



**HISTORIC**  
COLUMBIA

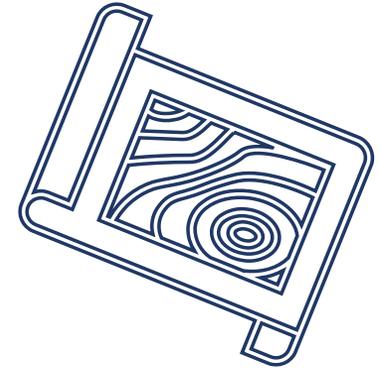
Mapping Columbia's History

# History of Columbia

- Columbia was founded in 1796 as the nation's first planned capital city, after the General Assembly voted to move the capital from Charleston due to demands from the upcountry residents for a more geographically central capital.

Five state appointed commissioners designed a town of 400 blocks in a two-mile square along the river.

Why was South Carolina's Capital moved to its current location?



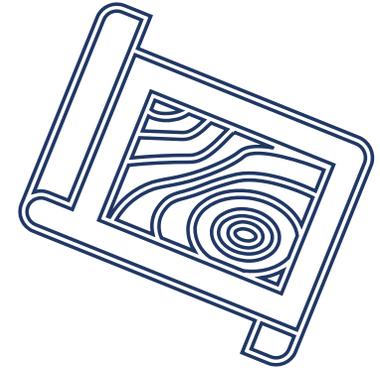
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# Geography of Columbia

- The location was chosen for its geographic features in addition to its central location between the Atlantic Ocean and Blue Ridge Mountains.

Columbia is situated on a **fall line** or the boundary where an upland region and coastal plain meet, typically where rivers cross forming water falls or rapids. Columbia's fall line is formed by the intersection of Broad River and the Saluda River, flowing into the Congaree River. It's at this point where the river is no longer navigable by boat.

What are some positives and negatives of these geographic features?



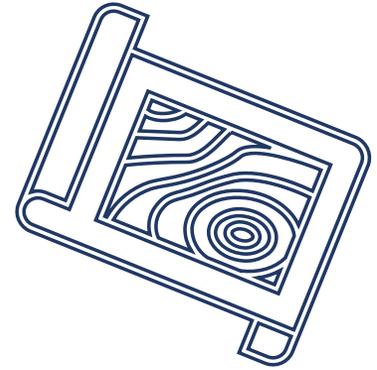
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# Development of Columbia

- Assembly Street was originally designed to be the city's main business district, but the street would often flood and was too muddy to travel on.

The business district moved up hill to Richardson Street (known as Main Street today). The main thoroughfare in and out of the city became Gervais Street as it led to the ferry which crossed the Congaree River.

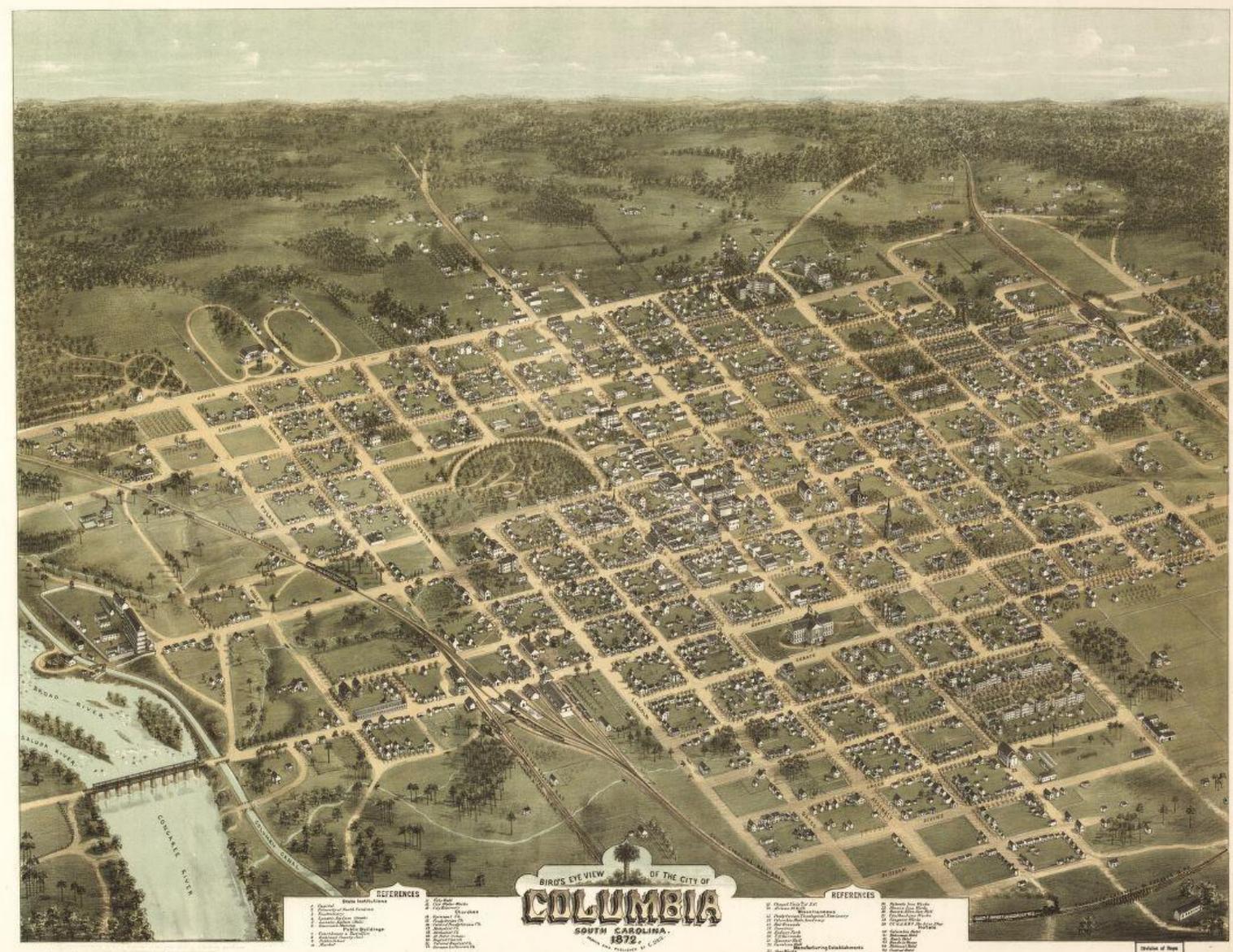
How might geography effect how a city develops over time?



