana University, 2011). This brought an end to a period of exponential growth in much of the Hoosier state.

Thankfully, the lure of cheap energy had brought big business to the state of Indiana before the natural gas supply was depleted, and many cities were able to sustain themselves. Industrialists of assorted varieties, including automobile, glass, steel, and instrument manufacturers, packed up their families and ideas and moved to the Hoosier state. C.G. Conn Limited in Elkhart and Standard Oil in Whiting brought stable businesses to the state and provided employment to ever-increasing numbers of Hoosiers (Ksander, 2006). In Muncie, the Ball brothers' glass industry kept the town afloat at the end of the gas boom.

The Lilly family also brought business to Indiana at the turn of the last century. After failing to run a plantation in Mississippi, Eli Lilly and son Josiah moved back to Indianapolis. After working with various partners, Lilly set off on his own and, starting with the innovation of gelatin coating for pills, began a successful career. With a commitment to the production of high- quality prescription drugs and community service, the Lilly pharmacy flourished. By the late 1880s, Eli Lilly and Company was one of the leading businesses in the region with more than \$200,000 in annual sales (Indiana University, 2011). The Lilly family bolstered the economy in Indianapolis and the Ball family did in Muncie. From its humble starts, as can be seen on the following page, Eli Lilly has grown into a multi-million dollar corporation that continues to support the Hoosier state.

The Lilly men's community involvement also extended into Indiana's public works and infrastructure. At the turn of the century, public works were a new idea and attractive amenity when choosing a metropolitan area in which to live. Lilly recognized this potential economic advantage and advocated the creation of public corporations to provide low-cost gas heating and public water to the state's residents (Glass & Kohrman, 2005). Thanks in large part to Lilly's continued dedication to the cause, the Indianapolis Water Company, the Consumer Gas Trust Company, and the Commercial Club (precursor to the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce) were created in the 1890s. These organizations provided Indianapolis with much needed public utilities (Price, 1997). As with many towns at the time, including Muncie, this was a draw for citizens.



Original Eli Lilly laboratory, Indianapolis Star

In addition to Mr. Lilly, future President Benjamin Harrison and Thomas Moore were instrumental in the creation of the Consumer Gas Trust. Organized much like a not-for-profit, the trust was put in place to safeguard against monopolistic takeover from large corporations such as Standard Oil. While the trust changed hands and services over the years, it is still in business today as Citizens Energy Group. It now serves more than 300,000 Indiana residents (Citizens Energy Group).

In 1904, the Indianapolis Water Company was the first to present purified water as an option over well water to Indiana's citizens. After acquiring the deed to a portion of the Indianapolis Canal, the company used the Canal to provide waterpower for turbines that operated a purification plant and pumped water to Indianapolis consumers (Indianapolis Canal Walk, 2011). These industries and organizations serve as yet another reminder of the great accomplishments made during the Progressive Era.

POLITICS

Changes in population demographics and the increasing popularity of the Progressive Movement impacted Hoosier politics in the decades surrounding the turn of the century. The African American population in Indianapolis more than doubled between 1900 and 1920, increasing African Americans' political power significantly. Nearly one in ten citizens of Indianapolis were African American and, despite a strong Ku Klux Klan presence in Indiana, several African Americans were elected to city council positions (Indiana Historical Society,

1996). Despite its location in the Midwest, the Hoosier state seemed to be ahead of the times in regards to the rights and respect of African-American citizens.

It was also during these years that Indiana became a more politically influential state. Between 1880 and 1924, all but one presidential election included a candidate from Indiana. Numerous vice presidents came from the state of Indiana during that time and Hoosier Senator Benjamin Harrison was elected President in 1888. He remains the only president from the state of Indiana (Price, 1997). It seems that this period of rapid growth and change might still be considered the “hey-day” of Indiana politics.

