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# Mr. Crump and His Successors: A Study of the Negro in Memphis Politics

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We, the undersigned, have accepted this thesis  
entitled, MR. CRUMP AND HIS SUCCESSORS: A STUDY  
OF THE NEGRO IN MEMPHIS POLITICS, submitted by  
Mr. Jack H. Morris in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for graduation with honors, June, 1960.

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MR. CRUMP AND HIS SUCCESSORS:  
A STUDY OF  
THE NEGRO IN MEMPHIS POLITICS

by  
Jack H. Morris

A Thesis Submitted in Candidacy for Honors  
at Graduation from Lawrence College  
June, 1960

120955

Grateful appreciation is expressed for the information and counsel supplied by the staff of The Commercial Appeal and for the help given me by Professor William H. Riker, without whose guidance this thesis could not have been written.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I	Introduction . . . . .	1
II	An Introduction to the Municipal Election, 1959 . .	8
III	The Growth of Memphis . . . . .	28
IV	The Crump Era . . . . .	51
V	Inside the Crump Machine . . . . .	84
VI	The Five Years Crisis, 1954-1959 . . . . .	100
VII	The Candidates in 1959 . . . . .	129
VIII	The Negro Vote and the 1959 Election . . . . .	147
IX	Conclusion . . . . .	177
	Appendix I - Maps . . . . .	185
	Appendix II - Scatter Diagrams . . . . .	191
	Footnotes . . . . .	195
	Bibliography . . . . .	208

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1	E. H. Crump . . . . .	1
2	New Faces on the City Commission . . . . .	8
3	Memphis on the Mighty Mississippi . . . . .	28
4	The Red Snapper . . . . .	51
5	His Vote Counted (Crump at the polls) . . . . .	84
6	A Stalemated Government . . . . .	100
7	A Change (Mr. Crump in later years) . . . . .	129
8	The Negro Speaks (Russell Sugarmon) . . . . .	147
9	In Memory of a Leader (Statue of Crump) . . . . .	177

All photographs are from the files  
of The Commercial Appeal.

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION



E. H. CRUMP - Ruler of Memphis for almost half a century, Mr. Crump brought progress to a river city. He perpetuated his state-wide control through extension of Negro suffrage. His death produced a split in the city government and divided voter loyalty, allowing a well organized Negro ticket to make a serious bid for public office.

For nine decades voters in the South have cast their ballots in a spirit of defiance to the union. Since 1876, the eleven Confederate States have segregated themselves from the rest of the nation by their extreme faithfulness to the Democratic Party. After reconstruction, the Party became the only effective voice of the section in national affairs, and more important, the primary means of limiting the political strength of their newly acquired colored citizens. Thus two recent studies of the political South, Southern Politics in State and Nation by V. O. Key, Jr., and A Two-Party South? by Alexander Heard, have been founded on the assumption that the "politics of the South revolves around the position of the Negro."<sup>1</sup> If this is true, and my observations certainly agree with their findings, then it seems crucial that we "identify and examine the points of low resistance to Negro participation in politics: they may indicate future trends."<sup>2</sup>

It is the purpose of this essay to examine one of these "points of low resistance to Negro participation in politics" in the hope that it will shed some light on the future political status of the Negro in the South. Since Negro voting has traditionally occurred most frequently in the large metropolitan areas, it seemed appropriate that this essay be an analysis of Negro voting behavior on the municipal level. Memphis, Tennessee, was chosen for this project, not only because it is a truly Southern city, being located in the heart of the Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee delta, and having one of the largest Negro populations of any city in the nation, but also because it is the only city in the South in which



Negroes have voted continuously since the turn of the century. Of further importance in the selection of Memphis as a topic of study was my summer's employment with the city's largest newspaper, which gave me the opportunity to view first hand the Negro participation in the city's municipal election of August, 1959.

The reason for approaching this topic from the local level is seen more clearly, perhaps, when we realize that it is here that the Negro, and the lower income citizen generally, comes in closest contact with his government. Therefore, it is in the distribution of municipal services that the right of suffrage is felt most acutely. As John Dollard expresses in his study of Southerntown:

Voting is concerned with whether the streets in a given part of town are paved and whether the town spends money for lighting those streets. Voting determines the treatment that the citizen may get from the courts...since the voter always has in reserve the threat of helping oust from office those who misuse him... The voter is more likely to receive the full protection of the law in regard to the sanctity of his home and person; that is the function of peace officers, to heed the needs and wishes of those who elect them. The voters, and the successful voters of course, share in the spoils of office; the non-voters naturally do not. The last one is an important consideration for the middle-class Negroes who would naturally receive many elective offices if Negroes could vote. Then there is the matter of taxes which are always most discriminately levied when the voters have control of the tax levying and collecting offices...Those who cannot vote must accept the will of others in these matters.<sup>3</sup>

Atypical of the South, however, the Negro vote in Memphis has been welcomed and courted by machine politicians for more than half a century. Principal use of the Negro ballot was made by E. H. Crump, Memphis political boss from 1910 until 1954. Entering the mayor's office against a well entrenched machine, Crump needed the Negro support

to gain and maintain his office. When his organization was firmly established and his candidates were guaranteed election, the Negro vote played an important part in his control of state politics. Although no one will deny that the Crump machine exploited the Negro ballot, it is impossible to overlook the services the Negroes gained in return. Shields McIlwaine, in his book Memphis Down in Dixie, clearly shows this by contrasting the benefits the Negro received from his Republican leaders and the benefits given him by Crump. In speaking of Robert Church, for many years the foremost Negro Republican in Tennessee, Mr. McIlwaine said, "the crowning irony of his career is that his backing of the Crump machine has done more for the welfare of Memphis Negroes (absence of the free ballot not withstanding) than all of his Republican efforts."<sup>4</sup>

Throughout this report, reference will be made to the services received by the Memphis Negroes for their support of the Crump candidates. Negro police, for instance, have been seen on Beale Street for almost twenty years, while other Southern Negroes still list the absence of colored policemen as a major grievance against their municipal governments. City-operated John Gaston Hospital provides free and low-cost medical and dental services for the Memphis Negro, and Negro housing in Memphis is probably the best in the South. Other benefits include superior schools; abundant parks and swimming pools; and available library, zoo, fair, and museum facilities. It is inconceivable that these benefits would have come in absence of the right to vote.

Certainly Mr. Crump was reared in the tradition of the Old South

and believed that he had a duty to protect and provide for the Negroes and poor whites under his charge. Yet it is doubtful that paternalism and benevolence can account for the unprecedented progress made by the Memphis Negro. "It would take an inhuman fairness on the part of administrative officers to distribute burdens and perquisites fairly when the element of coercion by voting is lacking."<sup>5</sup> Mr. Crump was not inhuman; he knew that his tenure of office depended, in part, on the Negro vote, and that this vote could only be maintained by holding a friendly attitude toward the colored citizens between elections.

Since the Crump machine was responsible for maintaining the Negro vote in Memphis, several chapters of this essay deal with the Crump era and the early history of the city. In reporting the period of Crump domination, it is necessary to show that Mr. Crump was an honest political leader, and not the demagogue pictured by some who have written about him. Physical violence was seldom a part of his machine's tactics, and he never used political influence to further his financial interests. A knowledge of the progress made under his leadership is a prerequisite to understanding the gains made by the Negro citizen in Memphis.

Because the right of participation in ballot box decisions was granted to the Memphis Negro without a fight, he has been able to mature politically and gain at least a portion of the self-respect accompanying full citizenship. This political maturity can be seen by the activity of the Negroes in the 1959 municipal election. A slate of four well qualified candidates made the first large scale attempt by Southern Negroes to gain public office since reconstruction. But this was not a campaign of protest,

nor a demand for additional civic benefits. Instead it was a Negro declaration that they had reached political maturity and were seeking courthouse positions as representatives of their caste. This can be demonstrated by the offices they were seeking: Commissioner of Public Works, Judge of the Juvenile Court, and members of the Board of Education. Despite white protest to the contrary, none of these positions could have altered white-Negro social relations had the candidates been elected. The extremely moderate integration policies favored by all candidates, although each listed desegregation as a long-range goal, further demonstrated that the election was for representation rather than social change. A fifth Negro candidate, seeking the office of tax assessor, did not adhere to this policy and was not allowed membership in the Negro political organization.

But while Crump had given the Negro his right to vote, the emergence of an effective Negro political organization to support the candidates of their caste, rested, ironically, on the decline of machine rule in Memphis. During the Crump era the city prospered under the leadership of one organization, and undivided voter loyalty prevented the establishment of any noteworthy opposition. But with the death of the dictator, the organization was incapable of settling its internal differences and lacked Crump's vision and popularity. Thus the organization split into several factions. With divided popular support, many candidates in the post-Crump elections saw the possibility of gaining public office for the first time. Of course, their platforms generally appealed to the majority of the city's voters, the white citizens.

Left without a benevolent dictator to provide for them, the

Negro had to look elsewhere for the services Crump had provided. He saw in the political confusion after 1954, a possibility of electing a member of his caste through a split of the white vote. Negro candidates in the elections of 1954, 1955, 1956, and 1958, provided experiments by which the colored citizens could test their strength. In 1959, therefore, with the experience of seven Negro candidates behind them, the Negroes were able to organize a Volunteer Ticket with support considered by many to be sufficient to elect several of its candidates.

Because of the development of the Volunteer Ticket, the 1959 election is considered the most important in the city since the 1909 election of E. H. Crump. It is my belief that this election could have occurred only in Memphis, where the Negroes had a long tradition of ballot box participation, demonstrating that the right to vote is the first step in developing civic responsibility. If followed, the election can serve to demonstrate to both the white and colored citizens of the South that racial issues are best settled peacefully through universal suffrage.

CHAPTER II

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE MUNICIPAL ELECTION, 1959



NEW FACES ON THE CITY COMMISSION - Seated (left to right) are: Mayor Henry Loeb, III; Commissioner of Public Works, William Farris; Commissioner of Finances and Institutions, James Moore; and Commissioner of Public Service, John T. Dwyer. Claude Armour, Commissioner of Public Safety and Vice-Mayor, is not shown.

A.

In its history, Memphis has witnessed three great crises. Yet, since 1819 the city has risen from a muddy Mississippi River village to one of the most important metropolises in the South. Her population has climbed from 308 frontiersmen to more than half a million "friendly citizens". Civil War and reconstruction, the great yellow fever epidemic of 1878, and the recent death of Edward Hull Crump, have all left their marks on the city and on the minds of its inhabitants. The first, needless to say, imposed on the city the unity of thought which has characterized the Southern mind to this day. The second impoverished the city, changed the base of population from German to English descent, and paved the way for the reform movement at the turn of the century, with the last, in 1954, came the end of an era in Memphis politics.

Many political analysts have interpreted the election of Estes Kefauver to the United States Senate in 1948 as a defeat of the Crump machine, and consequently, a rejection of his dictatorship by the citizens of Tennessee. This is not correct. For while the 1948 election greatly damaged his state-wide control, Crump's leadership at home remained intact during the following six years. Thus when his death brought an end to almost half a century of machine politics in Memphis, it did not bring with it the knowledge, ability, or desire necessary for the citizens to take over the reins of their government. The city had depended so long on Boss Crump's leadership, and on his ability to make the decisions for them, that they were incapable of

self-directed thinking.

Crump's Lieutenants, who were ill-prepared to manage the headless organization, lacked the ability to grasp the opportunity for aggressive leadership necessary to perpetuate their rule, and thus could not fill the void left by the death of Ed Crump. The remaining organization was unable to decide on a mayoralty candidate for their 1955 slate of city offices. With this internal disunity, the Shelby County Political Organization was capable of returning only two of its men to office, surrendering the other three posts to civic minded individuals who were novices in the art of politics. The result was a perpetual battle among the city officials in which all action died on the conference table. Therefore, the citizens looked with hope toward the municipal election of 1959, to solve the dilemma of the past five years.

The importance of this election cannot be underestimated, for on it rested the chance for political harmony and the re-establishment of an effective city government. But from this campaign came two reactions which were to becloud the fundamental issue and pose the serious danger that the election would not bring the unity that was needed. The first reaction was a feeling in the minds of all to many citizens that they were the ones to provide this harmony. Thus forty-five candidates, all billed as independents, made a bid for fourteen municipal offices, (a great contrast to the days of Crump, when any opposition to his slate was considered an oddity). Many veteran politicians looked in awe at the unprecedented number of



political aspirants, and one remarked: "What the city needs right now is a good health examination. Too many folks are suffering from auditory hallucinations. They think they hear voices calling them to run for office."<sup>1</sup>

The other problem, a more serious threat to the hope for unity, was that for the first time in the city's history, a well organized Negro group presented a slate of candidates with a backing considered by many to be sufficient for election. This problem was to overshadow all other issues and create an explosive drive for registration and voting on both sides of the color barrier. The day following the election, the New York Times caught this side of the contest when it reported, "The issue--clearly a white versus Negro battle--was settled at the polls in an overwhelming turnout of voters of both races."<sup>2</sup> Associated Press and United Press International bulletins released similar information to the major newspapers across the country.

While this was not the only outcome of the election, its publicity was not ill-founded. Total registration had risen from 159,513 for the 1955 election to 187,541 eligible voters in 1959. Based on the figures for the election of Commissioner of Public Works, the contest in which a Negro candidate held the greatest chance of success, 129,286 persons cast their vote, representing 68.9 percent of the registered voters. This was a substantial increase over the previous high in 1955, when only 54 percent, or 86,370 persons, went to the polls. Also significant is the fact that Negro registration

rose from 38,847 in 1955 to 57,100 in 1959, or from 24.3 per cent of the total registration to 30.4 per cent.<sup>3</sup> Yet one must remember that "the record vote reflected not only the tremendous campaign conducted by the Negro Volunteer Ticket, but also shows that the challenge of the five Negro candidates stirred a tremendous response among the white citizens."<sup>4</sup>

The dependence of this high vote on the Negro issue is seen clearly by the total returns for the various offices. As previously noted, the hotly contested Public Works race drew the unprecedented total of 129,286 votes. Second in number of votes cast, with a 126,217 vote total, was the contest for Judge of the Juvenile Court, in which a Negro was given a good possibility of victory over the four white candidates. The usually neglected race for City Tax Assessor drew 113,103 votes because of a Negro entry. The relation between the high vote and the Negro candidates can be seen more readily, perhaps, in the contests for the four Board of Education posts. For positions II and III, in which Negroes were candidates, 117,129 and 110,833 persons voted, respectively. For positions I and IV on the Board, in which no Negro was entered, the voting was only 82,973 and 80,948.<sup>5</sup> For the position in which no Negro was a participant, the voting varied according to the colored interest and support of the white candidates. In the mayor's race, for instance, where Negroes were fighting to defeat the strong white candidate, the vote turnout ran to 122,745 while only 93,169 persons cast their ballots for Commissioner of Public Safety and Vice-Mayor, which was the only seat on the commission

for which the Negro Volunteer Ticket did not endorse a candidate.

While the total vote changed according to Negro interest, the variation in voter participation was reflected more in the white than in the Negro wards. The Commercial Appeal reported that while the city average gave almost a 69 per cent voter turn out, "this percentage is some eight points higher than that for the predominantly Negro precincts."<sup>6</sup> However, a 61 per cent turnout of Negro voters is remarkable, even in Memphis, the longtime "voting oasis for Negroes in the entire South."<sup>7</sup> Since the majority of all Negroes in both the North and South, are employed in positions of common labor, it is often difficult for them to find the time or opportunity to vote. And one must also remember that the less educated, poorer classes, generally vote less frequently than do their more educated and richer neighbors. Tennessee, however, distinguished from other parts of the South, has no poll tax to restrict voting, no literacy test, and the polls remain open until 7:30 p.m. to give all workers ample time to exercise their voting privilege.

Some Negro leaders felt that the clear, 90 degree weather on election day, August 20th, subtracted from the potential Negro vote. Many Memphis Negroes are employed in the cotton fields of rural Mississippi, Arkansas, and Tennessee, and are outside the city during most of the daylight hours. Rev. Roy Love, a Negro candidate for the Board of Education had asked his supporters to pray for rain on election day to keep the cotton trucks from going out.<sup>8</sup> Another Negro campaigner warned the colored voters "They will pick you up in busses

and promise you twice as much money as you ever made before picking cotton to get you out of the city on election day!"<sup>9</sup> "Miss those trucks tomorrow," they urged, "and vote."

While the Negroes were unable to place a person of their race in the courthouse, the Volunteer Ticket saw each of its candidates win second place. Still it would be an error to interpret this failure at the polls as a complete loss for the Negro citizens. For the election accomplished more than that, and perhaps more than it could have if a Negro had been elected. First, it created an awareness among the white citizens of the need to "distribute civic responsibility and leadership to Negro leaders in the Negro community."<sup>10</sup> Second, it increased the self-respect of the Negro citizens through ballot box participation and showed them that their vote was meaningful. Third, it built an effective Negro political organization capable of becoming an important element, as a balance of power, in future elections. And fourth, it demonstrated to the city leaders the needs and desires of the Negro community without creating the race hatred incurred in the Montgomery bus boycott or the Little Rock school crisis.

B.

Under the long domination of the Crump political machine, opposition candidates in Memphis were seldom seen. V.O. Key, Jr., and other interpreters of Tennessee politics, believed this lack of opposition was the result of Crump's use of physical violence, which deterred any potential threat to his maintenance of power. While I am sure that the

fear of intimidation was important in the anti-Crump camp, I believe that the actual use of force was unnecessary. Furthermore, if violence had been used, it would be an impossible task to prove. Rather, I feel that the mere announcement of Crump backing would guarantee a candidate a sufficient quantity of votes to render it foolish for any opposing candidate to compete against him. Also, since candidates supported by Crump were generally the most acceptable to the business community, and were men of character and honor, it would have been hard to find a slate of capable men who were not in sympathy with the Crump selection. Under Crump, the city simply witnessed an exaggerated form of a trait inherent in all one-party systems, the "extreme difficulty in maintaining an organized opposition".<sup>11</sup>

After the failure of the Shelby County political machine in the 1955 election, and the realization that its backing did not guarantee the results that it had under Crump, politically minded citizens began to refuse association with the organization. The drive to shun all "tickets", lest they be considered offensive, produced a deluge of inexperienced, independent candidates who hoped to give the city unity in 1959 without the binding connection of a name, a party, or a ticket.

To solve the problem of selecting candidates from this long and ununited list, a problem new to the citizens of Memphis, independent groups of individuals and non-political organizations began to endorse the various candidates. Most endorsements came as a slate presented to the public in the name of unity and harmony. Most important in this

endeavor was the Dedicated Citizens Committee who posed a "Unity Ticket", which they claimed would minimize the political strife present in the past administration. However, their efforts were hindered because they refused to reveal the membership of their group, and because of the outlandish number of other organizations who also jumped into the endorsement business. Slates were presented by the Home Builders Association, the Mortgage Bankers Association, The Memphis Real Estate Board, the Shopping Center Owners Association, the Business and Professional Men and Women, and the Downtown Association. Other endorsements came from various Negro organizations, several Veterans groups, half a dozen labor councils, both newspapers, the Parent Teacher Association, civic councils, politicians of all shapes and sizes, and even a couple of religious groups. One newspaper remarked, "Where there are two or more assembled these days, you likely will get an endorsement for a ticket."<sup>12</sup>

The political immaturity demonstrated by this movement greatly hindered the intelligent and rational selection of any slate, since almost all candidates were endorsed by one or more groups, many of them with opposing views. Another hindrance was that many endorsements were biased and "rigged through prearrangement",<sup>13</sup> and thus did not truly represent the group whose name the endorsement carried. Therefore many candidates approached the election with the undue confidence that they were the voters' choice.

To make matters worse, The Commercial Appeal attempted to straighten out this hodge-podge by conducting a poll of the voters.

However, since their poll was poorly managed and badly biased, in an attempt to muster white support behind one white candidate in the important Public Works race, the only opinion it expressed was that of its authors. Other groups also entered the public opinion field and a restaurant went so far as to put ballots on its menus and published the results as the "People's choice".

The movement toward independent candidates actually began during the 1955 campaign, when Edmund Orgill, then 56, exchanged his office as president of a large hardware firm for that of Mayor of Memphis. Henry Loeb III, another notable independent candidate, became Commissioner of Public Works at the age of 34. He was secretary of the city's largest laundry and had made his first move in politics by defeating a member of the former Crump machine for the politically important commandship of Post No. 1 of the American Legion.

These two men vied for the mayor's office in the 1959 election and promised one of the hottest political battles in years. The primary issue of the race revolved around the general theme of harmony and the ability to co-operate with other city, county, and state politicians. Mr. Orgill was hindered by the poor record of the past administration, although the blame was only partially his, and Henry Loeb was still considered by many to be too young and brash for the office. Unfortunately for the campaign, Mr. Orgill became ill early in the summer, "while shaking hands", and withdrew from the campaign when he entered the hospital. Mr. Loeb, left without serious opposition, won an easy victory for the position.