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What can this map teach us about Columbia in 1872?

Bird's eye view of the city of Columbia, South Carolina 1872. Library of Congress.

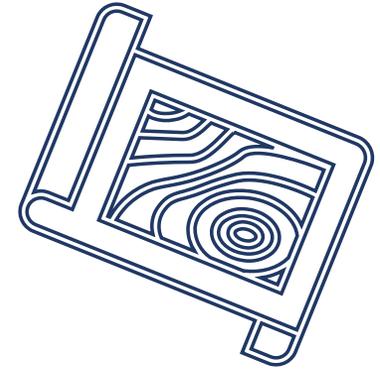


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# Development of Columbia

- Columbia grew at a rapid pace, aided by several economic and technological developments. The completion of the Columbia Canal in 1824 improved transportation between the upstate and Charleston. After its completion, an average of 30,000 bales of cotton were transported to Charleston each year.

Though the construction of railroads eliminated the canals use as a transportation source, the canal would produce electricity for the city at the turn of the 19th century.



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The locks at the head of the canal, 1898-1899.  
Views of Columbia, SC. South Caroliniana Library.



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# Development of Columbia

- Throughout the 1850s-1860s, Columbia was the largest inland city in the Carolinas. Railroads were largely responsible for the expansion in Columbia during this period. Rail lines that reached the city during this time primarily transported cotton bales, not passengers. Cotton was a key part of Columbia's economy.

What other technological advancements can help urban or economic growth?



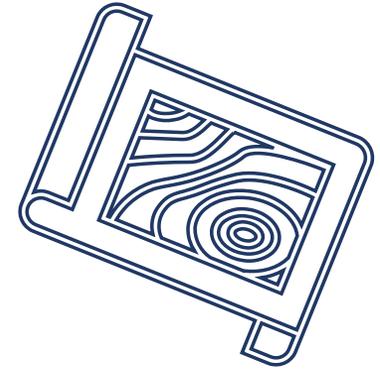
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# Burning of Columbia

- The outbreak of the Civil War would temporarily halt Columbia's growth. Columbia would be directly affected by the war in February of 1865 when General Sherman and the United States Army entered the city there was a fire, which destroyed 1/3 of its buildings and decimated Richardson (Main Street)

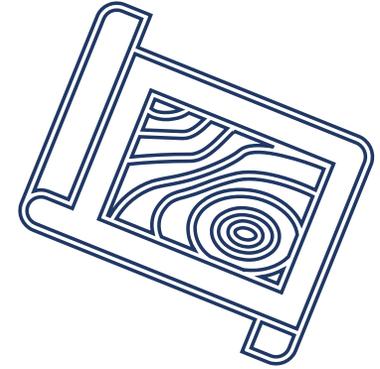
Accounts published immediately after the fire pinned the Union Army as the single aggressor. However, unclear orders as to whether Confederate soldiers should have burned cotton bales in the streets and some looting by both sides also played a role in the destruction. Despite this, the city was able to rebuild within a few years.

*What economic and political factors contributed to Columbia's reconstruction?*



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# Create Your Own City



## Activity Instructions

- Use the blank alphanumeric grid linked [here](#) to create and map out your own capital city.
- As you create your city, consider:
  - What geographic features would you want to build your city near or on?
  - What are some positive aspects of urban growth? What are some negative aspects?
  - What are some ways you can plan for/ prevent natural and man-made disasters?



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