WORLD VIEW

In addition to infrastructure, there was also an increase in the construction of state amenities and entertainment at the turn of the century. It seems that along with the Progressives of the time, Hoosiers were ready for a change. The face of Indianapolis changed drastically with the addition of several now famous sites. The well-known Soldier’s and Sailor’s Monument at the center of Monument Circle and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway were both constructed around the turn of the century and quickly became state emblems. As the World’s Fair did at the national level, these sites embraced other cultures and broadened the cultural horizons of Hoosiers (Indiana Landmarks, 2011).

While the center of the state’s most famous roundabout has served various functions over the years (green space, picnic spot, Governor’s mansion), it was not until 1887 that the state legislature reserved “the circle” at

Indianapolis's heart for a memorial honoring Hoosier Civil War veterans. Bruno Schmitz, a 29-year-old German architect, won a hotly contested international design competition with his plan for a towering monument that filled the circle. The monument was topped with a 38-foot-tall statue fittingly named "Victory", which remained at her station until taken down for cleaning in the summer of 2011 (Indiana Landmarks, 2011).



Monument Circle, 1888. Indiana Historical Society

The turn of the century also brought racing, a popular European pastime, to the Hoosier state for the first time. American entrepreneur Carl Fisher took action in 1906 to fill the "need" for a three to five mile test track in the United States. After purchasing four adjoining 80-acre tracts of farmland on what was then the far northwest side of Indianapolis, Fisher and associates went to work in creating the "Indiana Motor Parkway". After a rough start dampened by rainy

weather, terrible track conditions, and the loss of three lives, the track was paved with brick and a national pastime was born (Indianapolis Motor Speedway).

These new enterprises have become hallmarks of the state of Indiana and are a lasting legacy of the Progressive era.

Social reform also seemed to be moving into the Hoosier state. Male and female teachers' salaries were raised significantly to \$44.40 and \$40.20 monthly respectively, an 87 percent increase for men and 139 percent for women. At the time, Indiana was one of the only northern states to have more male teachers than female (Gray, 1995). This is yet another example of how Indiana seemed to be ahead of the times in social reform and public policy.

WOMEN

As the Progressive Era swept the nation, Hoosier women strove to take a more important role in their communities. May Wright Sewell, commonly known for her dedication to the women's suffrage movement, asserted herself in numerous other areas in the Hoosier state. Sewell was an important and well-recognized educator and was a leader in civic improvement. She served as the first vice president of the National Council of Women, and is to this day recognized as an outstanding citizen of the state of Indiana (State of Indiana). During Sewell's lifetime, Hoosier author Booth Tarkington claimed that Sewall, in company with Benjamin Harrison and James Whitcomb Riley, "would necessarily have been chosen... as one of the three most prominent citizens of [Indianapolis]." The IMPCL Digital Collections retain hundreds of letters written to

Sewell, from such notable people as Jane Addams, Clara Barton, and T.C. Steele. The fame, popularity, and respect garnered by Sewell seem to demonstrate the fundamental shift in the national view on women that happened during the Progressive Era. It was this shift that enabled the success of Emily Kimbrough.

LITERATURE

1880-1920 is commonly referred to as the “Golden Age of Indiana Literature” (Indiana Historical Society). During these years, Hoosier authors such as Booth Tarkington, Gene Stratton Porter, Theodore Dreiser, and James Whitcomb Riley were prominent names in literature. In fact, Indiana authors ranked second behind only New York authors in the first 40 years of the 20th century. While Riley’s early poetry was only a moderate success, his loveable character Little Orphan Annie skyrocketed him to national fame. Gene Stratton Porter also achieved a spot on the national scene with her homegrown swamp story, Girl of the Limberlost. The state’s most prominent authors are pictured below. As can be seen, the Progressive Era and social reforms taking place in Indiana are not represented by a more diverse group of authors. Despite much progress, the most respected authors of the time were white, middle to upper class men of western European descent. (Indiana Historical Society).



