

### East End

**The history of Columbia Tusculum and the East End presented here is from the *Bicentennial Guide to Greater Cincinnati*, published by the Cincinnati Historical Society, 1988. Permission to use this history was granted by Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal. More information can be found at <http://library.cincymuseum.org>**

### Historical Overview

Since the latter part of the nineteenth century, the seven-mile strip of land from the foot of Mt. Adams to the floodplain of the Little Miami River has generally been known as the East End. While this designation implies that the region is a single, homogenous area – and, indeed, some city officials, journalists, and even residents of the vicinity have regarded it as such – the East End began as and remains a series of distinct, though interrelated, communities.

The oldest of these communities is Columbia which Benjamin Stites (1734-1804) established in November 1788, approximately a mile north of the mouth of the Little Miami. It was only the second white settlement in Ohio and for a brief time competed with other early settlements to become the major village in Symmes' purchase. But the Ohio River frequently flooded Columbia, and the United States Army decided to build Fort Washington at Losantiville. Thus, Cincinnati, not Columbia became the dominant community in southwest Ohio. Between 1800 and 1815, Columbia's residents moved to slightly higher ground, but the settlement grew little because of its distance – a long six-mile trip – from Cincinnati.

However, the land sandwiched between the steep hillides of Walnut hills and the Ohio River quickly attracted residents and industry. Closer to Cincinnati than Columbia, this area was known as the "Eastern Liberties" as it lay just beyond the corporation line and, therefore, municipal laws did not apply. By the mid-1820s, lumberyards and boatyards had begun to concentrate there. In 1828, the region was incorporated as Fulton Township, possibly named after Robert Fulton, the inventor of the steamboat.

As steamboats became increasingly important to river commerce, boat building and related industries boomed. By the early 1830s, Fulton, though only two and one-half miles long and half a mile wide, had four boatyards that were supplied by two lumberyards and four sawmills. With its many active boatyards, Fulton attracted skilled workers and mechanics. The population quickly grew to almost 2,000, and in 1832, Fulton incorporated as a town.

Although Fulton was one of the first towns that Cincinnatians regarded as a suburb, it did not have the undesirable attributes usually associated with suburban communities at that time. When most urban Americans walked to work or shopping, the center of the city was the most desirable place to live, and well to-do-citizens lived there. Outlying areas, then, were left to those with lower incomes, especially blacks and immigrants.

However, according to the Ohio Gazeteer and Traveler's Guide of 1837, the boat building town east of Cincinnati was "not subject to be filled with that class of inhabitants which infest the suburbs of large cities; hence, the society in Fulton is much better than if it was really a suburb." Fulton's council passed ordinances to regulate taverns and entertainments, prohibit horse racing and disorderly conduct, and "suppress vice and immorality." Clearly, once Fulton was incorporated, the appellation "Eastern Liberties" no longer applied here, and anything other than legitimate businesses and productive working people was unwelcome.

Fulton was essentially a single-industry town. By the early 1840s, 400 of the town's estimated 2,000 inhabitants were employed in boat building, and steamboat construction remained the primary activity into the early 1850s. Once the demand for boats had peaked, the town's growth

stabilized. A new suburb, Pendleton, then experienced most of the new development along the Ohio River east of Cincinnati.

The unincorporated village of Pendleton, like Fulton, depended primarily upon transportation-related industry, but on railroads rather than steamboats. In 1841, Pendleton, which lay along the Ohio River from a point east of Foster Street to Delta Avenue, became the site of the original depot, railyards, and workshops of the Little Miami Railroad. The Little Miami was the first railroad to serve Cincinnati but Council members were not ready to allow this new dirty, and potentially dangerous means of transportation to enter the city. Thus, the railroad set up its terminus outside Cincinnati.

The officers of the Little Miami chose to build in the area between Fulton and Columbia, most of which was owned by Nathaniel Greene Pendleton (1793-1860) and Jacob Strader (1795-1860), eventually president of the railroad. Passengers and freight were unloaded at the Pendleton depot and then transported by horse-drawn vehicles into Cincinnati along Eastern Avenue. Even after 1848 when the Little Miami built a passenger depot inside Cincinnati at East Front and Kilgour Streets, the Pendleton yards remained important. In fact, the railroad expanded them, adding workshops and a large freight depot.