The withdrawal of Edmund Orgill from consideration in the mayor's race left the Memphis Press-Scimitar, the city's crusading evening newspaper, somewhat embarrassed. Noted for its ability to avoid moderation, in any form, and for its hasty decisions, the paper had given its full support to Mr. Orgill much too early in the campaign. Thus when he withdrew it was forced to endorse the man it had criticized most severely. A similar situation occurred with the continuance of the Orgill campaign organization. The body formed a new group known as the Dedicated Citizens Committee, whose chief purpose was to endorse a slate of officers they felt could work harmoniously together and provide the city with the much needed internal unity. Of course, their support of Mr. Loeb raised protests from the anti-Loeb camps. A Negro candidate remarked that he was in doubt as to what the Dedicated Citizens were dedicated to. They had done a "flip-flop", he said, "and endorsed the candidate they were dedicated to oppose."<sup>14</sup>

The entrance of James W. 'Jimmy' Moore in the campaign for Commissioner of Finances and Institutions was probably the biggest name among the political newcomers. Mr. Moore, a handsome realty dealer, had been a major league outfielder and president of the local Yellow Cab Company. While he proclaimed that he was no politician, which several of his later actions proved, he had the personality, charm, and drive for action that his opponent lacked. His campaign theme centered around the waste and inaction under the past administration.

In the race for Commissioner of Public Works, the position



vacated by Henry Loeb, William Farris, William Fowler, and John Ford Canale drew the greatest attention among the white voters. The young, aggressive Mr. Farris had been personnel director and administrative assistant under the past three mayors and presented a hopeful picture of potential leadership. Mr. Fowler, the oldest candidate in the race, was the veteran city engineer. A member of the old Crump organization, he campaigned on his knowledge of the Public Works Department. Mr. Canale, a funeral director, entered the race with two strikes against him. He was the executive assistant to the pro-Crump Shelby County Commission and thus drew attack from the anti-organization citizens and from those who believed that he would favor the county in the present city-county struggle for division of school funds. Mr. Canale, who was a Catholic, also would have violated the unwritten law allowing only one Catholic on the City Commission. John T. Dwyer, assured of re-election as Commissioner of Public Service, had already filled this religious position. All three candidates for the post, as well as the labor candidate Sam Chambers, ran as independents.

The spirit of independence ran so hot during the campaign that Claude Armour, seeking re-election as Commissioner of Public Safety, and Mr. Dwyer, both of whom had been elected in 1955 under the label of the old Crump machine, ran separately as independents. Stanley Dillard, who was opposing Jimmy Moore for Commissioner of Finances and Institutions, also declared his independence. He had been elected to the post in 1955 on an anti-organization ticket, but had joined the pro-Crump group after election, giving it a

trouble-causing three to two "working majority". Mr. Dillard drew Negro protest for his support of segregated public facilities. In the school board contest, the incumbents, as a body, refused to campaign and waited for the newspapers to defend their group policies.

A dual conflict arose in the heated contest for Juvenile Court Judge, where a strong Negro candidate was pitted against four whites, and where two capable white men were opposing incumbent Miss Elizabeth McCain and contender Mrs. Ila Huff. In the other judgeships incumbent Beverly Boushe was opposed by Negro-supported Ray Churchill for Division II of the City Court. Some Negroes did not feel that they received equal justice before Mr. Boushe. Two minor candidates opposed Judge William B. Ingram, Jr., for re-election to Division III of the City Court. Judge Ingram, whose court handles traffic offenses, had been running a continuous battle with the police department. While some of his actions were justified, others seemed foolish, spiteful, and even dangerous.

Aside from the prevailing theme of unity, and the white versus Negro issue, the major problems facing the commission candidates were: a possible change in the form of government; settlement of the city county dispute over division of school funds and the possibility of combining the two school systems; annexation of neighboring villages; and continued progress on the major city improvements, namely: the system of expressways, a new jet-age airport, a civic center, and the pending downtown redevelopment study. A call for equalization of assessments and for the adoption of a "Little Hatch Act", governing

the political activity of city employes, was also heard.

The attempt to change the commission form of government, an idea that had helped put Mayor Orgill in office in 1955, had the endorsement of the major candidates in the 1959 race. The lack of action and political disunity prevalent during the 1955 term brought the question again to light as a possible answer to the problem of political unrest. The mayor-council or strong mayor form of government and the city manager plan were thought to be more effective for group action in a city the size of Memphis than the present system. There was also discussion of combining the city and country governments into a "Greater Memphis" area.

C.

While the Negro Volunteer Ticket pushed its campaign around the slogan "This is a crusade for freedom", the equally emotional whites had no official theme. Fearful that if a Negro was elected it would disrupt racial harmony, they unofficially rallied under the label "Keep Memphis white."<sup>15</sup> The importance of this fear, the existence of which, as I indicated in Section A of this chapter, was demonstrated by the election, brings to mind the story of an election in another Southern town. This town, much smaller in size, was holding an election for mayor, in which a white and Negro citizen were running. Being in the black belt area, where Negro voting is generally restricted, the town had only two Negro voters against one thousand eligible whites. The day following the election a visitor from a

neighboring town inquired about the outcome of the contest. "Oh," the local informant said, "the white candidate won a thousand to two". "Well," replied the visitor, "you might have known those niggers would bloc vote!"

The application of this story to the Memphis election seems very real. For, as I shall show in a later chapter, unity of the white vote seemed more cohesive against the Negro candidates than did the Negro vote for these men. The simple explanation here is that the Negroes have divided loyalties while the whites do not. In the 1959 election, Sam Chambers, representing organized labor, drew votes from Negro workers despite the fact that Russell Sugarmon, Jr., a Negro, was campaigning for the same post. It was also believed that some Negro votes went to white candidates because certain lower class Negroes resented Sugarmon's Harvard education. The Negroes then are capable of crossing the race barrier when they are dissatisfied with the candidate of their caste, or when they feel that a white candidate offers them more. The white voter, on the other hand, is incapable of such action. Negroes must always consider the merits of white candidates, while no white voter is expected to view a Negro candidate as anything other than a threat to white supremacy.

Generally, the most effective political weapon in the hands of a minority group is the bloc vote. This, and its specialization as single shot voting, "implies voting for one or several candidates according to instruction regardless of qualification."<sup>16</sup> This definition assumes that group support of a candidate is irrational,

that it gives the candidate votes arbitrarily, on the merit of his race, and disregards his ability to fill the office. But, "by rational action we mean action which is efficiently designed to achieve the consciously selected political or economic ends of the actor."<sup>17</sup> Thus the Negro is perfectly rational in his decision to support a candidate of his race. In the recent municipal election the chief goal of the colored people was "participation in government and not paternalism with a handout, [a desire] to join the community and be a part of the community's institutions."<sup>18</sup> Presenting a slate of Negro candidates was the most "efficient" and thus the most rational means of achieving this "consciously selected" goal. The racial understanding gained by the campaign further illustrates this rationale.

We also note that the definition of bloc voting gives a misleading interpretation to the word "instruction". To me, the word "instruction" would mean a concentrated effort by the Volunteer Ticket to increase Negro registration, voting, and understanding about the issues involved in the contest. This is quite different from the implied meaning of docile subjection to the will of a promoter as seen in the given definition. We must remember also that the whites were well "instructed" so that they would know the Negro candidates by name and could avoid casting a vote for them by mistake or ignorance.

Of the five Negro candidates in the election, three were ministers, two lawyers, and one was taking extension courses in accounting. All had some college education. Reverend H. C. Bunton

and Roy Love were candidates for the Board of Education, while the Reverend Ben L. Hooks, who is also an attorney, was seeking the Juvenile Court Judgeship. Attorney Russell Sugarmon, Jr., by far the most significant of the Negro candidates, was entered in the six man race for Commissioner of Public Works. Eliehue Stanback, the only Negro candidate not a member of the Volunteer Ticket, (although they did endorse him), was attempting to oust veteran Tax Assessor Joe S. Hicks from his office. All five were members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

I was interested to note that the Negro candidates ranked in education and in color according to the importance of their office. Mr. Sugarmon was a Harvard Law graduate, having received his bachelor's degree at Rutgers; was a representative of the Negro upper class; and could almost have passed for a Caucasian. Mr. Stanback, on the other hand, was barely literate, although he had attended a local Negro college. He represented the lower, middle class Negro and was the most radical member competing for the Negro vote. His color was coal-tar black. The other candidates varied between these extremes in the order of the importance of their campaign position. John Dollard in his Caste and Class in a Southern Town indicated that Negroes have more respect for the light skinned members of their race than for the pure blacks. He also suggested that these "high yellows" were more acceptable to the whites on an equal basis than were the darker Negroes. However, Mr. Sugarmon attached no political significance to his light color when I questioned him about it during an interview.

The efforts of the Volunteer Ticket, and of the white opposition to the Negro candidates, centered around Mr. Sugarmon's bid for Public Works Commissioner. With no incumbent to buck, since Mr. Loeb was moving into the mayor's office, and with three or four comparatively strong candidates to split the white vote, the election of Mr. Sugarmon seemed quite possible. Some courthouse officials felt that the Volunteer Ticket was purposely channeling attention into the Public Works race to allow the similar situation in the Juvenile Court contest to go unnoticed.<sup>19</sup> However, the strong position of the incumbent judge, Miss Elizabeth McCain, minimized scattering of the white vote and thus reduced the chance for Reverend Hooks election.

The possibility of a Negro candidate, representing a minority of the city's voters, being elected to any post, rested on the absence of a run-off voting law. Under the present voting laws candidates ran for specific posts on the City Commission, or Board of Education, with the highest vote determining the winner. Since there was no run-off election, a candidate, theoretically, could gain office with only a one vote plurality. The threat then was that the almost equally strong white candidates would split the white vote and allow the sole Negro candidate for each office to be elected by a small plurality. Should a majority be required for office, and a run-off election held, a white candidate would be assured election, since the contest would be reduced to the racial issue.

Several attempts were made to obtain a special run-off election for this campaign, but when the governor failed to call a

special session of the Tennessee legislature to consider the proposal, other strategies had to be used. The final, and most important, movement to restrict Negro voting strength was "to try to persuade 'weak' candidates in the Public Works Commissioner and Juvenile Court Judge races to withdraw in favor of one 'strong' candidate."<sup>20</sup> Until five days before the election, however, "this strategy had not worked because of lack of agreement over who was the 'strong' candidate in each race."<sup>21</sup> On August 15, in the midst of an almost frenzied attempt to get any candidate to withdraw, William Fowler removed himself from competition in favor of William Farris, who had the backing of both newspapers and the "Unity Ticket". This, of course, prevented Mr. Sugarmon from winning the election, and helped start the bandwagon necessary to put Mr. Farris into office.

While it is still too early to know the real significance of the 1959 election, there is room for much speculation on the subject. Being the first completely free election in Memphis since Crump took office in 1910, the election gave the people an understanding of their duty as citizens. The drive for unity, and the election of the candidates supported by the Dedicated Citizen's "Unity Ticket" has already shown signs of improved county and state relations with the municipal government. The campaign pointed out a weakness in the state's election laws and will probably enable the adoption of run-off laws for the metropolitan areas.

More important, however, will be the ultimate effect on the Negro voters because of their participation in this election. Much



talk during the campaign was concerned with giving the Negroes minor executive positions in the city government to allow them an opportunity to develop civic responsibility. I am sure the pressure on both white and Negro political leaders will see that advancement is made along these lines. The election will also serve as an example to other Southern cities that both whites and Negroes can work peacefully toward their goals through use of the ballot box. Emotionalism, although still present, was restrained, allowing Memphis to boast of not only the most significant, but also the "quietist" election in years.

CHAPTER III  
THE GROWTH OF MEMPHIS



Memphis on the mighty Mississippi

A.

Before continuing further in our discussion of Memphis politics, I feel that we should view the city's history, culture, and record of economic growth. Each of these, while not directly related to politics, stands back of every governmental decision. These facts have determined the thought patterns of the Memphis citizen, and consequently are of paramount importance in directing the behavior of the people. We cannot overlook their influence, for without them we would not have a full understanding of the importance of the recent municipal election.

"Born in 1819 of the westward movement and of cotton,"<sup>1</sup> the city was strategically located on the down-river end of a series of four high bluffs, which stretch for a hundred miles along the Tennessee shore of the Mississippi River. "Bluffs were always at a premium along the river, for they were safety from the spring flood,"<sup>2</sup> and the Fourth Chickasaw Bluff at Memphis was the highest and thus most important of all. After a series of French, Spanish, and American forts had occupied the bluff, plans for a city were laid out by three Nashville land speculators. Judge John Overton, a former Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court, obtained a large tract of bluff land in 1794 and sold half of his claim for \$100 to a young Nashville lawyer and associate of his, Andrew Jackson. James Winchester, a retired army general of the War of 1812, was the third party involved in the plans for the new city. Seven years later, on December 9, 1826, Memphis was incorporated with a population of 308

frontiersmen.

The city began to grow, and by 1850 was the central cotton market for Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee, and had become an important rail and steamboat center. The city had had telegraph lines to New Orleans and Nashville for four years, free public schools for two, and in another six years would erect the first five story building in the state. Cotton was becoming increasingly important, and in the years between 1840 and 1860 the city's cotton sales rose from \$1,400,000 to \$16,000,000.

Despite this reliance on cotton, "there is ample evidence that the Memphis of those boom decades was considered nationally, as well as locally, a Western town. A gateway to Texas and the far west over the only route open the whole year round, it received considerable attention from the war and navy departments for defense of the frontier against possible aggression from Mexico and the gulf."<sup>3</sup> As another part of its link with the West, Memphis became, "in September, 1858, . . . the Eastern terminus of the Overland Mail to California."<sup>4</sup>

Gerald Capers in his excellent Biography of a River Town explains this dual orientation of Memphis.

No metropolis, not even New Orleans, typifies more clearly the character of the lower west than Memphis. Bound to the upper valley by the Mississippi and by trade, and allied with the lower seaboard because of cotton and the Negro, this city on the middle Mississippi has always been both South and West . . . it displays traits of both its progenitors; and when it ultimately favored secession in 1861, its decision was dictated more by emotion than by reason. Socially and economically it has resembled Chicago far more than it has resembled any Southern town. Figuratively and literally, the

the South met the West in Memphis.<sup>5</sup>

Economically, the settlement on the bluff was West before it was South; it did not become rabidly Southern until it was caught in the emotionalism of the early months of 1861.<sup>6</sup>

Certainly this was so, for in 1834, the candidates from Memphis to the state constitutional convention were all abolitionists, favoring gradual emancipation and colonialization.<sup>7</sup> And further, it was not until the following year that extremists in the state were able to remove from the free Negro his right to vote. Even after the excitement of Lincoln's election in 1860, Memphis and Tennessee had not made up their minds on the questions of slavery and secession. In a state-wide vote on February 9, 1861, to determine whether or not the state should hold a convention to consider secession, the Unionists won 91,803 to 24,749. And in Memphis the Unionists carried by a 722 majority.<sup>8</sup>

But as the year progressed, the spirit of secession grew increasingly feverish in the cotton capitol. On April 15, President Lincoln asked Tennessee to contribute her share of the three-month volunteers needed "to put down the rebellion." Two days later he called for a blockade of Southern ports and suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. Emotionalism had grown too strong in Memphis, and some of the citizens considered withdrawing from the state and joining already seceded Mississippi unless Tennessee left the Union immediately. On June 8, the state again voted for secession, this time in the affirmative. In Memphis only five votes were cast against the move. The city had formally joined the South.

Immediately the city became important to the South as a supply and hospital center for the Mississippi and western campaigns. But its usefulness in this line ended on June 6, 1862, when the Federal fleet captured the city after a brief waterfront battle. The city remained under military control until July 3, 1865,<sup>9</sup> one year before Tennessee re-entered the Union. "During its occupation, Memphis succeeded in maintaining trade and communications with the lower South, and served as an entrepot for most of the contraband trade between the North and the South."<sup>10</sup> General William Tecumseh Sherman, who was briefly in command of Memphis, was convinced that because of this trade the city was worth more to the Confederacy after its capture than before.<sup>11</sup> In any case, all evidence points to the conclusion drawn by Mr. Capers, that "few Southern towns suffered as little from the four years war as did Memphis."<sup>12</sup> The damage that was done was chiefly ~~material~~<sup>PSYCHOLOGICAL</sup>, rather than physical or economic, and left the city without effective leadership to meet the post-war demands.

Before the slow job of recovery could complete its course, the second tragedy of the generation struck with a force much more devastating than any war. In August, 1878, yellow fever broke out in the city, spreading panic and fever at an epidemic rate. Within less than two weeks emigration had reduced the city from 40,230 (the 1875 population) to 19,600, of whom 14,000 were Negroes. Of the remaining 5,600 whites, 4,204 died, while death claimed only 946 Negroes.<sup>13</sup> When the population returned, they were reduced in

numbers, bankrupt, and incapable of solving their problems. On January 31, 1879 the city surrendered its charter and became a taxing district of the state.<sup>14</sup> According to the laws of Tennessee, Memphis was nonexistent for the next twelve years, and the tax district was governed by a state-appointed president.

The epidemic also affected the cultural and economic base of the river city. Before the war, the city resembled Cincinnati or St. Louis in the composition of its population. In 1860, 37 per cent of its citizens were of foreign origin, mostly of German and Irish descent. The favorable economic conditions which existed in Memphis during the War did little to change this picture. But with the outbreak of yellow fever, much of the wealth and culture of the city, represented by the German element, moved North and remained there, permanently. The Irish, who on the whole were too poor to move, remained, and "the extent to which they were reduced in numbers by the epidemic is suggested by the fact that of the eight thousand who died, nearly half were Catholic."<sup>15</sup> Thus by 1900 only 15 per cent of the population were foreign born, or were the children of immigrants.<sup>16</sup>

The change in population, however, had begun at the end of the War. The freedmen from the delta regions of Mississippi and Arkansas began to flood into Memphis with the hopes of a new life. "The Negro population of Memphis, which in 1860 had numbered 3,882, increased so rapidly during the post-war years that by 1870 it amounted to 15,471."<sup>17</sup> From this influx, Beale Street emerged as

the Main Street of Negro America, a position it still maintains. As the century drew to a close, the city, with its bright lights and factory jobs, drew increasing numbers of rural families to its doors. What was left of the "city's cultural heritage became a minority, outnumbered by the newcomers from the country."<sup>18</sup> And in addition to the attractions Memphis offered the newly freed Negro and the red-neck in search of a job, the city provided an immense variety of vice and corruption to draw the transient river gambler and fun seeking tourist to its tenderloin sections.

During the decade of the 1880's, Memphis took part in the tremendous burst of industrial expansion that characterized the New South. The city almost doubled its population between 1880 and 1890, jumping from 33,592 citizens to 64,495. It would be 102,320 by 1900. "The percentage increase in invested capital from 1880 to 1890 was 304, while the increases for Atlanta, Nashville, and Richmond were 285.2, 154.5, and 142.4 respectively."<sup>19</sup> The value of manufactured products increased from \$4,413,422 to \$13,244,538, and climbed to \$39,593,146 by 1919.<sup>20</sup> Located in the heart of the still untouched hardwood forests of the mid-Mississippi Valley, the city became the "first hardwood market, and second largest general [Lumber] market in the world" by 1900.<sup>21</sup>

The city's second largest industry, the manufacture of cottonseed products, also boomed. The organization of the Memphis Cotton Exchange in 1874 to control the marketing of cotton, grew into one of the most important agencies in the South, annually



handling \$100,000,000 in cotton by 1920.<sup>22</sup>

Much of this industrial expansion was due to the efforts of James T. Harahan, vice-president of the Illinois Central Railroad, who was instrumental in making the city "one of the railroad's most important terminal and supply centers."<sup>23</sup> (A bridge bearing his name was completed across the Mississippi River in 1909. The Frisco Bridge, the first to span the river, was built in 1892.) Also instrumental in bringing diversified industries to Memphis was E. B. Miller, secretary of the Industrial League for attracting new industry. Mr. Miller argued against the popular cry of the New South for large cotton mills in favor of smaller manufacturing plants. "Cotton mills", he said, "employ the cheapest labor to be found . . . An ordinary \$100,000 spinning mill will employ from 100 to 125 hands at 75 cents per day [while] . . . a \$10,000 pottery plant will employ 100 at \$2 per day."<sup>24</sup> Others followed his advice and Memphis, where cotton was king, avoided the mass unemployment which met other cotton towns in the depression which followed the First World War.

But in their early drive for industrial power, the physical appearance of the city was neglected. Only twelve of the city's 175 miles of streets were hard surfaced by 1900, and sewers were virtually nonexistent. Parks were unheard of. The police force was drastically undermanned, over-worked, underpaid, and plagued by the instability of a political foundation. Fire fighting equipment was less than half that required by the insurance underwriters.

Memphis was also unique for the extensiveness of its crime.