George Ade, Meredith Nicholson, Booth Tarkington, James Whitcomb Riley. Indiana Historical Society

MUNCIE CONTEXT

POPULATION

Muncie, Indiana, benefited greatly from the widespread economic growth occurring across Indiana in the years between 1890 and 1910. The changes in demographics, infrastructure, community amenities, and commerce that occurred in the state capital also changed the face of Muncie. A booming factory scene, well-developed city infrastructure, and high-class community amenities supported a significant increase in population (more than 10,000 citizens in 12 years) (Ball State University). Delaware County grew from just more than 30,000 residents to more than 51,000 residents between 1890 and 1910 (Historic Muncie, 2011). As at the state and national levels, this change in population altered more than the

people living in Muncie. Industry, politics, and worldview were altered drastically during the Progressive Era.

The increase in factory jobs provided by Muncie's quick industrialization ushered more ethnically diverse citizens to the area. From 1882-1886 (pre-gas boom) only 24 immigrants took the U.S. citizenship oath in Muncie. Between 1892 and 1896 (post-gas boom) that number increased to more than 200 citizens. The majority of immigrants came from English speaking countries, but more than seven languages were spoken in Muncie by 1896 (Ball State University). However, despite this diversification, the wealthiest citizens of Muncie remained predominately white and of western European descent.

INDUSTRY

The gas boom mentioned earlier was a major factor in the industrialization of Muncie. The self-proclaimed "City of Eternal Gas" capitalized on the natural gas boom and citizens were able to bring both steel and glass manufacturing plants to the town (Ball State University). This industrialization supported the development of the city and provided much-needed funding to continually improve the town's infrastructure and amenities. It also carried Muncie through the Panic of 1893 (a nationwide economic depression) and supported the area after mismanaged gas supplies were quickly exhausted (Ball State University). This industry has kept business in Muncie throughout the years and can be given partial credit for the preservation of the area's architectural history. Without a

solid economic foundation, historic homes would be abandoned rather than preserved with pride as can be found in the Emily Kimbrough Historic District.



Delaware County Court House, Muncie, Ind. Ancestry.com

Thanks to the work of James Boyce, Muncie was supported through tough economic patches by a thriving glass manufacturing industry. Boyce was the owner of Boyce Handle Company, a farm equipment handle manufacturing plant. Widely regarded as the richest man in Muncie, Boyce used his considerable influence and set his sights on luring the Ball brothers and several other glass manufacturers to the Muncie area. Thanks to generous offers of land, money, and access to natural gas, the fruit jar manufacturing plant of Frank C. Ball and

brothers moved from Buffalo, New York, to Muncie and began the family's now iconic relationship with the town.

Supporting the glass industry were steel plants, lumber mills, brick manufacturing, and several stone quarries. The Kitselman Brothers opened two wire and fence manufacturing plants while Thomas Warner Gear produced parts for automobiles. The Indiana Bridge Company supported the growing industries by ensuring that transportation was as reliable and as quick as possible. Muncie was also located at the intersection of railroads that led to "The Big Four": Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland and Indianapolis.

In addition to new bridges, Muncie had a well-developed system of artesian wells and sewers. At a time when proper city sanitation was rare and diseases caused by lack of clean water were common, this was a draw for those looking to settle in the area. Muncie produced numerous promotional brochures that advertised its first-rate infrastructure and community amenities in great detail (*City of Muncie*, 1887). This pride in Muncie can be seen in the impressive homes, built with an attention to detail and sparing no expense, that can be found in the historic districts of Muncie.

Amongst the amenities listed in the promotional brochures were two telegraph and two telephone companies, three fire stations, and seven schools that were "first class in every particular" (*City of Muncie*, 1887). The brochures also boast of Muncie's lighted residence districts, 76 miles of streets, and 30 miles of sanitary sewers. Although commonplace amenities today, it was these

luxuries that drew a higher class, wealthier population to the Muncie area at the turn of the century (*City of Muncie*, 1887).

POLITICS

Thanks to a higher tax income and local support, Muncie 's local government had more spending money than many towns of similar size. The town's government was able to build a grand courthouse and opera house as well as a community library and reading room. Three "amusement houses", a large auditorium, two public parks spanning more than 100 acres, and a roller skating rink were also available to Muncie's citizens (*Story*, 1887). For a small metropolitan area, Muncie was well equipped and maintained. These amenities drew in the business, and therefore wealth, necessary to build and maintain the architecture found in the Emil Kimbrough Historic District.