The Little Miami Railroad stimulated both commercial and residential development. In the early 1840s, warehouses and factories such as the Ferris home plant, which produced parts for horse harnesses, were located along the rail line northeast of Columbia. And in 1848, Israel Wilson (1808 – 1888) subdivided farmland Northeast of Columbia, calling it Linwood because of the many linden trees in the vicinity.

Although new subdivisions were being platted in the eastern communities, transportation problems limited their appeal. Tickets on the Little Miami Railroad were relatively expensive, and the horsecar line out Eastern Avenue, opened by the fifth Street & Pendleton Street Railway in the 1850s, was slow and unreliable.

In 1866, Joseph Longworth (1813-1883) laid out two major subdivisions in the village of Columbia – Undercliff and Mt. Tusculum. The latter subdivision included property where Longworth's father had established vineyards in the 1830s. The Mt. Tusculum lots, intended for the well-to-do, ranged in size from 5,000 square feet to twelve acres and sold very slowly. Undercliff, on the other hand, included smaller lots that sold three times as quickly, primarily to people who worked for the railroad or nearby factories.

The City of Cincinnati gradually reached out to annex these river communities. Fulton was annexed in 1855, followed by Pendleton (1870), and the Village of Columbia (1873). Annexation made possible the reorganization of a number of separate street railways into a single company, improving the area's accessibility.

In the mid-1880s, area residents and developers formed an improvement association to seek better transportation links with Cincinnati. The association convinced City Engineer Horace Stanley to repave and widen major streets, and aided the Cincinnati Street Railway Company, as the Consolidated line was then called, in obtaining additional franchises. In return, the street railway company, headed by Charles Kilgour who had also invested in area real estate, promised to convert the entire combined line from downtown Cincinnati to Undercliff to electric streetcars and to charge only five cents per passenger.

These improvements resulted in a burst of growth in what was now being called the East End. Between 1887 and 1892, its population doubled. Even Linwood, which still relied on the Little Miami Railroad, became a popular commuter suburb. Linwood, incorporated in 1874, had around 1,000 inhabitants by the early 1890s. An improvement association called the Committee of Fifty heralded Linwood as a refuge far from the "smoky, busy town whence issue every night

multitudes of tired citizens seeking refreshing air of the peerless hills and vales among which they built their homes.”

Linwood added to its appeal by obtaining a firehouse, schools, waterworks, and an electric light plant. Cincinnati annexed the community in 1896, along with a number of other upper-income commuter suburbs including Clifton and Avondale. Linwood’s attractiveness as a residential suburb was then augmented by the extension of the streetcar lines to Linwood Avenue.

At the turn of the century, the strip of communities along Eastern Avenue boasted a population of about 10,000 residents and several active local commercial districts. At the same time, however, a new wave of industrial development began to alter the character of those portions of Columbia and Linwood adjacent to the railroad line. Manufacturing in Fulton and Pendleton had already changed; boatyards had been mostly replaced by large lumberyards, small machine shops, and foundries. In Columbia and Linwood, the small lumber and coalyards, the hame factory, and Queen City Forging, which had built a factory on Tennyson Street in the early 1880s, were joined by new, large firms such as LeBlond Machine Tools in 1897, Charles Boldt’s glass bottle works in 1900, and numerous small workshops.

The major impact on the area came in 1907 when the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad, which then controlled the old Little Miami line, purchased land in undercliff and constructed a mile long railyard. During the early twentieth century, while the hillsides and hilltops of Tusculum and Linwood remained essentially middle-income and wealthy residential areas, the lower ground between the river, railroad, and Columbia Avenue became an even greater mix of industrial activity and lower-income housing.

Residents and city officials increasingly came to view the entire area as a single neighborhood – the East End. Community distinctions had been blurred by annexation and the gradual industrialization along Eastern Avenue and adjoining streets. The perception of a solid, uniform East End was further reinforced by the improvements of Columbia Avenue between 1930 and 1937. Columbia Parkway became a major highway running through all the communities that made up the East End, tying the eastern suburbs to the basin.

The parkway cut through the East end for the same reason that the railroad had: the ledge running parallel to the Ohio river and then up the Little Miami River Valley was the easiest path to travel into Cincinnati. The parkway and the railroad strengthened the view that the East End was primarily a transportation corridor, not a series of separate communities.