There were 504 saloons in 1903, most of which were hot-beds of the city's underworld.<sup>25</sup> Prostitution and gambling were not only wide open, but were so entrenched in the political circles that reform from the top was unthinkable. The murder rate was on a continual rise, reaching 134 in 1916. This was 89.9 homicides per hundred thousand population, almost triple its next competitor, Atlanta, with 31.<sup>26</sup>

Memphis had made more progress during this period of its growth than it had in any span of previous history. It had been transformed from a small river town into a booming industrial city. "But the progress was economic, materialistic, produced by the machine, and while it solved some problems it created new ones. To deal with them the city turned increasingly to social and political reforms in the spirit of the progressive era."<sup>27</sup>

Part of the reform centered around the need for expansion and the annexation of new territory. To aid this cause John J. Williams was elected mayor in 1898, having won "probably through the manipulation of an estimated two thousand Negro votes."<sup>28</sup> The threat of a new fever epidemic in the late summer of 1898 furthered the cry of annexation. Despite minor resistance by neighborhood villages, Memphis, in January, 1899, extended its boundaries to include 16.77 square miles, a sizeable increase over the 4.64 square miles that had comprised the city since 1870. (See Map 1) But there followed the problem of providing municipal services. Sewers took precedence, because of the health issue, and between 1899 and 1901,

eighty-eight miles were added to the city sewer system.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the efforts of Mayor Williams, and his successor James H. Malone, to cope with the problems of industrial expansion, little was accomplished. Roads were still muddy and unlighted in most parts of the city, health remained a major problem, and crime and vice continued to rob the population. The reform impulse needed more than intellectual justification. It needed leadership and popularization, qualities that would be lacking until the election of Ed Crump as mayor in 1909. Crump rose out of the progressive spirit and became the focal point of the entire movement. He alone cannot be given credit for the change that occurred, yet the city became what it is today because of his ability to carry the passion for reform into the municipal government.

#### B.

During the decades of the Crump regime, a gradual, but persistent change took place in the composition of the city, and in the minds of its citizens. As Memphis grew in size, it also grew in understanding and in culture, so that by the time of Boss Crump's death, the city had emerged from the hovel of its past and was recognized as one of the most progressive cities in the nation, and the unmistakable leader in the Mid-South. The river town that had once been famous for its sway and swagger, for its sin and vice, now became famous for opposite reasons. And while it is difficult to speak of this change in Memphis without appearing to be a mouth-piece

for the Chamber of Commerce, some recognition of the city's achievements must be made.

It is through this recognition that we understand the political achievements of the city's Negro population, and the subsequent social and economic goals that they have obtained. It is evident that the growth of the city and the recognition of Negro political rights sprang from the same source: the Crump era. Thus it is impossible to view the rise in Negro rights without recognizing the other and related accomplishments of the Crump machine. The mind of the Memphis white, over the past fifty years, has been conditioned to accept the higher status of the city's Negroes only by a continued effort on the part of their political leader to bring the city out of its provincial past and to work into its blood the progressive views of the rest of the nation.

This change can easily be seen by the awards the city has taken in recent national contests. For the past fifteen years Memphis has been recognized as America's Quietest City, has twice been named the Nation's Safest City, has won first place in the National Fire Prevention Contest nine out of the last nineteen years, and has fourteen first place trophies as America's Cleanest City.<sup>30</sup> This is a far cry from days at the turn of the century, and achievements that could only have come with progressive leadership.

The cultural advancement in the city is equally apparent. There are now one hundred ten public parks, covering three thousand acres, located throughout the city (see map 2). While the large parks

are generally reserved for the white citizens, or in the case of the Fairgrounds and Overton Park, are open to Negroes one day per week, the neighborhood parks are fairly well divided between the white and colored areas. The free Overton Park Zoo is a favorite with children throughout the Mid-South, and is the only zoo of notable size in that section of the country. There are six public and three private swimming pools for whites and four public pools for Negroes. The sheltered waters of McKellar Lake provide excellent boating, sailing, and water skiing facilities. The Memphis Park Commission also maintains seven public golf courses, while an additional five courses are operated by the city's country clubs.

Other marks of the city's culture are found in its museum, art gallery, art school, Sinfonietta, the outdoor Shell in Overton Park for summer musical performances, and libraries. Special notice should be given to the Goodwyn Institute, which offers a complete reference library and maintains a free educational lecture series, and to the newly remodeled Ellis Auditorium, with a combined seating capacity of nearly ten thousand in its two halls. Of recent importance, Memphis has become headquarters for the World Literacy Foundation, headed by Dr. Frank Laubach, world-known for his each-one-teach-one method. The city's educational television station WNNB is closely linked with the Foundation, and has taken a great step toward reducing the high illiteracy rate in that section of the country. Shelby United Neighbors, better known as SUN, the city's community chest program, is viewed with pride by Memphis citizens, and

considered by many to be the most effective community welfare program in the United States.

Since the days of W. C. Handy, who made Beale Street home of the blues, Memphis has been a center of popular music. This is one of the few areas where the crudeness of the past, although presented in modern terms, is still seen. Presently the home of Elvis Presley, most rock-and-roll and country music of the South is first recorded in Memphis. Today there is even question in some minds over who is, or was, the city's most famous citizen, Mr. Crump or Mr. Presley (although both were born in Mississippi).

Memphis was a pioneer in giving full recognition to the importance of a city's appearance. One of the most significant steps taken by the Crump machine to "clean up" the city, was the creation of the City Beautiful Commission in 1930 as the first such official group in the United States.<sup>31</sup> Much of the beauty of the city, and certainly that part which draws immediate attention from newcomers and visitors, is the fine system of parkways. These large, four lane streets with their broad, tree covered boulevards, run for more than six miles around the former boundaries of the city (See Map 2). Four interstate highways pass beautiful Overton Park on East Parkway, and the five highways that enter Memphis via the Memphis-Arkansas Bridge pass several blocks of ornamental parks on Crump Boulevard. Almost every highway enters the city through beautiful residential sections with neatly kept lawns and large shady trees.

Part of the city's cleanliness has come through its

intelligent approach to industrialization. Unlike the steel mills of Birmingham, Memphis industry is comparatively clean and is located some distance from the center of town. Most of the city's industry is found in the northern part of the city, in wards 39, 40, and 41, along the Wolf River, and in the south and southeast along the railroad yards and McKellar Lake. Only the cotton warehouses, which dominate Front Street, are in the downtown section. Here again the Crump leadership has left its mark on the growth of the city, for it was during his political domination in 1948, that plans were laid for the \$50,000,000 President's Island Industrial Park.<sup>32</sup> Through the creation of this, and other industrial parks, the city has been able to provide 960 acres (there will be 7,800 acres when the project is completed) for the expansion of heavy industry. Since all sites are served by water, rail, and truck transportation, and are provided with all city utilities, the Park has helped draw new industry to Memphis.<sup>33</sup>

By examining Map 3 we can see that the areas of Negro concentration are confined primarily to the industrial sections of the city, as defined above. While the map is not based on population figures, but on the more recent distribution of registered voters, I feel it gives the most accurate picture of non-white residential areas now available. I base my reasoning on several points. First, continued expansion in Memphis and the present trend for Southern Negroes to move to the industrial centers of the North have contributed to a declining proportion of Negro

residents in the city. Although the city has seldom been over 50 per cent Negro, it was reported to have been almost at that level in 1930. The 1940 census listed a non-white population of 41.5 per cent of the total, and in 1950, the census said only 37.1 per cent of the population was Negro. A special U.S. census conducted in Memphis in 1958 showed the city to be 35.4 per cent Negro, having the eighth highest proportion of non-white residents in the country. Thus Negro registration in August, 1959, accounting for 30.4 per cent of the total eligible voters does not seem far out of line. Second, the importance of the election to both white and colored citizens brought about an extremely high registration in all areas, further justifying our reliance on these figures. And third, it would be very difficult to correlate the federal census tracts to our map, since they do not follow ward boundaries.

Striking in the pattern of Negro concentration is its separation from the central business district. Essentially, minority groups of common origin tend to locate in the heart of a city and be walled off from further expansion by restrictive codes and prejudice feelings. In Memphis, however, the dominant Negro areas lie to the north and south of the central business region. By comparison with Map 2, it can be seen that much of the present Negro housing lies outside the limits of the old city, as marked by the three Parkways. This, I believe, would not have taken place without the Crump era, and is closely linked with the provisions made for industrial expansion away from the city's heartland.



The location of Negro areas has also had considerable effect on the expansion and annexation pattern of the city. By comparison with Map 1 we can see that since 1900 Memphis has grown more rapidly toward the east than toward either the north or south. The Wolf River on the north and Nonconnah Creek on the south have been considered natural barriers to further expansion in those directions. The city's major highways and rail routes also run in an east-west direction, giving the city some incentive to move outward along their routes. However, of no little consequence is the psychological barrier presented by the Negro concentration along the north and south boundaries.

There is some indication today that these barriers are being overcome, as seen especially by the 1957 annexation of all-white Frayser (wards 69 through 72) and the present talk of annexing the Whitehaven area to the south. When this latter area is annexed, the city will take on the fan-like appearance typical of most river cities. The low-lands of Arkansas, across the Mississippi, are often flooded and consequently provide no hope for industrial or residential development. While this may hinder the city's later expansion, it provides Memphis with a perpetual front door view of farm and woodlands, a pleasure impossible in other large cities.

Since the turn of the century Memphis has increased in size from 16.77 square miles to 140.68. This expansion is due primarily to the aggressive policy of annexation held by the Crump

politicians. An early recognition of the need for annexation has prevented the city from being stifled by the wall of small fringe municipalities which endanger the growth of most large cities. I am sure that the continued expansion of the city under Crump has helped to broaden the mind and outlook of its citizens, as American imperialization of the same period did throughout the country. Indirectly, then, the annexations since 1900 are partially responsible for conditioning the mind of the Memphis citizen so that five Negro candidates in the 1959 election could be accepted without protest.

Clear-cut class divisions are not present in Memphis housing. Yet, some general observations about the city can be made. The older area, as previously noted, is located within the Parkways. Most of the homes east of East Parkway are new, with the northern section, north of Poplar Avenue, being predominantly the higher priced homes. The new homes south of Poplar, generally have been in the \$10,000 to \$20,000 bracket. On the whole, the suburban movement has not been characterized by the silk-stocking class or even the young executives, but has depended heavily on the veterans and the subsequent population boom of the early fifties. Since 1945, 82,874 new homes have been built in Memphis. Chickasaw Gardens, and the area around Memphis Country Club (the 45th ward), is one of the few distinctly elite sections. While the rich are found in almost all wards, the predominately white areas, of course, are the center of the city's wealth.<sup>34</sup>

The pride in a beautiful city, spurred by memories of pre-Crump days, has brought a constant anti-slum drive which has eliminated much of the city's poorer housing. State and national governments, as well as the city itself, have done a great deal to eliminate below-standard housing by constructing large multi-unit apartments. Some of the city's notable housing developments are: Hurt Village (D-8 on Map 3), Dixie Courts (F-9), Foote Homes (H-7), Lamar Terrace (H-10), and LeMoyné Gardens (I-8). A new 258-unit housing project for Negroes in ward 39, which opened this fall, is typical of the city's anti-slum program. This project, in thirty-seven two and three story buildings, ranges in size from one to five bedroom apartments. Rent rates are low and are determined by the income of the tenants.<sup>35</sup>

Equally important, if not more so, is the progress being made in providing decent homes for the upper class colored citizen. Normally neglected by city planning, the upper class Negro must usually be content to live at the standard maintained by his lower class brother. Any attempt to obtain better homes often brings race prejudice, protests, and at minimum, refusals of sale. In Memphis, however, many nice homes for the well-to-do Negroes are available, those located along Bellevue Boulevard and South Parkway East in ward 28 and precincts 26-2 and 60-3 are the most notable.<sup>36</sup> Again the availability of nice residential sections for Negroes rests on the location of Negro areas around the central business district rather than in its center.

The Lakeview Subdivision for Negroes on Horn Lake Road<sup>37</sup> is an excellent example. The 614-lot subdivision is divided into four sections depending on the price of the homes, which range from \$7,000 to \$18,000. When the subdivision officially opened on Labor Day, 1959, ninety homes had been built and sold. The focal point of Lakeview is a private country club, with automatic membership for purchasers of homes in the \$10,000 plus bracket, and membership available to purchasers of the lower priced units at a small monthly fee. The club has a five-acre lake, badminton and croquet courts, a playground, and this summer will add an eighteen-hole putting course, tennis courts, and a swimming pool. The clubhouse provides a cocktail lounge, a dining and ballroom, and four meeting rooms for its members. Lakeview School has been built in the subdivision and two church sites and a shopping center location are provided.<sup>38</sup>

The growth of Memphis can be seen by its pattern of industrial development. It is significant to note that no one industry has characterized the growth of the city. Rather, it has become a center for many important, but varied, concerns. Because of this, Memphis has escaped the overnight booms and severe depressions that have become a part of the one-industry towns like Birmingham. By the same token, the silk-stocking class in Memphis is not dependent upon the rise of any one industry. A city based on varied industries, as a rule draws its elite from different sections of the country, giving a wider range of experience and social views than possible under a strict hierarchy of local aristocracy. The unparalleled

social status of the Memphis Negro<sup>IN THE SOUTH</sup>is, I am sure, partially dependent on the fact that Memphis has a wider variety of industry than other Southern cities.

Being in the center of the South's cotton belt, the city is the largest spot cotton market in the world, normally selling more than one-third of the nation's cotton crop, and is the world's largest interior cotton warehousing center. Memphis has become the largest livestock and meat-packing center in the South, the South's largest producer of mixed-feeds, and has the largest trade area of any Southern city.<sup>39</sup> Memphis is also the hospital and medical center of the Mid-South and is the location of the large University of Tennessee Medical Units.

Much of the city's economic welfare is dependent on its retail and wholesale trade. Many of the nation's largest wholesale and distributing houses are located in Memphis, and the city has become the wholesale trade center of the South with the tenth largest sales area in the country, being exceeded only by New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Detroit, Cleveland, and St. Louis. The trade area of the city covers a primary market of 175,052 square miles with 286 counties in seven states.<sup>40</sup> This area alternates between the 150 and 200-mile radii of the city, as seen in Map 4, and generally extends farther to the south and west than in the other directions.

While speaking of local business, it would be an error to

neglect the commercial concerns controlled by the Negro population. Until the mid-1920's prostitution, gambling, liquor, and dance halls were the chief source of Negro wealth. Since the days of Crump, however, Beale Street has lost much of its former color and has become a respectable district noted for its clothing stores, pawn shops, and Jewish merchants. Today, banking, insurance, and real estate draw the cream of the Negro talent. (Several candidates in the 1959 election were connected with Mutual Federal Savings and Loan Association.) Some of the first Negro theatres in the country were established in Memphis.<sup>41</sup> Professional men, barbers, beauticians, and morticians, are also sources of Negro self-employment.

Since World War II, almost four hundred new industries have located in Memphis. This rapid industrial growth has been the principal reason for the substantial post-war population increase. Shelby County has quadrupled its population since 1890, while the city of Memphis has had a six-fold increase to 506,050 in December, 1959. The growth rate of both the city and the county have been considerably greater than that of Tennessee or of the nation. The average rate of increase each ten years since 1890 for Shelby County has been 30 per cent compared with a 45 per cent increase in Memphis. Between 1940 and 1950, the population increase in Memphis accounted for 27.5 per cent of the population rise for the entire state. Ranked thirty-second in the nation in size in 1940, the city rose to be the twenty-sixth largest by 1950.<sup>42</sup>

Much of the industrial growth of the city has depended on the available sources of inexpensive utilities, adequate transportation, skilled and unskilled labor, and available land for expansion. The Memphis Light, Gas & Water Division, one of the largest municipally owned utility companies in the United States, distributes its services at rates far below the national average. The city's strategic location as the South's pre-eminent center of river, rail, and highway transportation has placed Memphis industry within easy reach of natural resources and given it an immediate link with an expanding market area. The abundant labor supply and the afore mentioned President's Island Industrial Park have also influenced the expansion of the city's industry.

Of chief importance, however, has been the favorable attitude that the city and county officials have held toward the business community. The Crump machine, while progressive in municipal reform, has always held the conservative labor and business views of the "New" South. Business has been felt necessary for the growth and prosperity of the city, so furthering this end has always been a Crump goal. Compared with the ninety-four principal cities in the nation, Memphis has constantly held the lowest property tax rate in the country.<sup>43</sup> The city utility rates have generally favored business, and the official city policy, until recent years, has been strongly anti-union. It is very doubtful that the recent industrial expansion in Memphis would have taken place had the Crump

administration not been recognized for providing honest and efficient government at bargain rates. The Crump record for eliminating the vice and corruption that had been so much a part of the earlier city also won industry's favor. Again, the progressive movement in Memphis and the leader that it brought into office are greatly responsible for the economic and physical growth of the city. And without this growth the corresponding rise in understanding and acceptance of Negro rights would have been impossible; all began with Crump, and to him the city owes its envied position.



THE CRUMP ERA



THE RED SNAPPER - This photograph of Edward Hull Crump, taken in 1910 shortly after his election as mayor of Memphis, was the only photograph for which he ever posed. In later years, however, he had no objection to news photographers recording him in action.

No political analysis of Memphis would be complete without a chapter on the Crump era. This period of Memphis history entered with the progressive movement at the turn of the century and flourished through almost five decades of unparalleled city growth and expansion. The man who was responsible for this chapter of the city's history, and who had been the dominate power in Tennessee politics, was Edward Hull Crump. Called Ed by his associates, E. H. Crump in the Memphis newspapers, and Mister Crump by the citizens of the town, he was known throughout the country as the "last of the great city bosses."<sup>1</sup>

Numerous magazine articles have been written about Crump and his administration, some of them by reporters who had spent as much as a day in the city. Most of these articles attempted to link Boss Crump with corruption and intimidation which had become an accepted part of the Hague, Curley, Pendergast, and other large city political machines. One article reported that he "practiced intimidation on a scale which makes New York's Tammany Hall look holy by comparison,"<sup>2</sup> while another compared the Crump era with Germany under Nazi rule.<sup>3</sup> On the whole these reports have been totally unfounded or exaggerated, and have greatly hindered the attempts of honest reporters to recreate the past fifty years. Assuming I had come to town with a preconceived notion of Crump as a tyrant, city and county officials immediately jumped to the defensive when I questioned them about their city's heritage. In the Crump obituary issue of The Commercial Appeal, my feelings are adequately expressed: "The Commercial Appeal has never

recognized the political boss and the tight political machine as necessary adjuncts of the American way of life. They are not. That this must be said even now does not preclude recognition of the many great contributions which Mr. Crump made to the progress of Memphis to which he was genuinely devoted."<sup>4</sup>

Ed Crump came to Memphis in 1892 from Holly Springs, Mississippi, a farming community forty-five miles south of the city. He was born on a small farm seven miles north of Holly Springs, and was one of three children of a Confederate veteran. His father died in the yellow fever epidemic of 1878, when he was 4, and left the family impoverished. In attempts to supplement the family income, Crump sold fruit to passengers at the depot and quit school at an early age to become a printer's devil on the local weekly.<sup>5</sup>

"Young Crump, like many another boy of the rural South whose ambition had not been dulled by poverty, concluded that the land offered no hope for a better life. He turned cityward, . . ."<sup>6</sup> arriving in Memphis at the age of eighteen. He was a bookkeeper and cashier, and at 23 became secretary-treasurer of the Woods Chickasaw Company, a buggy, harness, and farm implement firm. Within six years, in 1903, he became owner of the business and it changed to E. H. Crump Buggy & Harness Company, which he retained until becoming mayor in 1909. Further recognition of his success in Memphis was registered in 1902 by his marriage to socially prominent Bessie McLean.

In 1921, while county trustee, with "a high income from fees and tax collections,"<sup>7</sup> Mr. Crump returned to business. He joined with

Stanley Trezevant, a former United States marshal, to form Crump & Trezevant, Inc., an insurance and mortgage brokerage. The firm grew rapidly so that by 1929 it had branches in St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and Little Rock. On a trip to Boston in 1929, Crump became convinced that the economy was unsound and that further expansion would be foolish. He closed the existing branches, and the company remained financially sound throughout the depression. Mr. Crump was as proud of this business decision as of any of his political maneuvers. Trezevant left the company in 1936, and it was reorganized as E. H. Crump & Co., with his three sons as officers. The company grew steadily and in 1947 took over a three story building on the corner of Main and Adams. From his office in this building, Mr. Crump ruled the city, hence giving him the name: "the man on the corner."

Although Crump had won his first election while living in Holly Springs, when he was named captain of Mother Hubbard's baseball team, he did not enter politics until 1901.<sup>8</sup> In that year he was elected a delegate to the county Democratic convention, and in 1905 won a seat on the city Legislative Council with the backing of reformers. How a reform candidate could be elected from "the bloody Fourth," as the Fourth Ward where Crump lived was then known, is one of the political miracles of the city. It was one of the toughest wards in the city and controlled by "a bunch of killers [who] hung out at the old Turf [Saloon]." <sup>9</sup>

Founded on the Judaic-Christian convictions, the progressive movement assumed the natural goodness of the common man. The devils

of the urban reformer tended to be political institutions and city bosses rather than man himself. The way to reform, then, was to "delimit the powers of elected officials and make the people more directly responsible in the affairs of government."<sup>10</sup> Thus the creation of the commission form of government in 1906, in which Crump played a leading role, was "not only a means to progressive achievement, but an attainment of a progressive objective."<sup>11</sup>

The then existing form of government, providing for a Legislative Council which met with the mayor to enact laws, had proven itself inadequate for the growing city. The government had also fallen into the political manipulation of Mayor J. J. Williams, a reactionary to the progressive movement, and it seemed apparent that a change in the form of government was necessary to give Memphis "home rule," instead of political bossism. The extensiveness of crime in the city at this time has been previously mentioned. Its entrenchment in the municipal government need not be described in this essay, but the knowledge of its existence is important. William Miller, in his informative book, Memphis During the Progressive Era, has devoted almost two hundred pages to this subject.