In addition to these gathering places, Muncie was also home to many "clubs and societies of a social, literary, or fraternal nature [which] indicate the intelligent and progressive spirit of the people" (*Story*, 1887). While it is difficult to objectively evaluate the intelligence or spirit of a town, the members of these clubs (the wealthier residents of Muncie) certainly separated themselves from the rest of the town. They established residential areas outside of the town's industrial center, far from industry and minority populations. Land near factories and to the south of town was settled mainly by the poorer class, consisting of mostly immigrant or African-American factory workers. Despite the advances of

politics in Muncie and the relatively Progressive nature of the time, there was still clear segregation of classes and races in the area.

WOMEN

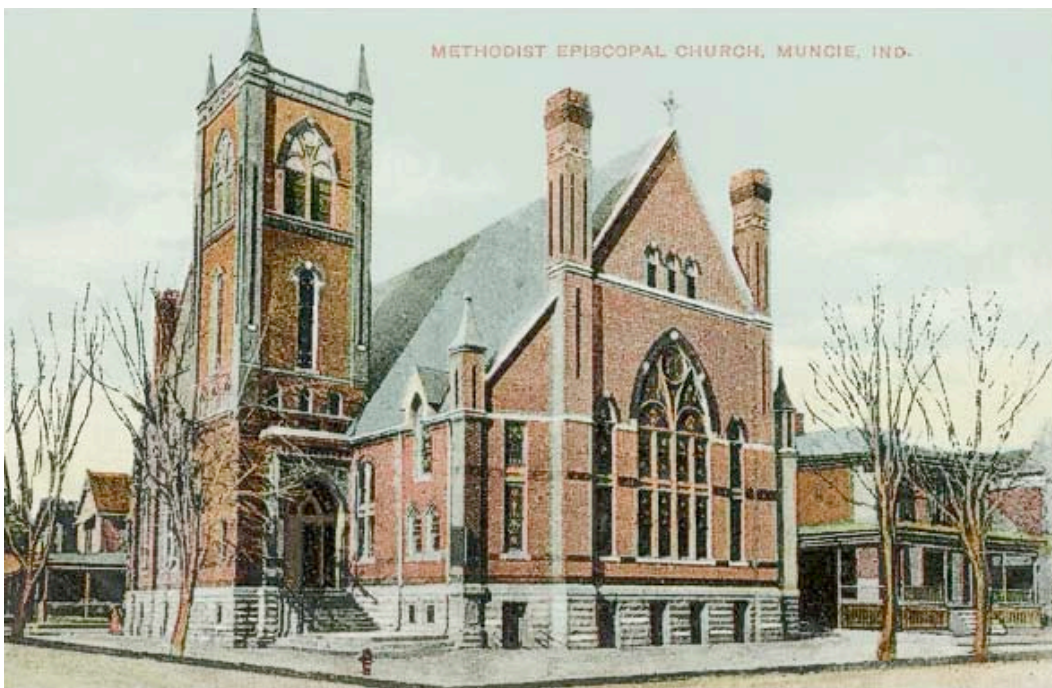
As at the national and state levels, Muncie's women were active in the women's suffrage movement and formed numerous clubs and societies in which they were able to express their views. The Woman's Franchise League of Muncie, with members such as Mrs. Frank Ball and Mrs. H.R. Cowing, met at the homes of various members and discussed politics at the national level (Munsey, 1900). Detailed records were kept of the group's activities and beliefs, including brochures that summarize yearly events. Although the women were active in the suffrage movement and politically involved, the women were still referred to as Mrs. (Insert Husband's Name) in minutes (Woman's Franchise League, 1914). Furthermore, the notes kept by the league indicate that the group was not very active in the community, beyond discussing the issues. Feminism had not yet, it seems, penetrated completely into Muncie society.