By the mid-twentieth century, the East End had social and economic problems. Housing along Eastern Avenue, especially in Fulton and Pendleton, was deteriorating. Low rents attracted low-income families, including blacks and large numbers of Appalachians. Though most of the housing north of Columbia Parkway remained in the middle-income category, the general public regarded the East End as a poor industrial neighborhood in decline.

The population of the East End peaked at around 12,000 at mid-century then steadily declined. Attrition reduced the housing stock as owners of aging buildings demolished or abandoned them rather than making repairs that low rents did not justify. Other housing was lost to industrial expansion and road improvements. An increasing percentage of residents were unemployed and on welfare, especially as activity on the railroad, once a major employer, declined. The Eastern Avenue business districts also suffered from a rising crime rate, shrinking numbers of customers, and increased competition from newer shopping centers.

Despite its problems, the East End had a number of strengths. In the late 1960s, residents created an active effective community council to represent their interests. The East End also enjoyed a stock of fine older buildings on both sides of the parkway that began to attract new middle-income residents who were interested in living in older neighborhoods close to downtown. Some renovation and even new construction started in the old Tusculum subdivision and parts of

the former villages of Columbia and Linwood. While parking was often a problem, new businesses, including large numbers of specialty stores, changed the commercial districts. Industry also changed with new firms taking the places of older ones that closed or moved out.

Though the East End still had serious problems in the late 1980s – unemployment, decreasing population, and many substandard buildings – the outlook for the community was generally positive. Its separate neighborhoods still retained distinct identities and had different strengths and weaknesses. The residents were increasingly aware of those separate identities and sought to reinforce them to assure that their communities did not simply become a single, faceless transportation corridor.

### **East End Tour**

Columbia:

Benjamin Stites' original plan for Columbia intended that Eastern Avenue should be the center of the town. When the members of Stites' party gradually left the settlement (near the present site of Tucker Marine) between 1800 and 1815, Stites and his companions, along with new arrivals, built these Eastern Avenue Residences between Stanley Avenue and Carrel Street.

Many of the houses built by notable Columbia residents on this higher ground still exist. The 20-room Greek Revival structure at 3811 Eastern was supposedly built by Samuel Knisley as an inn; his descendants were using it as a private residence by the 1840s. The Gothic revival frame house at 3626 Eastern Avenue was erected in the 1850s by Dr. Joseph Langdon, and the brick Federal style home at 315 Stites Avenue was built by Benjamin Stites' nephew, Hezekiah, around 1835.

One of the earliest homes located in this area was that of James Morris who had come to Columbia in 1798. In 1804, he constructed a log cabin that was later incorporated into the Gothic Revival style house at 3642 Eastern Avenue. Morris operated a tanyard behind the house. He and his wife had fourteen children, and many of their descendants continued to live in the vicinity. Morris called the area Morristown, but other residents generally preferred the name Columbia, which was used when the village incorporated in 1868.

Some of Columbia's business and political leaders continued to live in this vicinity even after Joseph Longworth began selling large lots on the hill above the village. Members of the Kellogg family occupied the former Knisley inn until 1977. Beginning in the 1840s, coal merchant Ensign R. Kellogg made it his home. His two sons, Edwin (1862-1937) and Marshall (1865-1950), were born there and shared the house after their father's death.

Marshall Kellogg became vice-president of the National Lead Company, while Edwin became active in city government. From 1899-1921, he served on the city council, vigorously pursuing road and sewer improvements for the East End. Kellogg Avenue was named in his memory.

Between 1950 and 1970, the condition of the houses around Eastern Avenue deteriorated and the number of owner-occupied units fell. Some of the old houses were damaged by neglect and eventually demolished, while others were subdivided as apartments.

In the early 1970s, however, there was new interest in older East End homes among middle-income individuals who saw advantages in their reasonable prices and proximity to downtown. The Miami Purchase Association, a historic preservation group, purchased some East End structures like the Langdon house and sold them to individuals for restoration. Other buildings in the vicinity of Eastern Avenue, including the Kellogg and Morris houses, were also renovated.

Although the movement towards renovation has slowed in recent years, it has saved some of Columbia's historic structures. Many of the new residents are active in neighborhood organizations, contributing to the preservation and improvement of the community, as well as its buildings.