Early in 1905, Kenneth D. McKellar, later to become United States senator with Crump support, and other progressives in the Jackson Club, were able to obtain the governor's signature on a set of Amendments to be incorporated into the city's charter. The 1905 Charter, as it became known, provided for a yearly audit of the city's books, placed restrictions on franchises granted to public service corporations

within the city, and gave the municipal government power to "regulate, control, and suppress gaming houses."<sup>12</sup> The bill also provided for a change in the structure of the city government. The Legislative Council became a bicameral body, with the five-member Board of Fire and Police Commissioners becoming the upper house, and the Board of Public Works, composed of ten members, becoming the lower house. "The mayor was made ineligible for re-election and his term of office was extended from two to four years."<sup>13</sup>

In the fall election, a slate of candidates proposed by J. T. Walsh, who apparently viewed the reform movement only as a ticket to public office, challenged the Williams power. A weak, but respected lawyer, James H. Malone was the Walsh candidate for mayor, while Walsh himself ran for Fire and Police Commissioner and vice-mayor. One of the ticket's choice for the lower house was the young, red-haired buggy dealer, E. H. Crump. The success of the ticket, however, was short lived, for in 1907, after the election of Malcolm Patterson as governor, the Williams faction was able to secure a repeal of the 1905 Charter, retiring Mayor Malone and the Legislative Council to private life. On May 4, the new city council appointed by the governor, took office under the former unicameral system. "Presiding was J. J. Williams, and at his side, filling the vice-president's chair was the ubiquitous John Walsh."<sup>14</sup> Malone and his group took the governor's action to the state supreme court, received a favorable ruling, and resumed their offices on June 22. Walsh, then, exchanged the vice-president's office for that of vice-mayor.

In the summer of 1907, before he had obtained political importance, Crump, because of his mother's influence, resigned from the Legislative Council and declared that he was leaving politics.<sup>15</sup> But, within a week, he was back in the game and announced that he would oppose Williams in the November 5 election to fill a vacancy on the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners. Once elected, he immediately ordered a crack down on the city's vice rings. When the police did not act fast enough for him, "he personally conducted three raids with twenty specially deputized officers . . . [announcing] 'If Chief O'Haver and his men cannot suppress gambling in this town, I can.'<sup>16</sup> While Crump's anti-sin campaign was short lived, he had created a name for himself as the 'Red Snapper' and had shown that he was not afraid to act.

Throughout this period, Crump was also stumping the city as the "foremost advocate of commission government."<sup>17</sup> Under the proposed commission system, the fifteen member Legislative Council was to be replaced by five elected commissioners, one being mayor, who would head the various departments in the city government, the mayor's term now being reduced to two years. The issue came to a head with the 1908 election for state legislators. An innovation in Memphis elections was introduced at this time, when Crump secured the backing of a faction of the city officials for a complete slate of legislative candidates favoring commission government. Using the slogan "business government for business men,"<sup>18</sup> the Crump slate was elected and the new form of government became a reality on January 1, 1910.

It was no surprise when Ed Crump announced that he would run for mayor in 1909. His fame as a reformer had won many friends, while his opponent, J. J. Williams, despite his influence in the business community, had passed his prime in the political market. Since Crump had been in the minority on the Police Commission, many of his newly appointed police officers had been fired by the political opposition and some of the incompetent policemen he had fired had been rehired. Such harassment to prevent reform made civil service an important issue in the 1909 election. The campaign, which brought the first political advertisements in the city, was one of the closest fought political battles in Memphis history. When the twelve thousand ballots had been counted, Mr. Crump had won "by only seventy-nine votes, the margin being from a single ballot box."<sup>19</sup>

The election, of course, was contested. The ballot boxes were impounded and taken into court for a recount. The judge began the count with the wards in which Williams believed foul play had lost him votes, but the count was never completed. The way Mr. Crump told it, when the count reached a majority of 313 for him, instead of the earlier figure of 79, Williams "arose, withdrew his contests and stated in open court that the election had been 'painfully honest.'<sup>20</sup> When Crump took office on New Year's Day, 1910, the first mayor under the commission system and one of the city's youngest executives, he became a cog in the political wheel and a necessary element in every political decision for the next forty-five years.

I think that it is significant to note the action taken by the commission government under the early Crump administration. The



first acts of the new mayor were spectacular and enabled the Red Snapper to gain the public support needed to popularize the progressive movement. "One of the first actions of his administration was to hold a series of conferences with the officials of railway lines running into the city, to secure the building of street underpasses."<sup>21</sup> When one railroad had refused to fulfill its part of the contract by 1911, Crump issued an ultimatum. If immediate construction was not begun on the Lamar Street underpass, the city would tear up the railroad's tracks crossing that street. Similar blunt tactics were used to improve service on the Memphis Street Railway Company. The trolley line had been giving poor service with outdated equipment for many years. Crump ordered several changes in the company's operation, which they argued would be too costly to undertake. This prompted no sympathy from the new mayor, who promised to establish a city-owned competing line, unless his demands were met.

Mr. Crump had a genius for action and for gaining public approval. Popular support for municipal reform required that the public become aware of their government as a service institution rather than a clan of saloon and brothel keepers. To help achieve this goal, Crump had all the city's trucks, wagons, and carts painted a bright yellow, a color they carry to this day. The color was selected because it was "so distinctive that everyone would know it was city property and every city employe would know that he was under observation by the general public."<sup>22</sup> Throughout his years as political leader, Mr. Crump kept a scrutinous eye on all public property. He

continuously knew more about streets than the street commissioner, and more about street lights than the commissioner of utilities. The story is told that during his early term as mayor he made frequent inspections of the city mule barns, and "many a garbage collector would go without his breakfast to beat the mayor to the stables."<sup>23</sup>

"Under Crump, official declarations favoring municipal ownership became more frequent. The power companies were accused of meddling in local politics, not co-operating with the city government, and charging exorbitant rates in order to line the pockets of New York capitalists."<sup>24</sup> The favoritism that had existed in the city's taxing procedure was also eliminated. The first uniform tax rate in the city was established in 1906, at \$2.16 per \$100 of assessed property. By equalizing the assessments of private and corporate property, Crump was able, in 1911, to reduce the tax rate to \$1.58, the lowest it had been in Memphis history.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the reduction in the tax rate, the Crump government "was spending an average of two and one-half times more on municipal services in 1914 than [had been spent] in 1902. For schools, the increase was eight times, and for city hospitals, about four times."<sup>26</sup> Of course, the commission government improved parks, modernized the fire equipment, and effected many changes in the police department. In an attempt to curb the soaring murder rate (see Chapter III), Crump saw to it that "every Negro found on the streets after midnight was arrested,"<sup>27</sup> a measure held against him to this day by out-of-town Negroes.

But Crump did not let governmental reform stop here. He realized that the progressive spirit he had carried into the municipal government would remain safe only if he could carry the same spirit into the County Court. In 1911, Crump made his first step to unite politics inside the city with those outside his legal jurisdiction. A carload of gravel had been rejected by the city as inferior, but the dealer had, nevertheless, managed to sell it to the county. The mayor immediately acted, and was the first city official to challenge the power and dignity of the County Court. His attacks on county government continued, and in 1912, he was able to secure an administrative transfer to a three-man County Commission. "There were years of struggle on the floor of the County Court. . . But in the end, the Court was subdued and gradually reduced in power and size until the once all-powerful body of fifty-seven men became a group of seven who met in the County Commission office to make up their program before every session."<sup>28</sup>

In his attempt to infiltrate the County government, Crump decided to run for sheriff in 1914, but on July 28 he announced his withdrawal as a candidate "because of the legal difficulty of holding two offices."<sup>29</sup> The mayor then supported J. A. Riechman, a prominent businessman, for the post, and precipitated "one of the most colorful of all Crump campaigns."<sup>30</sup> On the last day for qualification as a candidate, Mr. Riechman filed with the Shelby County Election Commission. However, as Crump later explained, he filed with the secretary instead of the chairman of the commission, and when the qualification deadline had passed, the anti-Crump body announced that Riechman had not qualified.

Undaunted, the Crump organization set out to elect Mr. Riechman as a write-in candidate. Facing the possibility of losing eight thousand favorable, but illiterate, Negro votes, "Crump's boys turned pedagogue and unfolded before a startled Memphis the slickest piece of adult education for the underprivileged in Southern history."<sup>31</sup> Scores of blackboards were set up on street corners urging Negroes to "Write it Rick." Beale Street and the Negro wards were plastered with signs, and banners everywhere proclaimed the simplified spelling. Some old timers contend that the correct spelling had to be used, and Crump had said "Write it Riech . . . place the I before the E," but this is debatable. In any event, enough wrote it Rick to elect him by a margin of three to one. Some people recall that for many years afterwards there were Negroes in the city who signed their X, but could write Rick whenever their literacy was questioned.

During the early period of the Crump regime, the anti-Crump forces, lead by editor C. P. J. Mooney of The Commercial Appeal, felt that the mayor was not the reformer that the city believed him to be, and attacked him bitterly. A Tennessee prohibition law had been passed in 1909 over strong Memphis opposition. Six weeks after Crump took office in 1910 he announced that he felt "cleaning up the dives and ridding the city of thieves"<sup>32</sup> more important than attempting to enforce the prohibition law against the wishes of the local citizens. Despite newspaper protests against this decision, Crump was re-elected by a heavy majority in 1911 over two-time loser Williams, who could only "me too" the Crump reforms. The office, having been changed to a four-year term, guaranteed Crump control of the city until 1916.

On October 14, 1915, ten weeks before his term expired, ouster proceedings were filed against him by the attorney general of the state in the Shelby County Chancery Court for failure to uphold the 1909 prohibition statute. The Commercial Appeal joyfully reported that the suit "charged in essence that there was an alliance of politics and the business of liquor, gambling, and prostitution in Memphis."<sup>33</sup> In addition to the ouster of Crump, the suit demanded the removal of Fire and Police Commissioner (vice-mayor) Alex Utley and W. M. Stanton, then City Judge. Ouster proceedings also seemed inevitable against other Crump commissioners and Sheriff Riechman.

Crump and his associates immediately filed a denial, and charged that the suit was unconstitutional, chiefly because it did not provide for a trial by jury. The legal defenses were overruled by the lower court, so Crump resigned and pleaded guilty to the charges made. The case was appealed to the state supreme court on points of law. Throughout the rest of his political career Crump maintained that "the whole point of the appeal and technical admission of [guilt] . . . was to . . . place the case before the supreme court for what was expected to be an affirmative decision granting a jury trial."<sup>34</sup>

An additional aspect of the ouster proceedings presented a difficult constitutional problem. Crump had been re-elected in the spring of 1915 for a third term as mayor in what The Commercial Appeal termed "the deadest election in twenty-five years."<sup>35</sup> Could he now be ousted from an office he had not yet begun? It seemed that he could

not. In fact, "one of the high points of the tactics was the contention that whatever the outcome of the ouster suit, Crump and his associates would be ousted only from the term of office they were then serving or had then resigned from. They could go back into office January 1 for the terms to which they had been elected in April."<sup>36</sup>

But, on December 29, the case still pending a court decision, anti-Crump forces emerged from the supreme court chamber with an order forbidding Crump to take office two days later. The stay order said Crump should be barred from office since he had pleaded guilty to the ouster charges. The Crump forces continued their supreme court battle arguing that the mayor had pleaded guilty to the charges, not because he was guilty, but to avoid a delay in reaching the high court on the legal questions. They contended that prompt action was necessary if Crump was to take office January 1. On February 12, the court rendered its decision, unanimously sustaining the removal of Crump, Utley, and Stanton. The court also ruled that they were not entitled to a trial by jury. Yet, the judges held that the "ouster applied only to the term the city officials were serving when the ouster was filed."<sup>37</sup> Thus Crump was allowed to take office for his third term.

It was expected that Crump would take office immediately. However, on the same day that his decision was rendered, the court found in a Nashville ouster suit that officials could be removed from office for actions in a prior term of office. Anti-Crump forces in Memphis announced that if Crump did take office, new ouster charges would be filed on that basis. "He made no public statement of his

intentions, but since the law required that he take office and file his mayor's bond within ten days after the legal beginning of his term, he was obligated to do so by midnight, February 22, or forfeit the office."<sup>38</sup> Crump finally took office on the night of February 21, in a secret meeting at the home of the County Court clerk. The move was not known until the next morning when he resigned in a special City Commission session at 9:30.

Within twenty-four hours, Memphis had a succession of four mayors, five held the office within ten days. George Love, a City Commissioner, was made mayor in November after the resignation of Mayor Crump and Vice-Mayor Utley. But Love was unfriendly to the Crump powers, so he resigned as soon as the court decision was made known, whereupon the new vice-mayor, W. T. McLain became mayor. When Crump took his oath on the night of February 21, "he was handed a check for \$679.31 in back salary."<sup>39</sup> Alex Utley, who had taken the oath of vice-mayor when Crump took his oath, became mayor when Crump resigned, but he too resigned immediately upon taking office. He drew only \$439.65 for his services to the city. The Crump controlled City Commission then elected Thomas C. Ashcroft mayor of Memphis, and McLain returned to the vice-mayor's post.

A second ouster suit was immediately filed, but it "became a moot question, for he was already out of office by resignation."<sup>40</sup> Since the first resignation on November 4, Crump had maintained his city power. Throughout this time he had kept his office in the Court House, technically a private citizen, but actually in control of city

affairs. In the summer, Crump announced for the office of county trustee, the most profitable job in the Court House under the old fee system. He was elected, then re-elected in 1918, 1920, and 1922. "Meantime his campaign against fees had placed his own office on a flat salary."<sup>41</sup>

Crump's supporters have incorporated into the body of Crump apologetics the assertion that the real power behind Crump's ouster in 1916 was the Merchants Light and Power Company. Fearful that the mayor would bring about public ownership of power, the company corruptly influenced the State Legislature into passing the ouster law. [Crump also said that company officials had promised to see that the ouster charges against him were dropped if he forgot his fight for public power.] Apparently the utility company connived at the ouster, but basically, Crump was forced out of office for his refusal to enforce the prohibition law, and his refusal to do so was grounded in nothing more sinister than his unwillingness to take seriously a law whose enforcement could only be a farce in Memphis.<sup>42</sup>

## B.

National and international issues prompted by the war with Germany, brought an end to the progressive movement that had characterized the first seventeen years of the decade.

Progressivism had brought Memphis better water and sewage systems, better streets, better fire and police protection and a handsome network of parks and playgrounds. It had reformed the courts and penal institutions, improved the school system and laid the foundation for an effective public health program. The city government had stood up to the corporations and had brought a measure of order to the city's economic life. Through the establishment of a commission form of government the city had achieved a more mature political leadership and a more efficient administration. Existing institutions had been reorganized and new ones developed to deal more effectively with many of the social problems of the times.<sup>43</sup>



Yet all had not been accomplished. Saloons and prostitution had been only spasmodically curbed, while violence and lawlessness continued to distract from the progress the city had made. Then too, the status of the Negro was little better than it had been in 1900. The lack of progress in these areas, I believe, rested in the composition of the city, and not in the leadership of the progressive movement.

"From its earliest days, Memphis was a 'river town,' where boatmen enjoyed a few hours of fast-living after lonely weeks on the river, and a 'good-time town,' where the farm and timber men celebrated the end of the season."<sup>44</sup> And such a town could only exist by providing the fast living that its male visitors desired. Thus "prostitution and dives were necessary features of a man's world, the kind of world that the Old South believed in. In a way, they were even good, because they permitted man to be what he was without his having to desecrate the ideal he had formed for those Southern women who laid a claim to respect."<sup>45</sup>

No one could expect a city to completely surrender its past and assume the new morals and ideals of the progressives in the short span of seventeen years. Indeed Memphis could not make this change so quickly. One must also remember that a leader, to exercise any control, must not progress faster than his constituency is willing to follow. Thus I do not condemn Crump for his early hesitancy in these

matters, but praise him for the changes he was able to effect.

And while Crump was at first reluctant to seek reform in areas where his power could not be strong enough to enforce it, the history of the city clearly shows that he did act as soon as it became apparent that he could gain the civic support necessary. When prostitution, the city's most tolerated social evil, was no longer smiled upon by the Memphis citizen, when the city had outgrown its 'river town' existence, then Crump acted. Joseph "Holy Joe" Boyle, who had earned his name by expelling all gambling, betting, and booking interests from the city, was Police Commissioner when the city "closed the lid" on the houses of ill fame. On the night of April 23, 1940, police visited the nineteen known houses in the city and ordered all to be closed by May 7. Some could not believe that the Crump powers had been levied against them, others thought that their landlords would protect them, and a few started a petition in their defense. But after hurried sales of fine mirrors, deep rugs, and flashy lamps, the designated date saw all houses closed. None have relit their lamps since.

The same thing had happened earlier with the city's murder rate. When "the traditional Southern attitude toward Negro killing scrapes hit off in the old jingle

Two niggers git to fightin'. They ain't no kin.  
One kill t'other. 'T ain't no sin."<sup>46</sup>

was no longer adequate, the Crump machine stepped in. In 1935 Police Commissioner Clifford Davis, now United States Congressman from Shelby County, and sixty-odd Negro leaders swung into action. Anti-murder

campaigns were held in most colored churches and in the city's Negro schools. As a result the city now has a lower homicide rate than almost any city in the nation. The Crump forces also lead in the establishment of a juvenile court. It was "his boys" who pushed a bill through the state legislature to allow Mrs. Camille Kelley, the first judge of her sex in the South, to become judge of that court without a lawyer's license.

Crump took immense pride in the reforms that his administration had brought to Memphis, helping the 'river town' to be replaced by a clean, modern, and industrial city. But this was not enough for him, for he carried his fight against gambling into the next county and the state of Mississippi. Many of the gambling establishments ousted from Memphis had relocated just across the county line and the state boundary, with the blessing of the DeSoto County law enforcement officers. On December 9, 1940, a large ten by thirty foot sign, in three colors, was constructed on Highway 61, just inside the Shelby County line. A large hand pointed down the road, and below it followed this warning:

LOOK . . . DANGER AHEAD  
DOWN THE ROAD IN MISSISSIPPI ARE GAMBLING  
DENS AND DIVES. SHERIFF ELTON S. BAXTER  
OF DE SOTO COUNTY, MISS., KNOWS THESE  
THIEVING JOINTS ARE RUNNING WIDE OPEN. HE  
CAN STOP THEM BUT WON'T . . . WHY?  
\* \* \* \* \*  
RUN BY THIEVES . . . THEY CHEAT YOU . . .  
THEY ROB YOU . . . THEY SLUG YOU . . .  
THEY GET YOUR MONEY!<sup>47</sup>

When Mississippi authorities threatened to tear down the sign, Shelby's sheriff, Guy E. Joyner, sent armed deputies to protect the warning. As

with many Crump reforms, it was never known whether or not he initiated the action, yet it is certain that it carried his approval.

While little of the early progressive spirit was devoted to bettering the city's Negro population, I again do not blame the Crump administration for this omission. The Civil War was still a fresh memory on the minds of many of the city's leaders, and even the North had not yet come to view Negro equality as essential to American democracy. Thus it is no wonder that while the Memphis progressive movement was humanitarian, Miller believes that it would be wrong to evaluate it on the basis of the attitude of the progressives toward the Negro. "For to judge it on this basis is to invest the movement with a quality it did not possess. The movement, being pragmatic, subscribed no transcendent principal of morality that required an examination of conscience regarding the general American tendency to brand the Negro as inferior."<sup>48</sup>

While racial feelings have certainly not been eliminated in Memphis, it seems evident, especially after the 1959 election, that they are less intense than in other Southern cities. Because it has been a gradual and evolutionary process stemming from a host of Crump measures, rather than from a single and dramatic exercise of power, it is impossible to ascribe a date to this change in attitude toward the Negroes. Still the change had its beginning and growth during the Crump era, and we can only assume that it has come chiefly as a payment for the vote the Negroes have given his machine.

During the early days of the Crump regime, when his reformers needed all the support they could muster to gain office, there was genuine exploitation of the Negro ballot. There are stories, and I am sure there is some measure of truth in them, about Negroes being herded into trucks and taken enmass to the polling booths, and about Crump politicians handing barbecues, cokes, and watermelons to Negroes as they left the voting lines. Crump justified these measures by believing that it was the most efficient way to impose order on a turbulent society, and that the end he sought permitted the means he used. Looking at the period in retrospect, I tend to agree with his reasoning. The progressive movement would never have been able to come to power without the Negro ballot.

