Kenosha has changed since John Bullen Jr. came here in 1835. The businesses and groups of people who live here have also changed. These have affected the way the land is used today.

The early settlers wanted Kenosha to be a busy port, but its use never equaled Milwaukee’s or Chicago’s ports. Therefore, they turned to other types of work. Many started companies that made products. For instance, the Simmons Company made mattresses; Jockey made nylons and underwear; and the Allen Tannery processed hides into leather. Other companies, such as Nash Motors (which later became Daimler-Chrysler) and Snap-On Tools, followed.

Class Activity
1. On chart paper list as many businesses as you can in our area.
2. What resources might you use to find this information?
Businesses in Kenosha

As the city grew, it changed to meet the needs of the people. Today Kenosha has over 85 industries which make many different products. Some of the businesses are located in industrial parks. An industrial park is a large area of land set aside for the purpose of industrial development. Instead of locating in the heart of a city, many modern-day businesses are choosing to build on the edge of town, where many of these industrial parks are located.

Kenosha will continue to meet the needs of the people. More businesses will open. More jobs will be created. More people will move here. Kenosha will live up to its motto, *City on the Grow.*
Snap-On Tools

One of the major companies to have its headquarters in Kenosha is Snap-On Tools. In the 1920s the Snap-On Wrench Company was formed. Throughout the years Snap-On continued to expand their tool sales with new and useful products. By the 1970s sales of Snap-On Tools reached the $100 million sales mark. Today the sales mark is over $1 billion. Snap-On’s products include hand tools, power tools, shop equipment, and tool storage products. These products can be found in over 150 countries around the world.

Jockey International

In 1876 a retired minister named Samuel Cooper, formed the company which was then called Cooper’s. Cooper and his sons wanted to help lumberjacks suffering from blisters and infections caused by their poorly made wool socks. Cooper believed if a quality product was made, people would be willing to pay extra money for a better sock. People were willing to pay for superior quality and comfort. The business continued to grow by adding complete hosiery lines for women and children. In 1902 the business grew with the opening of a new factory located at 60th Street and 23rd Avenue. Soon Cooper’s made a fortune selling men’s underwear. In the 1980s the company, now called Jockey International, began making women’s underwear too. The brand “Jockey for Her” made millions of dollars. Today Jockey products are sold in more than 120 countries. Jockey’s vision is “to be the best underwear company.”
G. Leblanc Corporation

George Leblanc came from a French family of instrument makers. He inherited a company that made wind instruments in 1904 and called the company the G. Leblanc Corporation. The G. Leblanc Corporation has its American Headquarters in Kenosha. The company’s origins are still in France.

George’s son, Leon Leblanc, met Kenoshan Vito Pascucci, who also built and repaired musical instruments. Pascucci was in France during World War II. While he was in France, Pascucci visited the Leblanc instrument factory. After touring the factory, Leon Leblanc and Vito Pascucci became good friends. During one of their conversations, Leblanc asked Pascucci if he would be interested in opening and running a Leblanc instrument factory in America. Pascucci said, “Yes, of course.” In 1946 when Pascucci returned home from the war, he opened the Leblanc Corporation in Kenosha. This factory is located at 70th Street and 30th Avenue. Today Leblanc is America’s oldest and largest maker of wind instruments.

Question

1. Why did Leblanc choose Kenosha as its American headquarters?
History of Automobile Making in Kenosha

1860

1879--Jeffery and childhood friend create G and J Manufacturing to build Rambler bikes.

1880

1898--Jeffery builds his first small four-wheel car.

1900--Jeffery buys old Sterling Bicycle Company to set up production of automobiles in Kenosha.

1901--First Rambler model designed by Jeffery’s son, Charles, rolls off the assembly line.

1916--In July Charles Nash purchases Jeffery Company and renames it Nash Motors.

1920

1940


1960--AMC is known as the largest employer in Wisconsin.

1970s--During the decade, a drop in car sales causes AMC to decline.
**Question**

1. The pictures below all portray the same overpass. From the information you read, what years do you think these pictures were taken?
Local and Chain Stores

Like many cities in the United States, Kenosha has its national chain stores: McDonalds, Blockbuster Video, and Wal-Mart, just to name a few. However, Kenosha has a much wider array of local stores and restaurants.

Whether it's fine jewelry, hot Italian pizza, or a good old-fashioned cheeseburger, Kenosha's locally owned and operated businesses have it all. Many of these local businesses were started as family businesses many years ago and are now being run by third and fourth generation family members.

Questions

1. Which of the businesses shown on this page are chain businesses?
2. Which ones are unique to Kenosha?
City Government

From 1841 to 1850 the village of Pike was governed by a president. When Kenosha became a city, the people elected a mayor. Michael Frank was the first village president and the first mayor. In 1922 the office of mayor was replaced by a city manager. C. M. Osborn was the first city manager. One of Osborn’s accomplishments was the creation of Kenosha’s Civic Center. This area was reserved for Kenosha’s government buildings—like the courthouse and post office.