#### Business District:

Today, most Greater Cincinnatians are familiar only with that part of the East End along Columbia Parkway, but this cluster of businesses and institutions is only one of several small business sub-districts in the area. The actual center of the community has always been the Columbia Business District, most of which is located on Eastern Avenue between Tusculum Avenue and Carrel Street.

Eastern Avenue was the major transportation route through the area. A part of the Cincinnati, Columbus, & Wooster Turnpike, Eastern Avenue also became the route for the Kilgours' street railroad, which terminated at Carrel Street, in the 1860s.

When the Village of Columbia incorporated in the late 1860s, the larger part of the fifteen to twenty businesses in the community, including a doctor, blacksmiths, dry goods and grocery stores, lumber dealers, and a druggist, were concentrated here. Almost all the other important community institutions were also here: a Methodist church, founded in the 1850s; Columbia Baptist Church, established in 1867 at 3716 Eastern; St. Stephen's Roman Catholic Church and school, organized in 1867 at 3800-3804; Spencer Township Hall and the Odd Fellows Temple, built in 1860 and still standing at 3833, and the Columbia post office.

Electrification of the street railroad in the early 1890s spurred new residential and commercial development in Columbia. Approximately sixty businesses, as well as perhaps a dozen community institutions, were soon located on the four blocks of Eastern Avenue between Tusculum and Carrel.

In the 1920s, these shops and offices housed doctors, a bank, a theater, dressmakers, gas stations, barbers, groceries, bakeries, butchers, cleaners, dry goods stores, confectioners, an undertaker, an electrician, a stone dealer, and a billiard hall. There were also a branch library at 3738 Eastern, the sixth District Police Station, McKinley Public School (established in 1876, though the present building was erected in 1885 with an addition in 1910) at 3905, the American Legion Hall at 3715, the Odd Fellows Temple (still in the former township hall), and four churches. One of these, the Congregational church at 3912, was converted into a YMCA in 1925.

The Columbia Business District change little through the mid-1950s. Thereafter, however, the number of businesses on Eastern Avenue dropped by half as the area's population fell. Even some of the institutions changed as the library became a Fraternal Order of Police hall and the Odd fellows Temple was converted into offices. Although four churches remained, new denominations had, in some cases, taken the place of the older congregations, and St. Stephen's closed its school.

Eastern Avenue is still the heart of the East End. The School, the churches, the post office, and the fraternal halls remain on or close to the same locations they have occupied for over a century. A few of the twenty or so remaining businesses along Eastern, such as Zorn Civil Engineering in the old township hall, are no longer oriented to serve the neighborhood, but some local retail operations remained. The most notable of these is Schneider's Pharmacy, 3700 Eastern, which has been in operation since the early twentieth century.

#### Columbia Parkway:

When the city began construction of Columbia Parkway in the 1930s, it intended that the project would eliminate deteriorating housing, create a scenic environment for motorists, and provide an

arterial highway to carry the growing volume of commuter traffic from the eastern suburbs into the central city.

To certain extent, these goals were achieved. A considerable number of aging homes were demolished and replaced by greenspace and a widened roadway. The drive along the parkway offers spectacular views of the Ohio River and Kentucky hills, provided the trees and underbrush have been trimmed. More than 50,000 vehicles per day travel the parkway, although they are slowed by congestion and stop lights in the Columbia business district. But in addition, the road has had considerable impact on the neighborhoods through which it passes, creating a barrier between sections of what were once part of the same community.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, a series of unconnected strips of dirt road was all that occupied the path that the parkway now follows. Vehicles traveling to Cincinnati from eastern communities used Eastern Avenue, which passed through the commercial, residential, and industrial centers of the East End.

In the late 1860s, work began on connecting these bits of road on the ledge above Eastern Avenue into a single street called Columbia Avenue. This road was to tie the downtown to the northern part of Columbia where Joseph Longworth had established a new subdivision for upper-income homebuyers. But Columbia Avenue remained a secondary road, and most travelers still used Eastern Avenue.

As early as 1907, city government considered turning the road into a parkway widening it and creating greenspace along the route. The 1907 comprehensive city park plan proposed connecting Cincinnati to Columbia Park (Alms Park) and Red Bank Park (Ault Park). The need for such a road became greater during the 1920s as the population of the eastern suburbs rapidly expanded and cars became more common. City officials also envisioned the parkway as a means of bringing Lunken Airport within a fifteen-minute drive of downtown.