However, many reporters who view Crump as a tyrannical dictator, assume that the Negro has always been a pawn in a political machine, moved at will and given nothing for his support. George F. Milton, in 1927, took this attitude when he reported in Forum that in Memphis

a vicious type of boss domination depends upon the purchasable Negro vote to control municipal affairs . . . I confess freely that the voting Negro in cities which have come under my observation, has hitherto served merely as a tool for debauching elections, and maintaining corrupt and unfit men in power.<sup>49</sup>

Ralph J. Bunche, in an extremely biased report on Negro voting in Memphis, took the same attitude when he said "The introduction of modern racketeering methods in elections in the South was first sponsored by Crump."<sup>50</sup> Long after Crump ceased to give the Negro element a carte blanche to the city's vice rings, which was one of their vote

payments in the early days, Bunche said the Crump power still "forced the Negroes to continue the alliance because of police pressure. . . ."51

Both of these reports, I think, are unrealistic, and fail to recognize the value that the Memphis Negro did receive by supporting the Crump machine. As we shall see in the following chapter, the entire Crump machine was built on its power to get out the friendly vote. And it is my contention that the Memphis Negro had just as many reasons, if not more, to support the Crump candidates as did the white citizens. V. O. Key, Jr., partially realized this, when he wrote "Negro votes for Crump candidates in Memphis can be explained. The Shelby organization controls their votes as it does those of the whites, but it ought to be remembered that Crump sees that Memphis Negroes get a fairer break than usual in public services."<sup>52</sup> Further recognition that Crump had gained Negro support by providing municipal services is seen in Shields McIlwaine's Memphis Down in Dixie. Here McIlwaine pointed out that "Mr. Crump knows that one of the first laws of politics is to give everybody something. So he calls Negro civic leaders into conference; he passes out little jobs; he sends his officials to the Negro civic gatherings; he gives to his colored brethren school buildings, parks and swimming pools."<sup>53</sup>

The early Crump attitude toward the city's Negro element can be seen in 1923, with the re-election of Rowlett Paine as mayor. In this election the Crump faction, supporting Mr. Paine, faced its only real opposition since the election of 1909. Opposition was concentrated behind a candidate backed by the Ku Klux Klan, and that organization

became the central controversy of the election. The fact that Crump supported the anti-Klan candidate gives some indication that he did not carry the race hatred harbored by other Memphis citizens. Crump's stand against the Klan was not unsupported, for The Commercial Appeal had won the Pulitzer Prize in the previous year for its attacks on the KKK and their activities in the Memphis vicinity.

Ralph Bunche fails to recognize Crump's anti-Klan position as advantageous to the Negro population, and becomes inconsistent with his goal (to show that Crump forced Memphis to become the city ". . . where the Black Balance of Power Fails to get the Fruits of Victory"<sup>54</sup>) when he suggests that a coalition of Negro and Klan votes could have overthrown the oppressive Crump regime. Bunche charges that it was only by "the single expedient of beating a few more black boys heads"<sup>55</sup> that Crump was able to keep the coalition from forming. Bunche carries his anti-Crump attack to the extreme by quoting an unpublished Ku Klux Klan report stating that their candidate had won the election, but Crump had stolen the ballots. Even if this were so, and I found no supporting evidence that it was, the Negroes should have joined Crump in stealing the Klan votes, and not criticize him for so doing. The basic fallacy in the Bunche report is that it fails to recognize that Crump was the only Southern political leader in the early part of the century who rose to power without a demagogic use of the race issue.

Ironically, further recognition of Negro achievement under the Crump regime can be seen in the Bunche report itself. In criticizing Memphis, Bunche comments that the city, during the thirties, had

only sixteen Negro nurses in the public health department; had an almost all-Negro postal force, but restricted the clerical jobs to the whites; forced Negro park employes to work under a white supervisor; hired only seven Negro policemen; spent a minimal \$3,272 on Negro parks in 1936; and maintained segregated schools. Yet, in an earlier chapter of the same report, Bunche quotes, without editorializing, an article on Negro rights in Atlanta. In 1940, Atlanta provided only "one ill-supervised park located more than two miles from the center of the Negro population,"<sup>56</sup> (see Map 2 for a comparison with modern day Memphis). The Negro section was largely responsible for the high juvenile delinquency, crime, and disease rate in that city. Atlanta had only one high school for the Negro citizens, who represented almost one-third of her 302,288 population; no Negro nurses or police; and worst of all had only 2,106 registered Negroes out of a colored voting potential of 54,155.<sup>57</sup> Bunche partially attributes the lack of Negro services in Atlanta to the lack of leadership provided by the city's weak mayor-council form of government. While deeming Atlanta's mayor a mere figurehead, Bunche overlooks the fact that it was through the strong leadership provided by Crump that the Memphis Negro could fare better than the colored citizens in any other Southern city.

Yet, we must realize that Mr. Crump had grown up in the tradition of the Old South. While he held a paternalistic attitude toward the Negro citizen, it would be an error to assume that he held any love for them as a class, or ever considered that white supremacy should be disregarded in Memphis. This is evidenced by Crump's support of the State's Rights Party in 1948.



The Negro prospered under Crump primarily for two reasons. First, as a reformer, Crump was greatly concerned with providing better jobs, lower taxes, and more services for the city's population. He was interested in beautifying the city through slum clearance and street repair, and in protecting its health with municipal hospitals and adequate water and sewage systems. All of these were enjoyed most by the city's poorer classes, and, of course, this meant the Negro. Thus "because Mr. Crump hates above all things to be ashamed of Memphis, he would like the Negroes to enjoy the best that the city can afford. . ."58

The second reason for continued Negro improvement under the Crump machine, and the more important politically, is that public services were considered a payment for the votes that Negroes gave his organization. Mr. Crump realized that a barbecue and coke were not a sufficient reimbursement for Negro support, and consequently provided the colored citizens with more services, more job opportunities, and a more congenial attitude than could be gained by the support of any other political faction. Throughout his career as Memphis political boss, Crump never hesitated to call Negro leaders into conferences to discuss their needs and plans. This to me is a clear recognition of the Negro voting power. While Mr. Crump did not need the massive Negro vote for his control of the city and county after 1923, it was through the additional strength that they provided that he was able to gain control of state politics.

While it has often been said that Negroes did not vote in Memphis, that they were "voted," I feel that their support of the Crump

candidates was no stronger than that of the white citizens, (to whom historians have bestowed the rational capability of conscious political selection), and that Negro support was rational. The most important aspect of the Negro voting under Crump was that it was continual, and allowed both the white and colored sections of the city to grow with the ballot. Thus in 1959, when the Negro's right to vote was an accepted municipal right, the privilege of citizenship could be turned to the more mature form of political activity with the support of qualified candidates for election.

C.

Leaving the Shelby County Trustee's office in September of 1924, Mr. Crump held no office until he was elected to Congress in 1930. He returned in 1932, but supported his colleague, Walter Chandler, for the office in 1934. Mr. Crump was a delegate to national conventions of the Democratic Party in 1920, 1924, 1928, and in 1932, when he was active in behalf of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He became a member of the National Democratic Executive Committee in 1936.

In city politics, after the second-term election of Mr. Paine in 1923, the mayor lost Crump support and was defeated in 1927 by Watkins Overton. Serving as mayor longer than anyone else in the history of the city, Mr. Overton was re-elected in 1931 and 1935. Crump support was withdrawn in 1938 and Mr. Overton was not a candidate in 1939. Walter Chandler became mayor in 1940, serving until his retirement in 1946. Joseph P. Boyle, Sylvanus Polk, and J. J. Pleasants

were mayors for brief periods until Crump support of Mr. Overton was restored, and he returned to the office in 1948. But their paths soon separated, and Mr. Overton resigned in 1952 allowing Frank Tobey, a member of the City Commission, to take the mayor's seat.

In 1939, following the Overton split, it was decided to bring Walter Chandler back from Washington as the Crump candidate for mayor. "But the big question of the day was the European War which had just started in Poland. The Roosevelt administration needed the Chandler vote to repeal the arms embargo."<sup>59</sup> So the Crump organization circulated an open petition for mayor, with Mr. Crump putting his name in the slot at the last moment, as an elector for Mr. Chandler. Mr. Crump took the head of the ticket of thirteen candidates for city offices, and opposition failed to appear for any position. Without a platform, or a speech, Mr. Crump and the ticket were elected with 31,835 votes. Crump took office on January 1, 1940, from a platform on the rear of a train, and served one day in office as a spectator at a New Orleans football game. When he resigned, the City Commission elected Mr. Chandler to the post, and Crump returned to his office on the corner of Main and Adams.

The control that Mr. Crump exercised over the mayors of Memphis can be seen by the story told me by a reporter for The Commercial Appeal. Lydel Sims, writing the humorous "Assignment Memphis" column for the paper, was once talking with Mr. Crump about how few people knew the words to the National Anthem. "I'll bet Mr. Chandler knows the words,"

Mr. Crump was reported to say, and in the midst of a busy day the mayor was called to the phone to sing the song that Crump requested. Other reports have it that carbon copies of all city business were sent to Mr. Crump as a matter of course.

During the twenties, the Crump organization moved toward statewide power. Governor Austin Peay was elected to office in 1922 and 1924 with Crump help, and won another term over Crump opposition. In the 1928 election, the Shelby County organization supported Hill McAlister, but Henry H. Horton was elected. Two years later, the Crump forces joined with the Lea-Caldwell organization of Nashville to re-elect Horton. But the \$3,000,000 financial bubble of the Lea-Caldwell organization burst "while the votes were being counted,"<sup>60</sup> and Crump lead the fight that almost brought about the impeachment of Mr. Horton. Mr. McAlister again became the Crump candidate for governor, and was elected in 1932 and in 1934. In 1936, the support was shifted to Gordon Browning, who won handily, only to lose Crump support and the 1938 election. Prentice Cooper was the recipient of Shelby County support after the Browning feud, and was elected in 1938, 1940, and in 1942. Jim Nance McCord ascended to the governor's office with Crump backing in 1944 and was re-elected in 1946. The string of Crump-supported governors was broken by the election of Mr. Browning in 1948 and 1950, but resumed in 1952 by the defeat of Mr. Browning, and the election of Frank Clement. Throughout this period, Kenneth D. McKellar maintained his seat in the U.S. Senate with Crump support.

In 1936, after Shelby County had delivered 59,874 votes in the democratic primary to elect Browning governor, giving the two anti-Crump candidates a total of 878 votes,<sup>61</sup> Browning sent his famous telegram to Crump saying that he had "60,000 reasons to love Shelby County." But soon after taking office Browning spurned the Crump support by appointing "Crump's long time adversary, Lewis S. Pope, special tax investigator."<sup>62</sup> Facing the prospect of 60,000 reasons why he might not love Shelby County in his race for re-election, the governor called a special session of the Legislature in 1937 to pass a bill purging the Shelby County registration books. Another bill, which passed 51-44 (after amending the two-thirds majority rule to a simple majority), put Tennessee on the county-unit system practiced in Georgia. This reduced Shelby County control of 25 per cent of the state's votes to 13 per cent. Both bills were quickly nullified by the supreme court.

The governor then threatened to send National Guard troops into Memphis to protect the registration of the city's voters, but a Federal Court order was obtained "whersin the United States marshal could recruit deputies to repel the invasion. After being assembled in Jackson, the troops were sent to summer encampment, and that ended the hassle."<sup>63</sup> When questioned about the governor's activities, Crump reported "The sneak has the insane desire to go to the U.S. Senate. He would milk his neighbor's cow through a crack in the fence to accomplish that purpose."<sup>64</sup> When the votes were counted after the 1938 election, Shelby County, at Crump's suggestion, had changed its

preference for governors, giving 57,255 to Crump-supported Cooper, and only 9,315 to Browning.<sup>65</sup>

Statewide political power remained until 1948, when the combined forces of Estes Kefauver and Gordon Browning attacked the Crump control, and made it surrender two of its most highly regarded offices. Kefauver, who had made a favorable impression on Washington political writers while a member of Congress, announced for the senatorial seat held by Tom Stewart. "Sleepy Tom" was dropped by the Crump forces in favor of a political unknown, John Mitchell, whom Crump had never met but supported because of his impressive military record. Kefauver had solid support from eastern Tennessee, breaking Crump's coalition with that area of the state. The Kefauver faction also carried their attack into Crump's homeground, and for the first time in modern political times the opposition carried on a strong campaign in Memphis.

Browning returned to the political front by opposing Jim McCord for the governor's chair. Crump attributed much of the Browning vote to organized labor, who were dissatisfied with a recently passed law outlawing the closed shop in the state. The McCord administration had also put an unpopular sales tax statute on the books. In criticizing Browning in this election, Crump placed large ads in the state newspapers to write

. . . that in the art galleries of Paris there are twenty-seven pictures of Judas Iscariot--none look alike, but all resemble Gordon Browning; that neither his head, heart nor hand can be trusted . . . that of the two hundred and six bones in his body there isn't one that's genuine; that his

heart has beaten over two billion times without a single sincere beat.<sup>66</sup>

Sharp-tongued, but humorous, criticism of this type had been a Crump speciality, yet Browning overcame the difficulty and was elected to two terms in office. But Crump mustered his forces and was able to defeat the "foe of '48" in the gubernatorial election of 1952.

When Crump died in 1954, he had a record behind him that few will be able to better. Having been elected to office twenty-five times, the voters of Tennessee never rejected his name as a candidate. A more impressive record, however, was set by the hundreds of other candidates who gained office with his support. On a score card which he kept, there were 118 elections in which all Crump candidates won in Memphis and Shelby County. During the twenty year period beginning in 1928, only two precincts in the county voted against the Crump selection.<sup>67</sup>

During the four and a half decades that Crump controlled Memphis and Shelby County politics, "the Tammany Tiger was tamed, Pendergast was sent to prison in Kansas City, Kelly was forced to the sidelines of the Chicago political game, and Hague was retired by the voters of Jersey City."<sup>68</sup> In the words of V. O. Key, Crump was "the country boy who came to rule a commonwealth,"<sup>69</sup> and he had done it with a militant honesty that was respected by his friends and enemies alike.

Although his keen political acumen may have slipped in his later years, there is little doubt that he had done more for Memphis in forty-five years than had been done by the entire list of political

leaders since 1826. He had changed a muddy, provincial village into a clean, progressive industrial and commercial center for the Mid-South. He had imposed order on a chaotic political battlefield, and gained popular support for the reform movement. He had eliminated all vice and organized crime in the city and accustomed the people to the Negro vote. He had obtained municipal control of all utilities, lowered the tax rate, and helped engineer the building of the Memphis-Arkansas Bridge. Although a dictator, his kindness and warmth were admired by all who came in contact with him.

The main criticism of the Crump era was that Boss Crump had taken the government in his own hands and had substituted the voice of Crump for the voice of the people. Memphians were thought to have surrendered their freedom of choice. But "in their enthusiasm [the anti-Crump forces] too often forgot that democratic government requires strong party organization and discipline if it is to be effective and that an unorganized 'will of the people' needs strong leadership and statesmanship if it is to find expression."<sup>70</sup>

Too often in our society political control has been taken as a synonym for vice and corruption, and honest men are encouraged not to enter public service. In the economic field, ~~she~~ size has spelled monopoly, and in politics, power has carried the unpleasant meaning of goon squads and machine domination. Although the dominate figure in Tennessee politics, Crump was not a racketeer, but an honest and powerful political leader. It was once reported that had Crump been appointed as city manager in 1909, instead of elected mayor, he would have been



praised throughout the country as the greatest financial bargain  
the city of Memphis has ever made.

CHAPTER V  
INSIDE THE CRUMP MACHINE



HIS VOTE COUNTED - Ed Crump holds one of the ballots that helped defeat Gordon Browning in the decisive 1938 election, marking the height of Crump's statewide power.

Perhaps no more apt explanation of Crump's continued political success can be given than the one supplied by John Gunther when, in a Reader's Digest article he asserted that Mr. Crump "bribed Memphis with good government at a low cost."<sup>1</sup> Memphians were willing to sacrifice some of their elemental freedoms for the order and efficiency that Mr. Crump was able to supply. Boss Crump himself, several years before his death, offered another recipe for his unequalled tenure in politics. To be a leader, he said, "you must have some courage, vision, real character, and honesty of purpose."<sup>2</sup> He added to this the well known political truth that the public cannot be fooled for any extended length of time. Thus anyone who practices the art of deception, while he may win early support, can count on a short career as a public servant. At the time of his death, high officials in Tennessee praised Crump as a friend of good government, a genius of organization, and a man of honesty and integrity. Governor Frank Clement stated that "perhaps Tennessee politics have never known a more controversial figure, but even Mr. Crump's bitterest enemies conceded his honesty, energy, and ability. These were fundamental factors in his enduring leadership."<sup>3</sup>

Yet his organization required more than a platform of good government to perpetuate its term of office. Already mentioned was Crump's militant honesty. Speaking of the Crump machine, V. O. Key, Jr. claimed "its only special characteristic is its insistence that it does not steal from the public till, and indeed, evidence to the contrary would be difficult [and I would add impossible] to find."<sup>4</sup> Crump

carried his code of honesty further than many reporters are willing to credit. Throughout his life he denied his insurance company the right to accept city business, although his sons have now begun to write city policies after his death. And not only was he himself honest, but he insisted that all city employes carry the same principle of public morality. One of the maxims of the Crump government was that if anyone of its men went bad, "particularly if he tampered with public funds, no one outside the organization could move faster or more severely than the organization did in punishing the offender to the full extent of Criminal Court procedure."<sup>5</sup>

In contrast to his tight control of public funds, he gave of his own means generously and consistently. Beginning in 1943 he sponsored the annual Benefit Football game for the blind, matching the city's top two high school teams at the end of their season. With no expenses to pay, the total receipts, usually around \$500,000, were divided into cash gifts for the city's blind.<sup>6</sup> He annually staged a boat ride for orphans and shut-ins, and when the circus came to town Mr. Crump took with him the same boys and girls. Crump Day at the Fairgrounds was also an important event in the city. Here his fans consumed 30,000 hot dogs and 1,600 gallons of lemonade,<sup>7</sup> took advantage of free rides, and sported buttons saying "Thank You Mr. Crump." Of course, Benefactor Crump picked up the tab. In spite of this showmanship, "his was a Paulian charity in that it was not only freely given, but was more unknown than known."<sup>8</sup> He was always a friend to

the poor, and if a house should burn, the owner could count on a check or a gift from Ed Crump.

Still, he won the hearts of the people in other ways. Unlike the other large city bosses who appeared at the turn of the century, Crump did not base his organization on the constant influx of rowdy, uneducated immigrant workers, and thus was able to obtain a measure of genuine respectability unavailable to Boston, Chicago, and Kansas City political leaders. While he relied heavily, at times, on the Negro vote, and had many friends in all walks of life, it never detracted from his acceptance as a Southern gentleman. His strict adherence to the published code of Southern morality and chivalry added greatly to his personal appeal.

Mr. Crump neither drank nor smoked, he never swore, and was a strict vegetarian. Ladies found him gracious, warm, and courtly; men discovered his sincerity, understanding, and political insight. He never forgot a friend, and almost everyone in Memphis could point with pride to at least one instance when Boss Crump had befriended him. Crump's character can also be demonstrated by the high regard in which his family life was held by the Memphis citizens. Everyone considered the unity and old-fashioned love that bound the Crump family a symbol of Ed Crump's warmth and affection. The city considered the death of his son John in 1939 and of his mother in 1940 to be two of the saddest blows that Mr. Crump ever received, and this endeared him to their hearts.

Crump's gentlemanly conduct, moreover, won the respect of his enemies, as well as maintained the support of his friends. The reporters on The Commercial Appeal always found Mr. Crump courteous, even when he called to report a "beef." Only once, I was told, was a threat received. Malcolm Adams, city editor of the paper, at one time rented a house from a Crump firm. And since he worked nights, his wife, the good Southern lady that she was, became afraid of prowlers. Mr. Adams reported this to his landlord and the next morning a crew was there to install a complete set of window guards. A few weeks later Ed Crump called Mr. Adams on the phone to complain about an article the paper had printed that was not to his liking. "Why, Malcolm," he said, "I've a good mind to huff and puff and blow your window guards down."<sup>9</sup> The fact that stories like this can be told about him, and are considered to be representative by those who knew him, makes it hard for me to believe the sinister characteristics which some articles ascribe to him.

Yet, we must not forget that Crump was a political boss and controlled a machine that outlived and outperformed all similar organizations in the country. This required a strong hand as well as a winning smile. Actually, there was no magic in the Crump machine's ability to win elections. "The formula consisted basically of organization from the neighborhood level up, of hard precinct work, of getting friends to register, and finally, on election day, of getting out the friendly vote."<sup>10</sup> Speeches were not usually a part of the organization's campaign, although newspaper ads and public statements would appear during the last few days

of the municipal campaign. One of the most famous features of Crump's political operation was, of course, the organization's card index system.

The index literally included every qualified voter in the city, giving name, address, age, and the number of his registration certificate. Typing the cards for the next election sometimes started before the official figures had been made for the last one. In each precinct there was a person in charge of the routine work of keeping tab on the voters of that area. Each worker was guided by a gray book, listing all former voters alphabetically. Late in the campaign this book was replaced with a black one, arranging the names by street number. At the courthouse, a city official kept the all important red book, listing every political job holder by precinct. By this method the machine was able to tell which of its friends were registered, and which still had to be qualified.<sup>11</sup>

This first stage of the machine's election duty, that of registering the friendly vote, was aided in several ways. During most of the Crump regime, poll tax receipts were required of voters. The organization usually saw to it that the time for paying the tax ended before the opposition had been able to stir up interest or organize precinct workers. Crump men, of course, had been going from door to door long before the deadline came. Even when permanent registration was initiated, and the poll tax requirement removed, registration of new voters usually came up during a period "absolutely without political interest."<sup>12</sup>

Crump favored a short campaign, usually of about ten days, consisting chiefly of door to door work. When this had been completed, and the election was on hand, a tray of duplicate cards for each qualified voter was taken to every polling place. As each voter appeared, a Crump worker pulled his card from the tray. For those whose cards remained, there were personal visits, telephone calls, and offers for transportation until they appeared. The system must have been good, for not only did it contribute to Crump's continued political success, but it also gained recognition from other political organizations. When an official from Tammany Hall, where the card system had originated more than a hundred years before, looked it over on a visit to Memphis, he declared it the most efficient system he had ever seen.

