

Camp Bushnell | Spanish-American War, 1898

Camp Bushnell, a mobilization camp under the command of Major General Henry A. Axline, was centered at what is now Drexel Circle. Electric lines and water and sewer infrastructure brought east from Columbus, helped spur residential development to the area that would eventually become the Village of Bexley (1908), and later the City of Bexley (1932).



Regimental Locations

Camp Bushnell covered about 500 acres of the Bullitt Park Addition, property owned by Logan M. Bullitt of Philadelphia. Named streets were utilized for the camp's layout with the volunteer infantry, comprised of soldiers trained to fight 'on foot', occupying the most space. The men in artillery were trained in the use of large weapons such as cannons. The cavalry, comprised of combat troops mounted on horseback, were located in the most northern sections of Camp Bushnell. The Parade Grounds, located at the southwest end of the camp, were a gathering point for assembly and marches.

Map adapted from "Sunday Programme Camp Bushnell", which was handed out to visiting families at the camp on Sundays



The 45 Star Flag

The circle of land which filled the intersection at Drexel Avenue and East Broad Street was considered the center of the camp and was where the large 45-star American Flag flew.

Photo: Bexley Historical Society Archives



Sundays at Camp

Friends and family came on Sundays from all corners of Ohio to visit the boys in blue with trains arriving at Union Station. City streetcars were inadequate to move these visitors the four miles from downtown Columbus to the camp. Transportation was provided by box wagons, furniture vans, coal carts, and ice wagons charging 5¢ a person.

Photo: Baker's Art Gallery, The Story of Columbus, Johnston Publishing Company, 1898, p.36



Memorial Boulder

A memorial to Camp Bushnell and to those who served in the Spanish-American War, an 11-ton granite boulder with bronze plaques, rests at the northwest quadrant of Drexel Circle. At the urging of Bexley resident Dr. Edward G. Mills, Bexley school children gave their pennies and nickels for this visual tribute. The boulder was dedicated September, 1934 with a parade including school children, Scout and civic groups, and veterans of the Civil War, Spanish-American War and World War I. The boulder was dedicated September, 1934.

Photo: Ohio State Journal, September 3, 1934



Major of Volunteers Charles Young

A graduate of West Point, Major Charles Young commanded the 9th Battalion in 1898. Young would continue to serve for many years, being promoted to Captain and later Colonel. Colonel Young served as a distinguished officer through World War I.

Photos: Coleman and Glendower Photo Collections



The 9th Ohio Vol. Infantry Battalion

The 9th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Battalion was an African American regiment formed in 1881 and, for the first time in U.S. History, led by black officers. The regiment was commanded by Major Young, and were mobilized at Camp Bushnell in 1898.

Photo: Lawrence Family Collection



Roll Call

Many of the companies were composed of men who had been friends since childhood. Their parents knew the officers in charge and because of that were more willing to let their sons enlist.

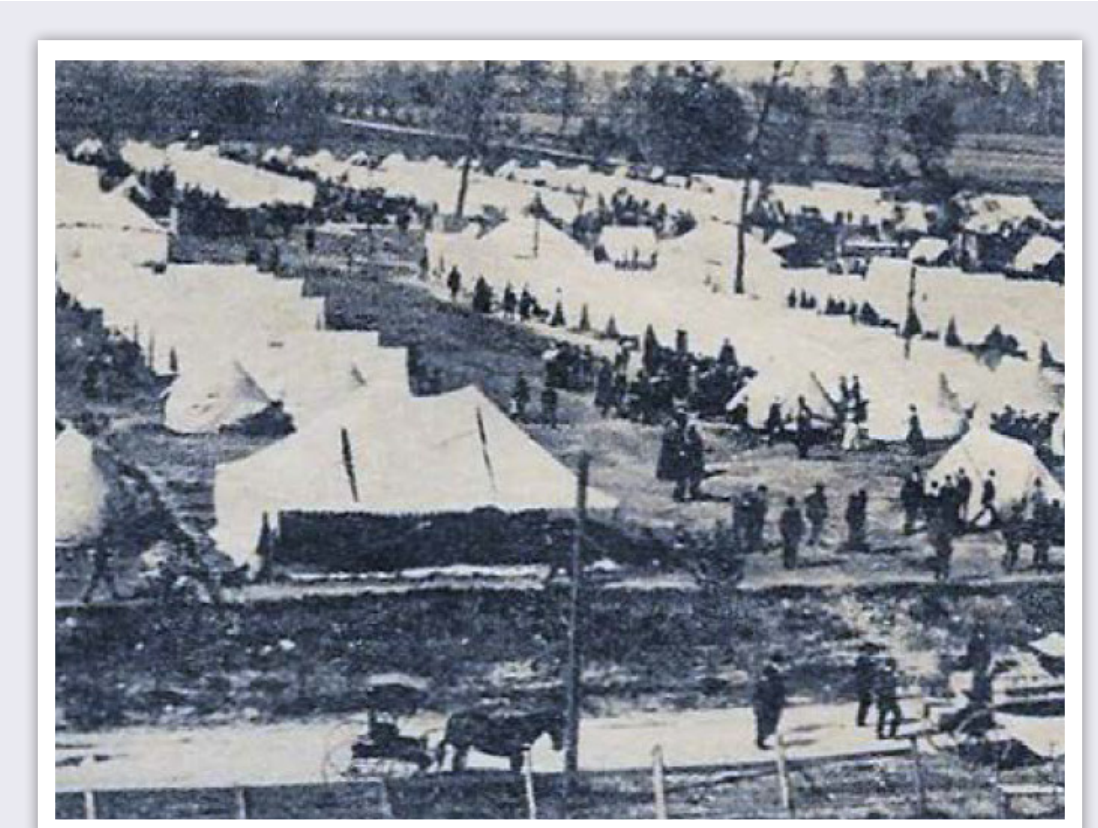
Photo: The Cosmopolitan, June, 1898, Vol.XXV-No.2, p.156



Regimental Post Office

The regimental post office at Camp Bushnell provided a vital link to home for the soldiers. Logistics of mail delivery during mobilization were complex, but vital for troop morale.

Photo: The Cosmopolitan, June, 1898, Vol.XXV-No.2, p.155



City Beginnings

Camp Bushnell, named for the then Ohio Governor Asa Smith Bushnell, was the largest of all the state camps of the National Guard. The Camp was active from April 28, 1898 through May 29, 1899. This 'Tent City' helped pave the way for the development of the City of Bexley. Water, sewer and electric lines were brought east from Columbus in order for the camp to function. In about a month's time, more than 15,000 troops who answered the call, "Remember the Maine", were mustered into service at this site.

Photo: Baker's Art Gallery, The Story of Columbus, Johnston