Work on the road began in 1929-1930, and the first section from Kemper Lane to Torrence Road was completed by 1931. Continuation of the road to Linwood Avenue was made possible by funding assistance from the federal Public Works Administration, and the entire parkway was opened in 1938.

By 1941, more than 30,000 cars traveled Columbia Parkway each day, but the road was only a qualified success. More than one hundred buildings, mostly old frame houses in Fulton and Pendleton, had been demolished. But in the Columbia area, the parkway route passed through a small commercial district that city officials did not want to destroy. This created a bottleneck that was not improved when traffic lights were installed to reduce the disturbing number of accidents along that stretch of the parkway.

Within twenty years of its completion, Columbia Parkway was widely regarded as inadequate by city planners and motorists. By the late 1950s, more than 60,000 cars per day passed over the parkway; it was simply overcrowded. In 1962, the road was extended from Linwood Avenue to the Village of Fairfax, adding even more traffic and eliminating a large number of Linwood's most attractive and historically significant homes. East End residents actively opposed an additional widening and rerouting plan that would have eliminated some 200 houses and businesses.

Even after new freeways were completed in the mid-1970s and some of the parkway's traffic volume was reduced, problems remained. The business district bottleneck still existed, accidents were still common, and periodic mudslides hindered traffic flow and damaged the road itself. The small commercial district between Tusculum and Delta Avenues suffered from a lack of parking and heavy traffic that limited access for customers.

At the same time, the business area underwent something of revitalization as new enterprises moved there, including the Precinct Restaurant in the former Sixth District Police Station and an

auction house in the old Yeatman Masonic Lodge. Today, although a drive along Columbia Parkway is certainly more pleasant than it was twenty years ago, the road is still not the pleasing boulevard that park planners envisioned in 1907.

#### Alms Park:

Many of the residents of what was once the Village of Columbia now call their neighborhood Columbia-Tusculum, referring to the large Mt. Tusculum subdivision that straddled the boundary between Columbia and Linwood. When Joseph Longworth platted Mt. Tusculum in 1886, he envisioned a middle and upper-income residential area. But today, the greater part of that subdivision, which actually lay within Columbia, is included in the Fredrick H. Alms Memorial Park.

The high ground rising above Columbia was known as Bald Hill because it had been deforested at an early date. Nicholas Longworth I (1782-1863) acquired the property for vineyards. In the 1830s and 1840s, he was a highly successful producer of Catawba wine, much of which was made from juice that came from press houses on the eastern slope of Bald Hill. In the 1850s, Longworth began calling the hill Mt. Tusculum, a name taken from a hill in ancient Rome where wealthy patricians had built their villas.

After Nicholas' death, his son, Joseph, subdivided the hilly property for residential development, creating two separate and very different subdivisions. Undercliff lay at the foot of the hill; the Mt. Tusculum subdivision included the crest and upper slopes. Joseph Longworth retained the name his father had given to the hill at least in part because it suggested the kind of buyers that he hoped to attract for the lots, some of which were as large as twelve acres.

Much of the land in Mt. Tusculum, which stretched from Columbia Avenue on the south almost to Linwood Avenue to the north, was extremely rough. The rocky slopes and gullies overgrown with tangled underbrush combined with an unreliable and expensive transportation system to limit the subdivision's appeal. By the 1890s, fewer than forty structures stood here. Only one-third of the bigger lots had houses, and Longworth's heirs tried to make some of the remaining properties more marketable by breaking them into smaller lots.

Much of the area, however, was still used for agriculture until the early twentieth century. The Legner, Staub, Brunner, and Buetsche families, who were mostly of Swiss or German descent, continued to cultivate grapes as well as vegetables and fruit trees here. Some also raised dairy cattle, and at least one worked in the glass factory in nearby Columbia.

The natural character of the hilltop property led city officials to consider using it as a park. This idea was suggested in the 1907 Kessler plan for a city park system.

Unlike many of the plan's proposals, the park in Columbia was realized. In 1917, Eleanor Alms (d.1921) donated funds for the purchase of new parklands as a memorial to her husband Fredrick H. Alms (1839-1898). The Park Board used her gift to buy fifty-nine acres of hilltop land in Mt. Tusculum that became Alms Park.