Good as the system was, it depended on two additional elements. First, it required the support of the several thousand city job holders to carry out the multitude of tasks the year round, and on the job holders and their families to comprise the inner core of the Crump vote on every question. And secondly, it rested on the passive support of many citizens who accepted his rule without casting their ballots. Memphis usually had a low voting turnout for local elections, and each person who remained at home on election day contributed to the continued life of the Crump machine. Another source of power was the machine's complete control of office holders, appointed and elected. "A man totally unknown, except to his mother, could be elected to a well paid position by a county-wide vote on the [sole] recommendation of the Crump



organization."<sup>13</sup> Such a candidate would be elected without any effort on his part, and would be totally dependent on the organization for both gaining and retaining his office. Obedience, then, became a prime requirement for political success in the organization.

"It would be naive to conclude that Crump's power . . . rested on standard machine practices alone,"<sup>14</sup> or that its public facade could be maintained without continuous manipulation behind the scene. Politics, as we have learned, is a science of government based on the art of compromise, and Ed Crump was a master at this art. "He was adamant only to the point where adamancy ceased to be useful to his purpose."<sup>15</sup> He demonstrated time and again his willingness to compromise by taking into the organization men who had demonstrated their ability to make headway against it. This can be seen by his dealings with organized labor. Opposed to the C.I.O., Mr. Crump was usually able to keep a working alliance with the American Federation of Labor, especially the local building trades who depended on city contracts and a favorable interpretation of the building codes. But when they threatened to leave the fold, the organization promptly added another union man to its office holders, often "a man who had showed indications of becoming a leader of labor."<sup>16</sup> Thus Crump was able to take enough wind from their sails to keep the opposition ship from getting underway.

Perhaps this is just another way of saying that "Crump [was] a shrewd politician. At critical moments he out maneuvered the opposition."<sup>17</sup> For instance, there was some talk after World War II that the opposition would be able to split the Crump support by appealing

to the veterans with a ticket of G.I. candidates. But before these plans could take form, Crump placed veterans on his ticket and announced that "the ex-service man played a great part for four years in world affairs. They are entitled to great consideration, and I am sure Memphis and Shelby County will accord them the honors they so richly deserve in future politics."<sup>18</sup> Similar tactics were used against a threatened break in the usually pro-Crump business community. When opposition arose, "Crump was always able to adopt for his own enough planks from their platform to prevent them from raising a strong structure."<sup>19</sup>

Crump's genius for organization and his ability to compromise worked within the organization itself, and was responsible for preventing any fragmentation of power. When he was in a room he dominated it by his attitude, his words, and his complete belief in his own correctness. "With him in the lead, case hardened machine men would pull in the harness with young idealists . . . union presidents would share the same candidates with executives of Memphis's largest businesses, and work could be divided between Baptists, Jews, Catholics, and agnostics."<sup>20</sup> Whenever rivalries seemed to be developing into death struggles they were taken to the large desk on the third floor of Main and Adams, where a settlement would soon be reached. We should also remember that Crump often formulated his opinions after weighing the advice of many persons, showing that he was open to suggestion. Candidates backed by his machine had usually been selected after reviewing the qualifications of many interested in entering public

service. Thus he was in essence the personnel manager for the county political organization, and the arbitrator of all political disputes.

With an organization as centralized as this, it is little wonder that opposition usually failed to develop. Also, as the organization gathered inertia, and Crump support became the only visible criterion for office, an element of fear was added to its power. Crump controlled all police, deputies, county and state attorneys, state prosecutors, inspectors of all kinds, and a multitude of other officials, making it easy for him to utilize his power and authority "to buy off, to discourage, or to intimidate opposition and potential opposition."<sup>21</sup> Thus it was inevitable that those who were inclined to question the wisdom of the organization think twice before they risked its wrath. While this wrath was more often than not a figment of the imagination, there were enough cases of actual intimidation to give some justice to the reports of fear.

Several examples of his "ruthlessness in dealing with those who got in his way or publicly differed with him"<sup>22</sup> are mentioned by all who review his tactics. But since the same ones are mentioned in each report, I am inclined to think that they are probably about the only cases, and not examples typifying general Crump policy. Crump was smart enough to know that a few "test cases" would be sufficient for his purposes, and that a wholesale display of power would not only decrease his backing, but would also give the opposition a cause to support.

Two of the often cited examples deal with Memphis businessmen. In the late 1930's a Negro druggist, Dr. J. B. Martin, who owned the largest prescription pharmacy in Memphis, entered anti-Crump politics and soon found police in front of his store searching every customer for narcotics. When his business dwindled, he moved to Chicago, and was elected to a Cook County trusteeship in 1946. Yet a usually reliable source said that in 1923 the doctor was pinched for peddling dope,<sup>23</sup> and a newspaper article from 1936 shows that he was arrested for possessing a large supply (\$600 worth) of untaxed cigars, cigarettes, and tobaccos.<sup>24</sup> The other example concerns a well known businessman who decided to wrok on the opposite side of the political street. Soon afterward the state legislature passed a new and heavy tax which exactly applied to his business.

Yet the Crump wrath did not include physical violence, and those who speak of killings and goon squads have exaggerated their stories beyond justifiable journalistic limits. Widespread fear and public worship can not both be used to describe the same person, and it is obvious to me which term applied to Mr. Crump. We should also note that there was humor in his wrath, and when one businessman was able to joke about Crump's mailed fist, the entire town enjoyed a laugh at his expense. This ocured when motorcycle police were sent to an undertaking establishment owned by a political opponent, and were given instructions to arrest his ambulance drivers for speeding each time they left his driveway. After a few days of this the undertaker placed a large ad in the newspaper proclaiming to be the only ambulance service

in town with a twenty-four hour police escort. As Memphis laughed the police were removed to new assignments.

Never at a loss for words, Crump once rebuffed a state Republican leader, Christopher Napoleon Fraizer, by saying "Christopher Napoleon's intellectual baggage is very light . . . it would seem one would get tired of being a fool."<sup>25</sup> Humor was an important part of his public statements, especially when he drew on his menagerie of terms to describe political opposition. Because of Kefauver's liberal tendencies, Crump charged him with having socialistic views, denouncing him as a "lizard changing his spots from brown to green, but mostly to red."<sup>26</sup> Clifford Davis spoke against the prospective senator and persisted in mispronouncing his name "Cow-fever," much to the delight of the Crump supporters. Speaking against the Truman administration in 1946, Crump accused the Postmaster General, Robert S. Hannegan, of acting "like a stool duck, trained to lead his wild brothers to their doom."<sup>27</sup> And on another occasion, when he called The Commercial Appeal to see what portion of his latest statement they planned to print, and was read a sharply curtailed article, he replied, "Why that's thinner than a worn out suit on a last year's hummingbird."<sup>28</sup>

On two occasions, however, his opponents were able to turn this kind of criticism into political hay to their own advantage. In 1945, in the midst of a bitter fight with the anti-Crump Nashville Tennessean, Crump replied to one of their articles on "Crump town" with a 1700 word tirade, in which the word rat appeared 17 times, and the word liar 20. Most of his wrath was spent on the paper's editorial

writer, Jennings Perry, who, he said, was an "unworthy, despicable character--a venal and licentious scribbler . . . Just what one would expect of a wanderoo [a purple-faced, yellow-whiskered, long-tailed monkey]. He has the brains of a quagga [a now extinct, striped, wild South African ass]."<sup>29</sup> The next day the newspaper printed the entire report, showing pictures of the two animals and Mr. Crump, labeling them: "This is a quagga," "This is a wanderoo," "This is Ed Crump."

The other time that Crump's zoological verbiage backfired has become a classic, and preceded Walt Disney in starting the coon-skin cap craze. In the election of 1948, Crump likened Kefauver to a pet coon "that puts its foot in an open drawer in your room, but invariably turns its head while its foot is feeling around in the drawer. The coon hopes, through its cunning, by turning its head, he will deceive any onlookers as to where his foot is and what it is into."<sup>30</sup> The idea was to present Kefauver as a "darling of the Communists" who was "desperately trying to cover up his very bad record" in Congress. Instead it boomeranged, and Kefauver put on a coonskin cap and invaded Memphis, saying he might be a pet coon, but he certainly wasn't Mr. Crump's pet coon.

Some mention of Crump's state-wide control should be made. Before his defeat in 1948, Crump controlled the state legislature almost as efficiently as he held the Memphis and Shelby County commissions. Basically, the Crump faction in state affairs had two main centers of heavy voting strength: Shelby and neighboring counties in western Tennessee and the Republican counties in the

eastern part of the state. Crump's strength in eastern Tennessee is explained by Senator McKellar's control of state patronage, and by a tacit agreement between the Crump powers and the Republican political leaders. In exchange for concessions from the state government, and for a promise to remain out of local politics in their counties, the Republican leaders threw their support behind the Crump candidates in the state Democratic primary. Also important was the fifty to sixty thousand vote margin which his machine controlled in Shelby County elections, generally sufficient to break a tie in the state-wide vote.

Despite his interest in state politics, knowing political analysts contend that Mr. Crump was only interested in furthering the welfare of the Memphis citizen, and entered state politics more to obtain this goal than to increase his personal sphere of influence. To support this assumption, they point to the following statement made by Crump in 1927:

My whole desire and purpose is for Memphis to progress, to have every opportunity for growth, and for its people to be happy in their pursuit of everyday business, and for the same spirit to reign in their home life. I am deeply conscious of my responsibility to exercise my privilege as a citizen of a free republic, and this I intend to do so as long as I have in me the independence of a man.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps this also explains why Mr. Crump did not seek a higher political office. Robert Marks of The Commercial Appeal feels that Mr. Crump did not seek the governor's chair because he realized that in such a position he would have to treat all areas of the state impartially, while remaining in Memphis he could exercise political pressure to obtain a disproportionate share of the state's financial assistance. To enter a

senatorial race, Mr. Marks believes, would have split his alliance with Senator McKellar, and lost the good will that the senator carried in anti-Crump areas of the state. Of course, this is mere speculation.

Still, the effect of Crump's participation in state politics precipitated political alliances which resembled the permanent two-party system thought to be the base of American democracy. Similar political divisions are unseen in other Southern states, where "voters divide into transient groupings around individual candidates."<sup>32</sup> While Tennessee is still considered a one-party state, the long life of the Crump machine forced all major political battles to be fought between only two major groups, the Crump and anti-Crump factions.

In reviewing the internal works of the Crump machine, we find, then, that it used few means that were not common practice to all politicians. Crump's absolute control over local politics certainly prevented many good men from seeking public office, but the efficiency and order that he was able to maintain seem to outweigh this disadvantage. Negroes received a better deal under his rule than in any other Southern city, and Memphis progressed at a faster rate than could have been achieved without the public support Crump carried.

While I cannot sanction all of his actions, I recognize the value of his organization and the good that it was able to effect. Perhaps no greater tribute can be paid to him than the complete failure of the Memphis citizen to handle his own political well-being after Mr. Crump's death. Many Americans are unconcerned with local politics, and



do not want to take the time to become informed citizens. They are willing to surrender their choice of candidates to a man like Crump, for "good government at a low cost." His machine was founded on this principle, and from these citizens it received its main source of power.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIVE YEARS CRISIS, 1954-1959



A STALEMATED GOVERNMENT - Seated (left to right) are Mayor Edmund Orgill; Commissioner of Public Safety and Vice-Mayor, Claude T. Armour; Commissioner of Finances and Institutions, Stanley Dillard; Commissioner of Public Services, John T. Dwyer; and Commissioner of Public Works, Henry Loeb, III. Elected in 1955, the commission was incapable of action throughout its four year term because of a non-progressive "working majority" formed by Armour, Dillard, and Dwyer.

A.

When death brought an end of the Crump era on October 16, 1954, a startled Memphis looked in vain for a new source of political leadership. Strong as the Crump machine had been, it was unable to produce a successor, and thus could not perpetuate its rule. The strength of the organization had always rested on the personal appeal of Boss Crump, and without this personality to unite the various factions in the city and county government, and to supply the final answer on all decisions of policy, the organization could not continue. Among the many and trusted lieutenants, Mayor Frank Tobey offered the greatest hope for the machine's survival. Although he had never been a member of the organization's inner core, he had demonstrated his ability to act independently while remaining loyal to the higher powers.<sup>1</sup> The hope of his ascension to the top of the political machine ended, however, when the mayor died in office the following September. By the end of 1958, weary from three leaderless elections, the Crump machine formally disbanded, leaving several city and county commissioners without the support that had placed them in office.

One of the first questions brought to the surface by the passing of Mr. Crump was the future of the commission form of government. During the forty-four years that Memphis had had a commission system, Crump had been the guiding hand in all political affairs. The one-man control of the city under Crump more closely resembled the city manager plan than the commission system whose name it carried. The city really knew very little about the commission method, and many

citizens questioned its ability to provide progressive government without machine rule. Other cities the size of Memphis had turned successfully to the council-manager plan, while some were investigating the mayor-council system as a possible source of effective leadership. Two days after Crump's death, The Commercial Appeal reported "We consider it likely that the commission framework will be discarded [in favor of a form of government that] will reveal itself to be something quite different than we have known while decisions were controlled by a single man."<sup>2</sup> Whether or not a change occurred, the death of Crump had made one thing clear--more effort by the citizens must be made if the present level of local government was to be maintained and progress continued.

In the 1955 municipal election, both major contenders for the mayor's office supported a change in the form of government. Edmund Orgill, entering politics for the first time, ran as an advocate of the council-manager system. While he vowed to remain in office for a full four-year term, he hoped the people would choose the council-manager plan in a special ballot allowing the new system to go into operation at the time of the next city election. Watkins Overton, who had served a total of sixteen years as mayor under E. H. Crump, weakly supported the council-mayor (strong mayor) system, with the change to be enacted through a public referendum. The election of Mr. Orgill was thought by many to be a public approval of the proposed change. Being informed of his victory, Mr. Orgill said, "I believe the people of Memphis want to go ahead to new, free, and progressive government."<sup>3</sup>

At the end of his term, however, no change had occurred, and none of the above adjectives could be used to describe the bickering and reactionary city commission that had prohibited progress for four years.

Yet, one needed not to wait until the closing months of the Orgill administration to see the breakdown in the city government and to realize that the commission had ceased to be an effective decision making body. The crumbling of the Shelby County Political Organization was seen shortly after Mr. Crump's death. Local business and newspapermen felt that much of the early progress of the Crump era had been exchanged for a "patch-and-mend-philosophy"<sup>4</sup> of handling municipal affairs during his later years. Under the Tobey commission, there was a constant fight "to get urgent programs out of the deep freeze where they had been laid away by a reluctant, grudging administration that preferred the status quo."<sup>5</sup> As the dictator had aged and more of the city's planning had to be delegated to men trained in following orders rather than in making decisions, less and less was accomplished.

The state election of November, 1954, had been planned by Crump before his death, and was carried out according to his last requests. The municipal election of 1955, however, had not been planned by Crump, and in the campaign of that year the failure of the old organization to work smoothly without their master was easily seen. The most vivid demonstration of their lack of leadership was that for the first time since 1909 the organization had gone to the polls without endorsing a candidate for mayor. One of Crump's greatest political

virtues, and one that contributed heavily to his long tenure of office, was his ability to settle political rivalries without having to submit them to a public vote. Without this leadership, the factions that had developed within the machine after his death were unable to agree on a mayoralty candidate, and could only present a "Good Government" ticket headed by the four commissioners then in office.

Mayor Walter Chandler, who had been appointed to office after Frank Tobey's death, attributed the lack of an administration candidate for mayor to "insufficient time" since the death of Mr. Tobey to review all possible candidates, and on the inability of those businessmen who were asked to join the ticket to leave their personal affairs.<sup>6</sup> The mayor, himself, declined the nomination, preferring to return to his law practice, but wholeheartedly supported the Good Government group. Edmund Orgill, it is reported, failed to gain the organization's backing because of his support of the Browning-Kefauver camp during the decisive 1948 election. It was felt that state and county officials in the organization had persuaded the otherwise agreeable commission not to back Mr. Orgill's candidacy. Watkins Overton probably failed to invoke the support of those faithful to the memory of Ed Crump because he had twice left the organization after losing Crump backing, and because he had proposed a slate of his own in opposition to the incumbent commissioners. Still Mr. Overton was endorsed by the pro-Crump Shelby County Commission, guaranteeing him some of the captive vote.

The headless Good Government ticket campaigned on an eight-point platform, pledging themselves to continue the commission system in Memphis; maintain low taxes; and to work with federal, state, and county officials in building a much needed expressway system in the city. Underlying each plank in their platform was a tacit praise of the Crump method and a promise to continue in his footsteps, clearly showing that their years of following the city's Pied Piper had rendered them incapable of independent action even in the face of political annihilation. Supported by the city administration were: the four incumbent commissioners, Claude A. Armour, Joseph P. Boyle, John T. "Buddy" Dwyer, and Oscar P. Williams; City Court Judges, Beverly Boushe and John Colton; Juvenile Court Judge, Elizabeth McCain; and the City Tax Assessor, Joe S. Hicks. The ticket made no endorsement of candidates for the Board of Education, wishing to keep the Board out of politics.

Looking first at the minor offices, we find that the Good Government candidates were returned to their respective offices without serious opposition. For instance, the incumbent Tax Assessor, who had served the city in that position since 1936, and who had previously been a member of the Tennessee Legislature for three terms, Shelby County Election Commissioner for two terms, a member of the county Equalization Board, and had served as mayor and tax assessor of Binghampton before it had been incorporated into the city, carried 63.25 per cent of the 69,601 votes cast for that office.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Judge Elizabeth McCain was re-elected Judge of the Juvenile Court by

a phenomenal 5 to 2 majority. Miss McCain, who was 56, held a master's degree in psychology and child guidance, and had served as Director of the Board of Education's division of child adjustment and as President of the Tennessee Board of Education prior to her appointment to the Juvenile Court in 1950. She received support from both white and Negro voters, surrendering only one precinct to her opponent, who had been dismissed in 1954 from his job as a complaint investigator for the Juvenile Court, being "accused of 'fee splitting' with attorneys he recommended to couples in domestic relation cases."<sup>8</sup> Finally, in the election for the Judges of Divisions I and II of the City Court, the incumbents were re-elected by outstanding majorities. Their opponents, however, attracted some support from the Negro wards.

The three incumbents who were running for the Board of Education were re-elected without a serious campaign, although there were sixteen candidates for the four-man post. Julian Bondurant, 50, president and treasurer of the Armored Motor Service Company, received 42,464 votes to top the list. He was a director of the Chamber of Commerce, a member of the advisory board of the Mid-South Fair, had been president of several Community Chest projects, and was past president of the Board of Education (an appointed position). John T. Shea, 59, was the only elected board member who was not a parent. He received the second highest vote total, 33,193. Mr. Shea had served as vice-president of the board for twenty-two years and was past president of the Memphis and Shelby County and Tennessee Bar Associations. He was also president of the Tennessee Athletic Commission. The third



incumbent, Mrs. Arthur N. Seessel, Jr., 40, had been a member of the board for four years and received 25,894 votes. The wife of a grocery store owner, she was active in civic, educational, and religious circles. Newly elected to the Board of Education was Mrs. Lawrence Coe, 45, a former teacher and a member of the YWCA board of directors for the past eighteen years. Elected with 29,185 votes, she was the wife of the chief chemist at McMiller Feed Mill and was active in youth and church work.

Most significant for our study was the entrance of a Negro candidate, Rev. Roy Love, who placed fifth of the sixteen candidates in the Board of Education contest. He received 20,110 votes, the highest vote total received by any non-elected candidate.<sup>9</sup> Rev. Love, 57, had been pastor of the Mt. Nebo Baptist Church for thirty years, and was a trustee of Gregg's Business and Practical School and of S. A. Owen Junior College in Memphis. He had tried to run for the Tennessee Senate in 1954, but was barred by a constitutional ban on ministers in the legislature.

Evidence of single shot voting first became important in this election. Since voters cast their ballots for the four candidates of their choice, and the candidates with the highest vote total were elected, there lay the inherent possibility of giving one candidate a disproportionate share of the votes by casting only one vote instead of four for the office. This was the single shot method used by the colored voters in support of Rev. Love. By casting only one vote for him, they deprived three white candidates of a vote and thus gave their candidate

a much higher percentage of the total than he would have received had all ballots been cast.\*

The effect of this technique can be seen by examining a typical Negro precinct. In precinct 35-2, for instance, 90 per cent of the registered voters in 1955 were Negro. In the returns from this precinct Rev. Love received 700 votes, while the fifteen other candidates split 986 votes. Assuming that every voter in the precinct cast a vote for the Negro, three times this figure should equal the vote given to the other candidates. This, however, would have given 2100 votes to the white candidates instead of the 986 they received. In this one precinct, then, 1114 votes were not cast for white candidates, giving Rev. Love a higher percentage of the total vote than he actually received.