WORLD VIEW

Although Muncie had become more ethnically diverse, the area remained predominately Christian. At the turn of the century, there were 30 churches in Muncie with a total membership of more than 11,000. One of these churches was the beautiful Methodist Episcopal Church, illustrated below. Along with the tradition of Protestant Christian faith, Muncie continued its commitment to

education and the arts. A strong public school system fed into “completely equipped business and musical colleges and a magnificent university building one mile west of the city” (*Story, 1887*). This focus led to the eventual creation of Ball State University, now a large employer and draw to Muncie.

Muncie citizens were proud of their town and of the amenities offered there. The promotional brochures produced during the Muncie’s heyday illustrated this, with glowing descriptions of the town’s “state of the art” amenities and prosperous citizens (*The Magic City, Muncie Indiana, 1905*).



Methodist Episcopal Church postcard. From the Collection of Thomas Keesling, Flickr.com

EMILY KIMBROUGH HISTORIC DISTRICT

It was this white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant, educated, and wealthy population that built what are now the historic districts of Muncie. The homes

occupying these districts were built on a grand scale in the fashionable styles of the time, including Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival. Often painted with three or four different colors and adorned with ornamental details, these homes displayed great craftsmanship and care. Churches and community buildings were often built in the imposing Gothic Revival and Greek Revival styles. These impressive structures with pillars, turrets, and cornices can still be found across Muncie today (Historic Muncie, 2011).

The pride and community spirit that produced Muncie's community amenities and residential districts have survived. The Muncie Historic Preservation and Rehabilitation Commission was established in December of 1976 with a mission "to preserve and protect the historic or architecturally worthy buildings, structures, streetscapes, and neighborhoods" of the Muncie area. To date, the Commission has been an integral part in the establishment of the now 11 historic districts in Muncie (Historic Muncie, 2011). Without the Muncie Historic Preservation and Rehabilitation Commission, the architectural history of Muncie, Indiana, and the Progressive Era might have been lost forever.

One of the 11 historic districts in Muncie is the Emily Kimbrough District, named for the Hoosier author who was raised there in the early 1900s. The granddaughter of C.M. Kimbrough (president of the Indiana Bridge Company), Emily Kimbrough chronicled her life in the Muncie in her widely read novel "How Dear to My Heart" (East Central Neighborhood Association). This novel not only brought attention to the Muncie area, but was also an important factor in the preservation and restoration of the historic district named after Kimbrough.

Although the region had been settled long before the gas boom, it was not until it was annexed into Muncie city limits in 1875 that the area now known as the Emily Kimbrough Historic District became a popular place to live. Prior to annexation, the neighborhood had been sparsely settled with modest homes. The rapidly developing economy created by the gas boom and industrialization of Muncie demanded an expansion of residential housing, and wealthy families called for a place to settle outside of the factory district (East Central Neighborhood Association). Again, although Indiana seemed to be latching on to the Progressive Era and the ideas of the time, separation of social classes and races was still the norm in Muncie.

Originally called the “East End”, the Emily Kimbrough Historic was settled by the most affluent members of Muncie society between the years of 1880 and 1910 (Muncie Historic Preservation and Rehabilitation Commission). The socially elite moved in and rebuilt the area, filling it with homes that served as statements of wealth. The finest architects in the area were often solicited to build homes in the East End, including Cuno Kibele, Charles R. Houck, and Alfred Grindle. The homes were often built on a grand scale and characterized by the ornate details and vivid color schemes so aptly described in much of Emily Kimbrough’s writing (Muncie Historic Preservation and Rehabilitation Commission). The tendency toward ostentation that is characteristic of the Progressive Era is evident in the District.

A glance at the list of the East End’s original residents is a walk through Muncie’s history. The homes occupying the district are the legacy of Muncie’s

early industrialists: a memory of the gas boom and of times past. The homes of Muncie pioneers James Boyce, Charles Over (Over Glass Works), and CM Kimbrough (president of the Indiana Bridge Company) can be found in the district, along with those of other affluent businessmen, lawyers, and bankers.