Mrs. Alms promised to leave money for an additional sixty acres. But during the 1920s, wealthy Cincinnatians developed considerable interest in Mt. Tusculum, and new residential development and speculation began. Property values shot up, and the Alms bequest purchased only twenty-three more acres. Even with some small additions in the 1930s, Alms park never became as large as Mrs. Alms and the Park Board had hoped.

Alms Park became widely known for its exceptional view of the Little Miami Valley, Lunken Airport, the Ohio River, and Kentucky, as well as for such amenities as the Romanesque style shelter house built in 1929. In 1937, the park became the site for the Stephen Foster Memorial, a bronze sculpture by Arthur Ivone commemorating the antebellum songwriter who had spent

several years in Cincinnati. The memorial, donated by pharmaceutical manufacturer Eli Lilly of Indianapolis, faces Kentucky, the subject of many of Foster's songs.

Today, the park has grown to over ninety-two acres, but further expansion is unlikely. In the 1970s, middle and upper-income homebuyers began renovating older homes or building new houses on the wooded hillsides. Most of this activity has taken place in that part of the East End north of the parkway and has, again, raised property prices.

Home of Richard LeBlond:

While Joseph Longworth's efforts in the 1860s to promote Mt. Tusculum as an area of large estates were generally unsuccessful, some grand homes were built here in the 1920s. Among them was Broadview Manor, the Home of Richard LeBlond which, since 1960, has been the location of St. Ursula Villa School, 3660 Vineyard Place.

Richard K. LeBlond (1865-1953) was born in Linwood, son of a Civil War veteran and printer. He became an apprentice machinist at the Franklin Type Foundry on Vine Street, and studied mechanical drawing at the Ohio Mechanics Institute. In 1887, LeBlond began his own business, manufacturing gauges, tools connected with type-making industry, and type moulds. The next year, he moved his small operation to the second floor of a building at Second and Plum Streets.

A contract in 1891 to build lathes and lathe attachments focused LeBlond's efforts on machine tool manufacture. In 1887, the R.K. LeBlond Machine Tool Company was incorporated and, the following year, opened a new plant on Eastern Avenue. The nationally-recognized firm outgrew that facility and in 1917-1918 began operations at another plant in Norwood.

LeBlond and his wife, Loretto Heekin, daughter of James Heekin who was Linwood's first mayor and president of the Heekin Can Company, lived in Linwood until 1909, moving then to Hyde Park to be near their children's schools.

The LeBlonds returned to this community in 1925 when Broadview Manor was completed. The 40-room Tudor style mansion, designed by architect George Rapp, has some walls which are 3-foot thick; the solarium boasts Rookwood tiles, fountain, and fireplace, and the Old English Room features a built-in organ, stained glass windows, and carved woodwork.

LeBlond served on the boards of at least two dozen firms, including U.S. Shoe, Fifth-Third Union Trust, Cincinnati Union Terminal Company, and Rose Hill Apartments Company. He was founder of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, and as a member of the City Planning Commission, took an active part in the development of Cincinnati's first comprehensive city plan, completed in 1925.

A late convert to Roman Catholicism, LeBlond willed his Linwood estate to the Cincinnati Archdiocese. Two years after Loretto LeBlond's death in 1958, the Sisters of St. Ursula bought the property from the archdiocese to use as a private elementary school and a residence for Sisters teaching there. Grades K-6 were moved here from the crowded quarters on McMillan Street in Walnut Hills.

Two new buildings were later erected. St. Ursula Villa now enrolls students, preschool through grade 8, from throughout the Cincinnati area.

Robert A Taft Laboratory:

Many of the Mt. Tusculum lots that Joseph Longworth offered for sale in the nineteenth century were actually in the village of Linwood. But only a few scattered houses dotted the north side of the hill when, in the late 1930s, the city and the U.S. Public Health Service agreed on this site, close to the proposed Little Miami Sewage Treatment Plant, as the location for a new federal

wastewater research facility. Ultimately, this plan came to fruition as the Robert A. Taft Laboratory, 4617 Columbia Parkway.

In 1912-1913, the Public Health Service set up the country's first water pollution facility in rented quarters at Third and Kilgour Streets. By the late 1930s, the lab needed its own building.