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\*Since the single shot method has the greatest chance of electing a minority candidate in a contest in which many candidates are entered for a multi-position office, let us construct an example using the above information from the Board of Education contest. In our example, then, there would be sixteen candidates (A,B,C, . . . P) running for the four school board seats. Let us assume that 50,000 voters go to the polls, and of this number a minority bloc of 15,000 use the single shot method in behalf of a single candidate, "N". The remaining 35,000 voters, each having four votes, can deliver a total of 140,000 votes to be divided among the other fifteen candidates. If divided equally, each would receive 9,333 votes, far below the 15,000 vote total assured to candidate "N". But since some of the candidates are expected to be more popular than the others, the white voters can be expected to vote for various combinations of the white candidates. When the votes are in, let us assume that the votes are distributed so: Candidate "A" receives 30,000, "B" draws 25,000, "C" gets 20,000, "D" has 14,500, "E" - 12,500, and the other ten white candidates divide the remaining 38,000 votes. It is easy to see how a vote split of this type would allow minority-supported "N" to be elected. But suppose the 15,000 Negro voters use some of their unused votes. Then, if only 501 of them vote for "D", "N" cannot win.

The extent to which the single shot method was used is impossible to know, since it can only be seen in the strongly Negro precincts. But, as shown in Table 6-1, a total of 13,478 votes were lost in the twenty precincts in which we can prove that this method was used. Were this vote divided equally among the fifteen white candidates, each would have received an additional 898 votes. Further impact of this method can be seen if we can project the findings of our table on the total vote for the Board of Education candidates. By dividing the votes lost by three, the number of votes that each

Table 6-1

Ward-Precinct	Votes for Love	Votes Lost
5	337	553
7-1	119	114
7-2	375	666
11-1	389	789
11-2	259	490
14-1	521	819
24	518	946
25-1	687	784
29-2	647	990
32-2	204	380
35-1	313	556
35-2	700	1114
37-1	264	296
39	369	439
40-1	352	333
41-1	749	990
43-3	505	853
48	485	612
51-1	334	266
61	715	1488
Total	8,842	13,478

person did not cast, we see that 4,492 persons in the twenty precincts used the single shot method. By comparing this with the votes for Rev. Love, we find that 49.67 per cent of the persons voting for the Negro used the single shot method. Should this same percentage of voters have used the technique in all wards, then 9,978 persons would have cast single ballots, depriving the white candidates of a total of 29,934 votes. While we have no idea how these votes would have been divided among the fifteen white candidates had they been cast, we can see what the difference would have been had they been divided equally. Here each candidate would have received 1,995 extra votes if the single shot method had not been used. Needless to say, this can have a great effect on the outcome of an election.

Turning now to the really significant positions, the greatest interest was seen in the eleven-man race for the city commission and in the contest for mayor, where for the first time in recent history two candidates, who represented different philosophies of government, had a chance for victory. Prompted by the Good Government ticket's endorsement of the four incumbent commissioners and Mr. Overton's former association with the organization, the main issue of the campaign was whether or not to follow in the tradition of machine rule. "We do not want another political machine," The Commercial Appeal reported.

Voters of Memphis will have to decide if they are to elect Mr. Orgill and thereby invite participation of all segments of our Mid-South metropolis in local government affairs, or Mr. Overton, whose principal backers are identified with the machine politics way of doing things.

They will determine if we are to have a bold, dynamic program for meeting our power and transportation demands,

now and in the future, or again embrace a patch-and-mend, do-it-only-if-politically-expedient type of administration.<sup>11</sup>

Mr. Orgill, 56 years old, was president of Orgill Bros. & Co., one of the largest wholesale hardware firms in the nation, was past president of the Chamber of Commerce, and was a former vice-president of the YMCA. He was a graduate of the University of Virginia and represented the liberal, yet aristocratic, circles of the city. Mr. Overton, 61, had been mayor of Memphis from 1928 until 1939 and again from 1948 to 1952. He had also served in the Tennessee Legislature and in the state senate. He had attended Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin, Harvard University, and had received his doctorate in jurisprudence from the University of Chicago. His "chief virtue, aside from personal integrity, was admittedly carrying out the program of a political machine."<sup>12</sup> Two minor contestants for the post drew only slight recognition during the campaign.

Mr. Orgill, who was supported by The Commercial Appeal, drew the greatest attention because of his lack of political ties, his successful business and civic record, and his fresh approach to the problems facing the growing city. However, he was attacked by his opponent for his help in establishing the Atlantic Union Conference, which the American Legion condemned as a "fetish of millionaires and Socialists,"<sup>13</sup> and for his support of the council-manager plan, which it was charged would "take away from the people their right to choose their chief executive."<sup>14</sup> The opposition advertised that Mr. Orgill's support of both showed that he had "little faith in the democratic process. . . He is interested primarily in making radical and sweeping

changes--not necessarily because they are needed or advisable, but because he is curious to see if his ideas will work. . . Let's not make our city Mr. Orgill's personal guinea pig."<sup>15</sup>

Several paradoxes arose in considering the qualifications of Watkins Overton. First, "Mr. Overton served for sixteen years under Mr. Crump, who was acknowledged to be the city's real 'mayor, strong mayor, and city manager.' Now, should Mr. Overton get credit for the unwise actions during those sixteen years and someone else get credit for the wise moves? Or should he be credited with the good things, and pass to others the bad? Or should he get credit for all of the good and bad, or for absolutely none?"<sup>16</sup> The second paradox was equally confusing. Mr. Overton had twice left the Crump organization because he found it impossible to agree with them on all points. Should he now be blamed for not getting along with his fellow politicians and at the same time be criticized for accepting dictation from higher up?

Similar problems arose in selecting the commissioners for the next four years. The commissioners, at this time, were elected in the same manner as the members of the Board of Education, each voter being able to vote for four of the eleven candidates. Between the election and the date that the new term began, January 1, the newly elected officials would decide among themselves which office each was to hold. Since no Negro candidate was entered in the race, there was no threat of a single shot vote. Two tickets were presented to the public, each representing four commission candidates, and three of the contenders ran as independents. In addition to the Good Government ticket,

Watkins Overton presented a slate composed of Henry K. Buck, L. Stanley Dillard, Malcolm R. Futhey, and Joe J. Thompson. Independents were Sam E. Chambers, Henry Loeb, III, and F. P. Carpenter.

The Good Government ticket, composed of Commissioners Armour, Boyle, Dwyer and Williams, sought re-election on a plea of "continued good government by experienced men."<sup>17</sup> Claude Armour, 36, was the Police and Fire Commissioner, and Vice-Mayor, and had been on the commission since 1950. Prior to this he had played professional baseball, worked his way up in the city's police force, and served several years as the chief of police. He was one of the young veterans that received Crump recognition after World War II. John T. 'Buddy' Dwyer, 37, also joined the police force after his release from the service, and rose to the commission, with Crump's blessing, in 1952. He had served as Commissioner of Public Service, and was supported for re-election because of his commendable work in this office. Joseph P. Boyle, 64, who had been on the city payroll since 1912, was the most controversial of all candidates. The Commissioner of Finances and Institutions, he had "made thousands of persons angry in his [previous] roles as poll tax collector, trusted lieutenant, and 'hatchet man' of the old organization. . . On the other hand he [was] credited with driving organized vice and gambling out of the city, and eliminating graft within the police department."<sup>18</sup> Oscar P. Williams, 62, had been the Commissioner of Public Works for twenty years, and had served on the Tennessee Legislature prior to this time. He had always operated in the background, and was not as well known to the public as the other commissioners.

Mr. Armour and Mr. Dwyer were backed by The Commercial Appeal in recognition of their past service, and because it was felt "that they could fit into . . . a program of continued progress if they were not dominated by the cold-patch thinking that has frequently interfered with their projects."<sup>19</sup> These two commissioners were expected to draw, in addition to the votes the machine could deliver, enough support from other areas to elect them. Commissioners Boyle and Williams, the older members of the city administration, were given credit for the reactionary feeling in the courthouse, and were expected to receive only the captive vote.

The Overton ticket ran on a seventeen-point platform which resembled the one proposed by the administration slate. Mr. Overton tried to include in his record everything good that was associated with the Crump era, urging the voters to drive around the city and see the "good things" that represented his record. His ticket had the difficulty of having to be against the city administration candidates, in order to attract the independent vote, and yet be enough like them to take credit for the Crump achievements and draw on the organization's supporters.

Mr. Buck, who was 59, was the terminal superintendent of the Illinois Central Railroad. He had been active in civic and church work, but had no previous political experience. Mr. Dillard, 47, was the only member of the Overton group supported by The Commercial Appeal. He was an automobile salesman, but had had twenty-four years service with the city. In 1928 he had served as assistant superintendent and



director of the recreation department of the Memphis Park Commission, and was later the director of research and attendance for the Board of Education and director of personnel for the Department of Health and Administration. Mr. Dillard had been fired in 1953 by the City Commission, being charged with inefficiency in his department. But he blamed his dismissal on political rivalry against him and then-Mayor Overton, who resigned shortly afterward, following years of strife with the Crump commission. Mr. Futhey, 55 years old, was the past president of Local 49 of the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators, and Paperhangers, and was serving his tenth term as business agent for the local. He was also president of the Memphis Building and Construction Trades Council, having previously served two terms as vice-president of the group. The last member of the Overton ticket was Mr. Thompson, 60, who was the chief engineer for a local electric company. He had previously served as manager of Westinghouse Electric Corporation's Memphis installation for sixteen years. He urged the voters to elect him so that his past experience could be used in constructing a Memphis power plant.

Running as independent candidates were three men who either refused association with the two tickets, or were not acceptable to them. Mr. Carpenter, 73, was the oldest man seeking election to the commission. He was a real estate man and a stock broker, favoring the council-manager form of government and a consolidation of city and county administrative offices. Mr. Loeb, 34, was the youngest man in the race, one of the most popular men in the city, and carried the

endorsement of The Commercial Appeal. He was secretary of Loeb's Laundry and had been named the city's "Outstanding Young Man of the Year" by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. A graduate of Brown University, he had served on the Memphis Park Commission in 1951, but after helping to initiate a hearing in which the chairman of the commission was reprimanded for misconduct in office, he was not reappointed when his term expired. Mr. Loeb had won his first political victory by defeating Bert Bates, of the old organization, for the Commandership of Post No. 1 of the American Legion. The third independent, Mr. Chambers, 42, had been an employe of Ford Motor Company for twenty-six years. He was past president of Ford Local 903 of the United Auto Workers and a former vice-president of the Tennessee Industrial Union Council. His campaign was directed toward the "little man."

When the election returns were in, it had become apparent that the old organization was incapable of holding the captive vote. The core of loyal city employes had disintegrated, and the ward organization was a shell. Edmund Orgill was swept into office with 52,177 votes, while Overton received only 33,061. The other two candidates for mayor polled less than 1,200 votes between them. Mr. Armour (Good Government) lead in the commission race, piling up the highest vote total for any candidate in the 1955 election, with 66,444 votes. Henry Loeb's (Independent) personal appeal placed him second on the commission's vote scale, drawing 54,262 votes. Mr. Dwyer (Good Government) was also returned to the commission, being given 49,658 votes. And Mr. Dillard (Overton ticket) received 33,761

votes to fill the commission. Of the other candidates, Mr. Boyle (Good Government) received 28,781 votes, and Mr. Williams (Good Government) was given a 27,198 vote total. Sam Chambers (Independent) gained 19,101 votes and Mr. Buck (Overton ticket) pulled in 17,953 supporters. None of the other candidates received 10,000 votes.<sup>20</sup>

The twenty Negro precincts (those that had used the single shot method in the school board contest) all returned heavy majorities for Mayor Orgill. In eighteen of these precincts a strong preference was shown for Commissioner Loeb, while sixteen of the precincts gave their second highest vote to Commissioner Dwyer (he was also first in precinct 51-1). Negro preferences were also shown for Mr. Chambers (who was one of the top four candidates in fifteen precincts), Commissioner Armour (among the top four in eleven precincts), and for Commissioner Dillard (ten times one of the top four candidates). A few Negro precincts gave high votes to Mr. Boyle and Mr. Williams.

Interesting to note is that the average age of the commissioners after the 1955 election was 42, compared with a 54 year age average under the earlier administration. Also worth mention was the voters' acceptance of Catholic and Jewish candidates. Mr. Loeb and Mrs. Seessel were Jewish, while Commissioner Dwyer, Judge Colton, and Mr. Shea, of the Board of Education, were Catholic. The election of these people in a strongly protestant Southern city, without raising the religion issue, demonstrates the broad-minded outlook of the Memphis citizen. This, I believe, came only because Mr. Crump had included them on his ticket for many years, thus different faiths, like Negro voting, had been accepted by the city's voters.

The fresh spirit of the election, however, was not carried into office on January 1. One of the first mishaps of the new administration was a premature announcement by Mayor Orgill, on a televised press conference, that he was considering the appointment of a Negro to the city hospital board. While this move was certainly a step toward progress, and one that should have been made, it drew a storm of protests against the new mayor, and hindered the formation of effective leadership at the beginning of his term.<sup>21</sup> More important was the political alliance formed by Mr. Dillard. With the election of two organization and two independent men to the commission, Mr. Dillard appeared to be the balance of power between the two factions. However, after the election he joined Armour and Dwyer to produce a "working majority" capable of killing all action proposed by Mayor Orgill or Commissioner Loeb. Through this alliance almost all action stopped and for four years the two sides sneered at each other across the commission table. A third hindrance to progress was the inability of the "working majority" to completely break away from the Crump way of doing things. Crump had instilled in the minds of the people the idea that the city could be built on low taxes. Because of this the 1955 administration became afraid to raise the tax rate for fear that the public would not accept the increase.<sup>22</sup> Hence the expressway system that had been urged in the campaigns of both Mr. Orgill and the Good Government ticket did not materialize, and all departments of the city suffered from a lack of funds.

B.

The formation of a new political organization, the Citizens for Progress or CP's as they became known, in March of 1956, brought to a climax the split that had developed in the city government. Despite denials by the CP officials, the organization resembled a renewal of the old Shelby County Political Organization headed by Boss Crump. The men behind the new organization were all former Crump associates, and included almost every office holder in the county. Commissioners Armour, Dwyer, and Dillard, of course, were charter members, while Mayor Orgill and Commissioner Loeb were not invited to the membership meeting. The CP platform favored retaining any institution initiated by Crump, whether or not it had outlived its purpose, and speeches made by officials of the organization praised the memory of Crump and made continual references to the many good things that he had brought to the city. But without the personal appeal of their former leader, and the foresight that he had carried, the new organization could do little more than rebuild a campaign machine.

The split represented by the Citizens for Progress can be seen by their goals and the platform they proposed. The group was organized to help "elect a legislative delegation in August [1956] who will support interposition by the state of Tennessee to the Supreme Court decision on segregation, and retention of the commission form of government for Memphis."<sup>23</sup> Their twelve-point program also favored maintaining the present city tax rate, gaining additional funds by obtaining a more favorable distribution of state income, and continuing the unit voting

rule for the Shelby County delegation to the state legislature to increase the voice of the county in state affairs.

The organization was a slap at Mayor Orgill, who was trying to increase the city's tax rate, and who advocated the council-manager form of government. The mayor also took issue with the group's demands for continued segregation and with the praise given the "Dixie Manifesto," signed by one hundred Southern congressmen, including Shelby's Clifford Davis, proposing legal opposition to the Supreme Court's decision on segregation. Mayor Orgill said the CP's were "preaching hate of the Negroes,"<sup>24</sup> and that their platform also held strains of anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish feeling. Further protests against the Citizens for Progress were issued when the organization began to use city employes to collect campaign funds, and mailed campaign literature on city stationery using the city's postage meter.

The mayor's opposition to the Citizens for Progress precipitated the formation of a second political organization headed by Mayor Orgill, his 1955 campaign leaders, and persons traditionally in the anti-Crump camp. Commissioner Loeb was not directly associated with the group. The Good Local Government League, the GLGL or "Glug Glugs" as their opponents called them, was a non-partisan organization designed to promote improved home government. They endorsed qualified men for both the Democratic and Republican primaries for state offices. In a ten-point program, the GLGL favored the adoption of a "Little Hatch Act" to control political activity of city employes; home rule for Memphis, allowing the city to determine its form of government through

a referendum vote; legislative reapportionment for the state of Tennessee; restrictions on political advertising near the polling places; an equitable distribution of city and county school funds (the city paid 75 per cent of the taxes, received 50 per cent of the school funds, and taught 77 per cent of the pupils in the county); and a repeal of the unit voting rule for Shelby County legislators.

The GLGL refused to recognize segregation as an issue, saying that it was "overtaxed already and nothing good can come of it except added hysteria."<sup>25</sup> The extent to which their liberal views were carried can be seen by the appointment of Rev. S. A. Owen, a Negro minister, to the chairmanship of a GLGL committee and their recommendation of T. L. Spencer, a Negro candidate, for the state House of Representatives in the Republican primary.

The election was a three-in-one affair, in which a staggering ninety-two names appeared on the ballot. In the general election, for Shelby County offices, the following positions had to be filled: Attorney General, Sheriff, County Trustee, County Tax Assessor, Court of Appeals Judge, a Chancellor of the Chancery Court, a Circuit Court Judge, two judges of the General Sessions Court, and three County Constables. In the Democratic and Republican primaries held at the same time, nominations were made for: U.S. Representative, Public Service Commissioner, three state senators, eight state representatives, and the state Committeeman and Committeewoman for the Democratic Party.

The CP's carried out an extensive campaign for the twenty-three candidates they supported, urging the voters to "keep Memphis

down in Dixie."<sup>26</sup> The Good Local Government League recommended twenty-two for office, supporting six candidates who had CP backing. When the election returns were in, all Citizens for Progress candidates had won heavy victories over the candidates who carried GLGL support. The only Negro in the Democratic primary for state representative, J. T. Walker, received only 4,015 votes, placing him sixteenth in the nineteen man race. He failed to receive the singular support of the Negro voters that many had expected. Because organized labor was split on the segregation issue, none of the labor candidates, who appeared as independents or under the GLGL banner, received sufficient support for election.

The general election in November, 1956, placed all of the CP supported Democratic candidates in office without serious opposition from the Republicans. The Republican vote in the election was primarily Negro, as can be shown by the vote given Herbert L. Harper, Republican candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives against Clifford Davis. A correlation between the vote for Mr. Harper, who ran unsuccessfully for the school board in 1955, and the vote given Russell Sugarmon, Jr., the leading Negro candidate in the 1959 municipal election, shows the Negro orientation of the Republican vote. Since we can assume that Mr. Sugarmon's vote was entirely Negro, his votes provided a measure to use in evaluating the 35,783 votes that Mr. Harper received against Mr. Davis's 90,874. The correlation, by precinct, between the Harper and Sugarmon votes was  $r = .92$ , indicating that 84.64 per cent of the precincts returned votes for Mr. Harper in direct relation to the



percentage of votes they gave the Negro candidate in 1959. This shows that the Republican strength for state offices depended heavily on the Negro vote. However, in the same election, President Eisenhower received 65,690 votes to Adlai Stevenson's 62,051. But a sufficient number of Presidential Republicans or Eisenhower Democrats (those who are ordinarily Democratic but crossed party lines to vote for Eisenhower) were white, so that there was no appreciable correlation ( $r = .164$ ) between the vote for Eisenhower and the vote for Sugarman.

The politically divided city and county governments greatly damaged state-local relations. "Shelby had dropped from the most efficient to the least efficient of the four metropolitan counties in a span of less than three years."<sup>27</sup> In the expressway controversy, for instance, the political rift was noted, and placed State Highway Commissioner W. M. Leech in a difficult position. If he had made an appointment with Mayor Orgill and Commissioner Loeb and ignored the Citizens for Progress group, it would have caused ill feelings among the CP officials. If he had worked only with the "working majority" on the city commission, it would have been an "obvious breach of protocol"<sup>28</sup> to ignore the mayor and the Commissioner of Public Works, Mr. Loeb, who in ordinary circumstances would have been the most logical and the only necessary people to see. Further difficulty arose in other instances where state officials had to consult the various factions of the CP organization in the city and county government. Thus in many cases, state politicians had to call on from six to eight officials instead of one, greatly hampering their work and the

chance that action would be accomplished. Many state officials remarked "we wouldn't be having this trouble if Mr. Crump were still down there."<sup>29</sup>

In the 1958 state and county elections, the Citizens for Progress showed early signs of internal weakness. Thomas P. Mitchell, state senator from the 33rd District, withdrew from the CP organization rejecting their nomination, and won heavily over J. Weldon Burrow, who was then given CP support. Much bitterness arose in the CP camp over which of the six candidates for Governor they should support. After many weeks of hassling, they finally decided to support Buford Ellington. The Commercial Appeal endorsed Andrew "Tip" Taylor from Jackson, Tennessee, and the Memphis Press-Scimitar supported the campaign of Edmund Orgill, who toured the state with a broom, promising a "clean sweep." Although Mr. Ellington was elected, he carried only a few Memphis precincts, while Mr. Orgill took second place in his home city, surrendering the local vote to Mr. Taylor. The Citizens for Progress had also supported the election of Prentice Cooper to the United States Senate over incumbent Albert Gore. Yet Gore had won the election and the Shelby County vote. The losses suffered by the Citizens for Progress brought an end to their organization, as the 1956 losses had terminated the existence of the Good Local Government League.