In 1958 the city government was changed again. Eugene Hammond was elected mayor. It is important for Kenosha’s mayor to work closely with a city council to govern Kenosha. Today we still have a mayor and city council. The people of Kenosha choose the members of the city council in elections. The city council makes the laws for Kenosha. Once they pass a law, the mayor may sign it or veto it. If it is signed, the idea becomes a new law. If it is vetoed, the idea usually does not become a law.

Questions

1. What is the name of our current mayor?

2. Where is the mayor’s office located?
In the beginning Kenosha was part of Milwaukee and Racine Counties. In 1836 Milwaukee County was divided. The southern part became Racine County. Racine County was divided in 1850, two years after Wisconsin became a state. Its southern part became Kenosha County. Today Kenosha County is one of 72 counties in Wisconsin.

Kenosha County is governed by the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors. Its members are elected by the people of the county. All citizens of Kenosha County, including those who live in the city, have a county board supervisor that represents them. In 1982 the first county executive, Gilbert Dosemagen, was elected.

Questions
1. When was Kenosha County established?
2. Who is our current county board supervisor?
The Village of Pleasant Prairie

The village of Pleasant Prairie was founded in 1835. One of the village’s earliest residents was John Lamb, a native of Kingston, England. Lamb played an important role in establishing the first school in the village. Therefore, a school was named in his honor. The Lamb School was the first school built in Pleasant Prairie and was one of the oldest schools in the state.

The school term consisted of four or five winter months and four months of summer school. School was not held in spring or fall. In the spring children had to help prepare the farmland and plant crops. In the fall children had to help with the harvest. The winter term was taught by a male teacher who was paid $40 to $50 a month. The summer term was taught by a female teacher who was paid $20 to $30 a month. Some of Pleasant Prairie’s first teachers in the late 1860s and early 1870s were Lucinda Davis, E. G. McClellan, Florence Doolittle, T. A. Ely, and L. A. Gilette. Female teachers had to be single. Once a female teacher was married, she was expected to quit her job.

In 1892 a new school was built. In the early days it was known as the Limerick School because the first settlers of the community were largely of the Irish descent and had come from the county of Limerick in Ireland. The cost of the new building was $1,194. The school was heated by box stoves until 1914 when a furnace was installed. In 1959 Prairie Lane was built because of the overcrowding at the school.
Pleasant Prairie’s Business History

Working at the Pleasant Prairie Powder Mill in 1911 was an extremely dangerous job because gun powder is an **explosive**. Although many explosions occurred there, an explosion on March 9, 1911, was the one most people remember. Millions of pounds of dynamite and giant powder containers exploded at the powder mill. The blast was so intense that it shattered windows as far away as Chicago and even shook buildings in Iowa and Michigan. Those working in the plant escaped death by crawling on their hands and knees from the burning building. If an employee’s clothing caught on fire, they jumped into a large tub filled with water. The powder mill once extended from Highway 50 south to Wilmot Road and from HH west to I-94.
After Powder Mill Explosion
March 9, 1911

Dwelling Three-Fourths Mile from Power Mill Explosion
March 9, 1911
Pleasant Prairie’s Business History Continued

Today the LakeView Corporate Park provides jobs for thousands of workers in Pleasant Prairie. Many businesses, like Jelly Belly, rent space in the ever-expanding development. The park is located off of Highway 165, linking I-94 and Highway H.
Recreation in Pleasant Prairie

The LakeView RecPlex opened in 2000. It has an indoor water park, a fitness center, and a large field house with soccer fields and basketball, tennis, and volleyball courts. The RecPlex is located on Highway 165 next to Lake Andrea.

Lake Andrea is a man-made spring-fed lake located in Prairie Springs Park. Residents can enjoy the 2.3 mile paved trail around Lake Andrea for in-line skating, walking, or biking. Other activities available include fishing, swimming, or just relaxing on the beach. This lake was named after Kenosha’s popular state senator, Joe Andrea.
In March 1835 Jacob Montgomery and his two sons built a house on the edge of the Pike River. In 1843 this settlement was named Pike. Later, in 1851, the land west of Highway 31 was changed to Somers. The Montogmerys were the first residents of Somers. They were **trappers**. Trappers worked by catching animals in traps and then selling or trading the animal’s fur. Due to the rich soil, Somers attracted many farmers, and much of the land is still used for farming.

The Somers Post Office opened in 1836. The first postmaster was Lute Charpenter. During this time mail carriers used horse and wagon to deliver the mail and received a **salary** of $20 a year. Today mail carriers enjoy the modern **conveniences** of trucks and automobiles to deliver the mail.