Though work on preparing this site began as a Works Progress Administration project, little progress was made until a decade later when construction started for a new facility to house not only the wastewater treatment research, but also air pollution, radiation, and food contamination labs. These had been established in Cincinnati in the 1940s and were also in rented quarters.

The laboratory, completed in 1954 and occupied one year later, was named after Senator Robert A. Taft (1889-1953) who had actively supported its placement in Cincinnati. Originally, federal health officials felt that the city was in a central position relative to the country's major centers of population. By 1966, however, reorganization of several federal research programs led to the removal of some operations, including air pollution studies, to other sites.

Ten years later, some of the operations in the Taft lab moved into the new Environmental Protection Agency building in Corryville. The EPA, organized in 1970 to bring together various environmental research programs, consolidated most of its scattered facilities in this new center. But the Taft lab was retained as the wastewater test facility of the agency's Cincinnati office for Research and Development.

#### Industry in Fulton:

Industry in Fulton centered on eastern Avenue along the narrow ledge between the Ohio River and the steep hillsides, and was related to the river. The largest and most important of the concerns were located between Bains Place and Hazen Street.

Beginning in the 1820s, most of the steamboat building firms that inspired Fulton's name were in this vicinity. By 1830, almost one out of four steamboats on western rivers was built in Cincinnati, and four-fifths of those were constructed in Fulton. When steamboat building peaked in the late 1840s and early 1850s, there were seven boatbuilding firms in the Cincinnati Area employing over 500 men, and all but one were located here. The boatyards of Hambleton & Company, John Litherbury, Joseph Morton, the Marine Railway & Dry Dock Company, and Johnson, Morton & Company, along with their associated lumberyards and sawmills, took up most of the useable industrial land along the Ohio River.

The construction of steamboats fell off in the 1850s, but the Civil War temporarily revived boatbuilding as Cincinnati firms built or repaired boats used in transporting troops and supplies for the Union Armies. The *Sultana*, Launched from a Fulton yard in 1863, became infamous when it was lost in an accident two years later while carrying Union prisoners home from Andersonville. Local companies also produced gunboats for the federal river fleets, either by constructing new boats or through the conversion of existing vessels.

After the war, the river trade suffered from increasing competition from railroads. By 1870, only three Cincinnati firms, all in Fulton, still built steamboats. All the others had either closed or switched to other lines of business, such as producing home construction materials. Within two decades, the only surviving boat builder was the Marine Railway & Dry Dock Company, located on a site between the river and present-day Johnson Electric Company building, 1841 Eastern Avenue.

Big lumberyards and sawmills took the place of the boatyards in the second half of the nineteenth century, but these relied more on railroads than river transportation. Crane & Company, a giant complex of storage sheds, mills, and workshops stretching from Weeks Street to Hazen, had several rail sidings of its own.

Because Fulton had such good access to the river, firms that used both water and rail transportation – oil terminals, grain elevators, and sheet metal plants – replaced the lumberyards in the early twentieth century. In the late 1920s, the Crane & Company site was taken over by the Cincinnati Sheet Metal & Roofing Company, which loaded and unloaded rail cars and barges installed on the river's edge below the factory at 1725 Eastern Avenue. Early in the following decade, the Rookwood Oil Terminals, a series of huge storage tanks, were put on the remainder of the old lumberyard property.

The oil tanks are now operated by United American Fuels, and the sheet metal plant is a division of American Building Components. Their presence helps make Cincinnati a major inland port, particularly because the sheet metal company's crane, one of the largest on the Ohio or Mississippi River, is used to handle both international and regional cargoes.

The Town of Fulton:

The Town of Fulton was once a crowded community of 3,000 – 4,000 people living in homes like those which survive on Eastern Avenue from Hazen Street to St. Andrews Street. The workers employed in Fulton's boatyards, mills, and workshops occupied homes like these in three subdivisions – Carrsville, Vanceville, and Lewiston – that were laid out along or near Eastern Avenue between 1820 and 1840.

**The history of Columbia Tusculum and the East End presented here is from the *Bicentennial Guide to Greater Cincinnati*, published by the Cincinnati Historical Society, 1988. Permission to use this history was granted by Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal. More information can be found at <http://library.cincymuseum.org>**