While large homes of well-known citizens stood as statements of wealth, smaller middle-class homes and worker's cottages were also built in the area, often on the north-south streets. Although primarily settled by middle class or affluent Caucasian citizens, some African-American families settled in the district as well. The home of WT Stokes, Muncie's first African-American policeman, is still standing (Historic Muncie, 2011). Despite changing times and views of minority populations, the Stokes family was the only minority family to build in the East End. Stokes's position as a policy officer seems to have afforded him a luxury not possessed by the majority of Muncie's African American residents.

While the natural gas supply in Muncie quickly disappeared, the prominent homes in the East End remained. The area continued to be the preferred neighborhood of Muncie's socially elite, and many homes were passed down to subsequent generations, as was documented in Robert S. and Merrill Lynd's "Middletown":

"A group of wealthy families live in 'fine old places' in the 'East End' of town, some of them still in the houses where the husband or wife was born. These houses may be large, heavy brick or stone affairs with perhaps two stone lions guarding the driveway near the old hitching post and carriage block

bearing the owner's name. Other owners live in rambling, comfortable frame houses in this section..."

It was this picturesque charm, so aptly described by the Lynds, which inspired a preservation movement in Muncie. Between the Great Depression, World Wars I and II, and general changes in architectural and residential preference, the East End had fallen from its original glory throughout the years. By the 1970s, many of the homes of many former Muncie businessmen had been torn down, broken into apartments, or fallen into disrepair. But in 1975, the East Central Neighborhood Association was formed and joined forces with the Muncie Historic Preservation and Rehabilitation Commission to designate the land surrounding Emily Kimbrough's birthplace as a local historic district.

Under local designation, owners of any structures within the district must receive approval before altering the exterior structure or landscaping of the building. Future alternations or destruction of any building within the district is also subject to be halted in order to ensure the protection of its architectural and historical integrity. In order to preserve as much of the neighborhood as possible, the original nomination used Monroe, East Washington, Hackley, and East Charles Streets as border streets for the district (Historic Muncie, 2011).

In 1980, the District was added to the National Register of Historic Places and was later expanded to include additional surrounding houses. The land currently included in the historic district spans more than 30 acres and includes 150 buildings, 50 of which have been deemed "architecturally significant" by the

National Register of Historic Places. These structures, including churches, homes, and businesses, are predominately in the Queen Anne, Free Classic, and Colonial Revival architectural styles. Other popular styles in the area include Italianate, Greek Revival, and Victorian Vernacular (East Central Neighborhood Association). Although Muncie was a modestly sized town in the Midwest, it seems that its citizens were up-to-date on the architectural trends of the time.

A standing example of Italianate architecture, a popular style in turn-of-the-century Indiana, is the home of James Boyce. Like so many other members of Muncie high society, Boyce constructed a home that epitomized the style of the day. Located at 601 East Washington, the two-story brick home features characteristic arched openings, bracketed eaves, and a low hip roof.

Proprietor of the Muncie Times John Wildman's home has also been declared "historically significant". Located at 721 East Washington (one block down from the Boyce home), Wildman's home was built amongst some of Muncie's most important citizens. Embracing the popular Queen Anne style, the Wildman home is a two-story home with a characteristic polygonal tower on the east side of the home (Historic Muncie). The scale of the homes and the demographics of the residents is a look into the town of Muncie in the Progressive Era.

By saving not only Emily Kimbrough's home but also the surrounding area, the context of her life has been preserved. The entire Emily Kimbrough Historic District remains an important part of Muncie history and provides a window into

the area's past. It brings history to life for future generations and reminds residents of the pride and hope experienced during the Progressive Era.

To celebrate this history, the East Central Neighborhood Association has sponsored the Old Washington Street Festival since 1977. The Festival not only promotes the history of the area and draws attention to the cause of historic preservation, but also provides insight into times past. Homeowners welcome guests on home tours while vendors, musicians, antique dealers, and crafters fill the streets. Attendance has reached more than 8,000 in years past (East Central Neighborhood Association). It is in this way- by preserving our history in a functional way- that it is kept alive. It is in this way that we honor our nation's past and respect the accomplishments made between 1890 and 1910.

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