In the election, Mayor Orgill had won in Chattanooga and Knoxville, primarily because of his 1948 support of Senator Kefauver, but placed second in Memphis and Nashville. In Memphis, a large portion of his 40,951 vote (compared with 44,190 for Taylor and 18,631 for Governor Ellington) came from the Negro precincts, where he received almost

undivided support. In precinct 60-3, for instance, which was 91 per cent Negro in 1959, 865 votes were given Mayor Orgill, while the other five gubernatorial candidates received a total of only 77 votes. The same was true with the Negroes in Shelby County, outside the city, where the strongly Negro Levi-2 box returned 975 votes for Mr. Orgill, giving 58 votes to the next highest candidate.<sup>30</sup>

Also important in the 1958 election was the Negro use of the single shot method for the second time in three years. This time the Negro precincts, through use of the technique, were able to give S. A. Wilburn, a young Negro attorney, 26,266 votes in his campaign for the state legislature. There were eleven men running for the eight-man post, and election officials discovered that a "surprisingly large number of [Negro] voters had marked their ballots for only one or a few chosen candidates."<sup>31</sup> While Mr. Wilburn placed tenth (of eleven candidates) in the race, the top-heavy vote he received from the Negro wards made many white citizens fear that a similar "ballot blitz" in a future election, if "carried out with a substantial degree of uniformity . . . [would] enable a strong minority to thwart the will of the majority."<sup>32</sup>

The threat was substantiated with the election of Robert A. Hoffman as Chancellor of Part I of the Chancery Court in the August general election. Mr. Hoffman, who had Negro support, won a close election over Rives A. Manker, who carried the backing of the Citizens for Progress and the endorsement of the Memphis and Shelby County Bar Association, chiefly by the one-sided margins given him by the Negro

precincts.<sup>33</sup> While this was the bloc vote without the refinement of the single shot, it was effective and just as powerful a threat in the eyes of the white voter.

Similar action was used by the Negro voters in the November, 1958, general election, in which Dr. R. Q. Venson, a Negro dentist, was one of twenty-one candidates seeking election to the eight-man delegation to a limited constitutional convention. Dr. Venson received disproportionate votes in twenty-seven predominantly Negro precincts. The Negroes had also instructed their ranks to vote for Louis E. Peiser and Harry W. Wellford, white attorneys, for the same office, and these men received considerable support from the Negro areas.<sup>34</sup> In precinct 43-3, for instance, in which 1,612 Negro and 2 white voters were registered, Dr. Venson received 352 votes, while Mr. Wellford registered 227 and Mr. Peiser drew 175. The high among the other candidates was 32.

Threatened with the possibility that this would be used in future elections, chiefly the 1959 city commission race and the school board contest, the white voters sought means to outlaw the single shot technique. Two sources of action were open to them. First, they could follow the lead set by Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and North Carolina, and require each voter to vote for as many candidates as there were offices at stake. However, the Negroes argued that they should not be required to vote for eight men when only one or two were acceptable to them. And, to change the city's 700 voting machines to void any ballot in which votes were omitted, would cost the city \$175,000.<sup>35</sup>

The second, and more practical solution, was to require the candidates to run for positions, rather than for the office. Under this system "instead of a number of candidates running for . . . eight state constitutional convention seats with the eight highest elected, each candidate would be required to run for a particular seat,"<sup>36</sup> on the convention, with a winner being determined for each seat. It would cost nothing to convert the voting machines for use in multi-office races. A bill to this effect was introduced in the state legislature by the Shelby County delegation in February, 1959, and was made law shortly thereafter. This was to become important in the 1959 municipal election, and will prove to be significant in later elections for the eight-man delegation to the state legislature. But while the new law required candidates to run for Position I, Position II, and so forth, it did not divide the seats among the various geographic sections of the city or county. Candidates still run at large, and Negro voters are denied the chance of electing a candidate of their choice in their home district.

Thus in the five years following the death of Edward Hull Crump, came the collapse of his machine and the failure of a substitute organization to replace it; the development of a politically divided city and county government, incapable of overcoming political barriers for the sake of action; and the growth and curtailment of an effective device to express the wishes of the Negro voters. In the midst of cries that this would not have happened had Crump lived, the city began to realize that Memphis should be up, not down in Dixie, and that progres-

sive action would only come through the acceptance of their civic responsibilities and the election of men capable of producing the needed leadership. The 1959 municipal election was looked upon as a hope for the future, and a chance to make up the time they had lost since 1954.

CHAPTER VII  
THE CANDIDATES IN 1959



A CHANGE - For years Mr. Crump selected the candidates for each post and they were ratified by the people. Without his influence, forty-five names appeared on the ballot in the 1959 Municipal Election.

Since the Orgill administration had been unable to provide effective municipal government, the first desire in the 1959 election was to elect new men to the commission who could provide this leadership. The office of mayor offered the greatest possibility for a man to prove his political strength, and therefore during the campaign it was sought by eight candidates, including Mayor Orgill and Commissioner Henry Loeb. Mr. Loeb's entrance in this contest left a vacancy on the commission which, without an incumbent to buck, drew six candidates into the race for Public Works Commissioner. Another possibility for new leadership, and one that seemed necessary if the election was to provide effective government was to retire one or more members of the "working majority" (viz., the Armour-Dwyer-Dillard coalition). Commissioners Armour and Dwyer had good records in their respective offices, despite their unwillingness to co-operate with the independent members of the commission, and they received only slight opposition. The attack on the "working majority," then, was made on its weakest member, Stanley Dillard, and three candidates entered against him in the campaign for Commissioner of Finances and Institutions.

When asked what his proudest accomplishments were during his term of office, Mayor Orgill listed "the independence and responsibility now given to citizens advisory boards, the vast improvement in civil service and personnel . . . the establishment of an effective Planning Commission, and the election of the new City Commission."<sup>1</sup> By the same token, he considered his failure to obtain a division of city and county school funds on a basis of average daily attendance (which would have



given the city 73 per cent of the school funds in 1959, instead of 50 per cent as received under the present plan), to be his greatest error. Despite his failure to get many of his measures through the blocked commission, a large number of citizens felt that the Mayor should be returned to office, and given new commissioners to work with, would prove to be the leader the city needed. It was certain that he would attract the Negro and the labor vote, while his popularity was also strong in other sections of the city. However, his withdrawal from the race six weeks before the election, due to an operation for a stopped artery, left Henry Loeb without serious opposition for the post.

Mr. Loeb had run for office in 1955 in order to defeat the political machine, but being blocked by the working majority, he decided to run for mayor in 1959. His two main objectives of office were to improve the school system and bring new industry to the city. He had been pushed aside by the 1955 Commission, given the undesirable Public Works Commissionership instead of the head of the Department of Finances and Institutions that he preferred. Still he had made the most of his headache, and had won many supporters by his efficient method of handling complaints. He had urged people to tell him about vacant lots that were grown over with weeds, about pot holes in the roads, and about alleys they wanted paved. When the garbage trucks failed to make a pick-up, he himself would make the collection. A great letter writer (he averaged a hundred a day), he prided himself with sending a personal letter to everyone who wrote or called his office, assuring the person that his complaint had been received and

that action would be taken. These were low-cost services, but were expected to add heavily to his vote total.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Loeb, an executive of Loeb's Laundry, had refused association with both tickets in the 1955 election, and had not been a part of either the Citizens for Progress or the Good Local Government League. When asked if he planned to present a slate of favored commission candidates in his 1959 campaign, he remarked that the only ticket he was interested in was a laundry ticket.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Loeb believed in establishing a charter committee to study the possibility of a change in the form of government, planned to work for consolidation of duplicate city and county functions, and believed in comprehensive planning for the city's future growth. With the withdrawal of Mayor Orgill from consideration, Commissioner Loeb received the support of both Memphis newspapers and of the Dedicated Citizens Committee, which had been formed by Mayor Orgill's campaign organization. With the prospect of a Negro's election in the Public Works contest, Mr. Loeb came under severe pressure to endorse one of the white candidates. While he refused to do so, urging the contenders for that office to "thin their ranks,"<sup>4</sup> he was criticized by the city's Negro population, who felt that the mayor was sacrificing their welfare because of the demands of the white citizens.

Because of the dissatisfaction with Commissioner Loeb, the Negro Volunteer Ticket endorsed Partee Fleming, 42, for mayor. Mr. Fleming had entered the race on "impulse" after Mr. Orgill's withdrawal, and was not a serious candidate until he received Negro

backing. He was the owner of a large wholesale and retail furniture store, and was the former national amateur heavyweight wrestling champion. The 300-pound candidate said that since Memphis was the largest city in the state it should have the biggest mayor.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Fleming's campaign centered around his promise to provide "10,000 new jobs for Memphis--a gold mine in your own back yard."<sup>5</sup> Despite his claim that he was a "heavy contender" for the office, he received less than half the 65,000 votes he expected.<sup>7</sup>

Fringe candidates in the race were Willis E. Ayres, Jr., who campaigned as the "foe of integration;" Tom Morris Bryan, who "wanted to give Henry Loeb some competition . . . because he was just sliding in;"<sup>8</sup> Albert F. Boskey, 33-year-old chemical worker, who entered the race because he felt more people should take part in their city government; Robert Gregory, who was disqualified by the Shelby County Election Commission because he did not own property inside the city; and former city judge William C. Bateman, who withdrew early in the campaign in favor of Mr. Fleming.

Claude A. Armour was virtually without opposition in his campaign for a third term as Commissioner of Fire and Police and Vice-Mayor. An organization candidate in 1955, a leader in the Citizens for Progress movement, and a former Crump lieutenant, Commissioner Armour ran "as an individual," in the 1959 election. Again, his record in office served as the basis of his campaign. During the eight years he had held the post, the Police Department had added 255 new personnel and the Fire Department had grown by a comparable figure.

His departments had obtained salary increases amounting to 68 per cent, and the forty-hour week had been introduced. Commissioner Armour had introduced drunkometers, a driver education division, a training center for new patrolmen, and had helped provide additional off-street parking.<sup>9</sup> It was felt that his record more than compensated for his lack of cooperation, and he received the backing of the two city newspapers and of the Dedicated Citizens.

His only opponent was J. O. Bomer, Jr., 69, an attorney who had been disbarred for life some twenty-five years before.<sup>10</sup> O. Z. Evers, a Negro who had filed an anti-segregation suit against the city transit system in 1956, had planned to oppose Mr. Armour, but was blocked because he had not lived the required five years in the city. A Memphis postal employe, he lost his \$4,875-a-year job for his political activities.

John T. Dwyer was the second of the incumbent commissioners to receive the backing of The Commercial Appeal, the Memphis Press-Scimitar, and the Dedicated Citizens Committee. While he was an "arrogant, dominating fellow,"<sup>11</sup> and was several times accused of poor sportsmanship in his campaign for re-election, he had a commendable record and a weak opponent. As Commissioner of Public Service, he was lauded for his work in urban renewal and rehabilitation, slum clearance, enforcement of a strict building code, and for the progress made by the Memphis Light, Gas & Water Division. (The Commissioner was liaison officer between the LG&W and the city commission.) Part of his campaign centered around the number of mouths he had to feed. Four of his children

wore T-shirts saying "Re-elect my Daddy, John T. Buddy Dwyer," and a fifth child was born to his wife during the campaign. Many felt that a large portion of his vote was a rejection of his opponent rather than the approval of his nineteen years as a public servant.

Lewis Taliaferro (pronounced Toliver), who opposed Mr. Dwyer, was a young attorney who campaigned that he could provide "leadership with vision." Although he was 38, his youthful appearance detracted from the seriousness of his campaign, and several politicians quipped that they might vote for him for president of the senior class, but not for commissioner. His entire campaign was centered around his attack of Mr. Dwyer and his policies, and very little original thinking was presented by the candidate. Mr. Taliaferro charged Dwyer with being a member of the "working majority," and supported a Little Hatch Act because Commissioner Dwyer had been using his office employees for campaign purposes. While the Negro Volunteer Ticket supported Mr. Dwyer's re-election, Taliaferro received some colored backing. And it was interesting to note that while his election was not favored by the Press-Scimitar, he probably received more space in that paper than any other candidate. The articles were too numerous, editorialized, and often dealt with trivial matters, all of which combined to work against the candidate rather than for him.

Stanley Dillard, seeking re-election as Commissioner of Finances and Institutions, was the most susceptible to attack of the three "working majority" commissioners. He was criticized for delaying action on building a new municipal airport and for requiring members of

the tax collector's department to work in his campaign. Mr. Dillard was also charged with keeping a personal photographer on the city payroll to take pictures of the Commissioner for frequent press releases. The major charge against him, however, was seen in The Commercial Appeal when they reported, "expedience too often has guided his actions when the interests of the community required forthrightness and affirmative action regardless of 'working majorities' or counting the house to see which faction in a controversy represented the most votes."<sup>12</sup>

While Mr. Dillard was not outspoken on the issue of segregation, he had said that he believed "that the best interest of . . . this city would be served by continued segregation of the races in our recreational facilities, schools, buses, and libraries."<sup>13</sup> At the same time he recognized and supported with "equal sincerity separate but equal facilities for our Negro citizens." Still this did not satisfy the Negro voters, who also objected to the segregated policies of the city hospitals, which came under Mr. Dillard's jurisdiction. It was evident that their support of Mr. Moore cost Commissioner Dillard the election.

James W. 'Jimmy' Moore, a 54-year-old business executive and political newcomer, attracted the most interest in the race. Running on a "plan for positive action," he promised "I will bring to the City Commission meetings an independent mind, mature judgement, and the courage to do what I think is right. I will not be swayed nor dictated to by anyone at any time."<sup>14</sup> He also promised "not to use my position

to make a political fortune . . . [and] to respect the office of Mayor and recognize the importance of co-operation with him and the other commissioners. . .<sup>15</sup> Mr. Moore drew on his years as an outfielder with the Chicago White Sox and with Connie Mack's famous Philadelphia Athletics for the "teamwork" needed in the city government, and on his years as head of the Yellow Cab Company for the progressive leadership necessary for action.

Mr. Moore carried the endorsement of the Memphis newspapers, the Dedicated Citizens' "Unity Ticket," Mayor Orgill, and the Loeb campaign organization. Vice-President of the Metropolitan YMCA, Mr. Moore was the recipient of Negro support. The political advertising used by Mr. Moore demonstrated his quick and original thinking. A telephone was installed at the Moore headquarters that would give a recorded message to those who called. The phone became the most popular in town, receiving more than 5,000 calls a day, and a second soon had to be put in use. The messages were changed daily and were sharp and to the point. "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link,"<sup>16</sup> went one message, and another said "Jimmy Moore is energetic, independent, aggressive, and intelligent. This will produce a much needed change when he is elected Commissioner of Finances and Institutions."<sup>17</sup> When Mr. Dillard charged that this kind of advertising was "dirty pool," the next day's message said: "Our opponent has accused us of playing 'dirty pool,' but how can he do this when he has put himself behind the eight-ball."<sup>18</sup> Signs outside the polling places on election day read "Why settle for less when you can have MOORE," and his newspaper ads

reminded that "Moore means More of the most for Memphis."<sup>19</sup>

Token support was given to C. E. Hurley, who advocated improving the status of Memphis State University, raising teacher salaries, and attracting new industry. His campaign centered around an attack on Mr. Dillard and on the Dedicated Citizens' support of Mr. Moore. Malone Sims, a salesman for Memphis Tobacco Company, also announced for the post, but withdrew in favor of Mr. Hurley.

Major interest occurred in the Public Works contest because of the entrance of a Negro candidate. Russell B. Sugarmon, Jr., an attorney and counsel for the Mutual Federal Savings & Loan Association, ran for office on the Volunteer Ticket, which felt "the Negro has never really realized his political potential here."<sup>20</sup> The 30-year-old candidate was the leading Negro running for office, given the greatest possibility of winning, and was responsible for most of the campaigning done by the Ticket. Mr. Sugarmon was a graduate of Booker T. Washington High School in Memphis and attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, where one of his classmates was Rev. Martin Luther King, the leader of the successful bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. Leaving Morehouse, Sugarmon enrolled in Rutgers University, where he received his bachelor of arts degree in 1950. Next came Harvard and a law degree in 1953. He later attended Boston University to complete the course requirements for a master's degree in finance, although he is yet to write his thesis. His wife, the former Miss Dolores DeCosta of Orangeburg, South Carolina, is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Wellesley. He promised that if elected he would select Public Works employes on the basis of merit, not color.



The possibility of Mr. Sugarmon's victory depended on the large number of white candidates campaigning for the office. One of the leading white candidates was William Farris, who had served as administrative assistant to three mayors, and was then director of personnel for the city. He had demonstrated his ability in these offices, and had piled up an impressive list of civic activities to support his interest in the future of Memphis. Mr. Farris, 36, was past president of Tennessee Junior Chamber of Commerce. He received the support of the two city newspapers, the Dedicated Citizens, Mayor Orgill, and members of the Armour and Loeb campaign organizations.

John Ford Canale, another strong white candidate, had served as the executive assistant to the Shelby County Commission since 1956, and was personnel director of the county. He too could be commended for his public service and for the many hours he had spent in civic, charitable, and political organizations. He was the president of Spencer-Sturla Funeral Home, and shortly after the campaign became the general manager of the Memphis Chicks, the city's professional baseball team. Mr. Canale and Mr. Farris campaigned as though there were no other contestants in the seven-man race. Each charged the other of being a machine candidate in disguise. Mr. Canale had been an active member of the Shelby County Political Organization and the Citizens for Progress, while Mr. Farris had campaigned for Browning and Kefauver in 1948, for the Crump organization under the Tobey administration, and had supported Orgill in 1955. Mr. Canale was further charged with not supporting a Little Hatch Act for city employes, and for his failure to

commit himself on the issue of dividing city and county school funds.

W. B. 'Will' Fowler, the veteran city engineer and an employe of the Public Works Department for the past forty-two years, was probably the best qualified candidate for the Public Works Commissionership. Yet he too had a history of submission to the Crump machine, and his more than 70 years lead many to believe that he would not bring the responsive and independent thinking to the City Commission that a younger man could. Fowler, who campaigned on his knowledge of the department, urged the voters, in the face of the Negro threat, "to rally behind the leading white candidate" and "unite behind the mature, experienced, elder statesman as a compromise candidate."<sup>22</sup> But when all meaningful support, by newspapers and the Unity Ticket, was given to Mr. Farris, and when these organizations were exerting pressure on all other white candidates to withdraw, to prevent Sugarmon's election, Will Fowler gave in and withdrew from the contest five days before the election. He stated that he had left the race "for the good of Memphis," and to the white citizen this was true, for without his withdrawal it is very likely that Mr. Sugarmon would have been elected.

The only labor candidate in the contest was Sam Chambers, who had run unsuccessfully for the City Commission in 1955 and for the state senate in 1956. He favored co-ordination of purchases by the various departments of the city government and believed in long-range planning for urban development. However, he did not believe that city employes should be "denied the right to participate in partisan politics,"<sup>23</sup> and therefore did not support the Little Hatch Act. It was expected that

those Negroes who were dissatisfied with Mr. Sugarmon would cast their ballots for Chambers because of his labor stand. Many persons were angered that he did not withdraw from the race as Mr. Fowler had done, and on the eve of the election Chambers reported he had received a threatening phone call, promising injury to him if the Negro were elected. Fringe candidates were Sam Hawkins, a laborer, and Sam Clark, a carpenter who campaigned in overalls. Mr. Clark was denied the right to run for office because he did not own land within the city.

In the race for Judge of the Juvenile Court, four white candidates were pitted against a Negro entry, and some felt that a condition similar to that which existed in the Public Works contest would develop. However, Judge Elizabeth McCain drew enough support from the white voters that a fractioning of the vote among the white candidates was prevented. Miss McCain had proved, through years of devoted service, to be worthy of re-election, and her opponents found little in her program that they could attack. During the campaign, Miss McCain announced that she would soon name a Negro assistant probation officer for the court, who would handle complaints involving Negro children. The proposal was submitted to the City Commission by Stanley Dillard (the Juvenile Court operates under the Department of Finances and Institutions), and was approved. The measure also gained the support of both city newspapers as "a step toward giving Negroes more voice in handling their governmental affairs."<sup>23</sup> "It is justified" they reported, "on the same principle that Negro officers were added to the police department some years ago. It should increase the efficiency

of the Juvenile Court and improve race relations."<sup>24</sup> However, the appointment has not yet been made.

The Judge's chief white opponent was Joseph B. McCartie, a competent young attorney. Mr. McCartie, who had grown up in an orphanage, campaigned on his first-hand knowledge of "the abandoned, dependent, and delinquent child." He drew support from those who believed that Miss McCain had not been firm enough in handling some cases, and from those who thought that a man would make a better judge. Another male candidate for the post was Hearn W. Tidwell, Jr., a 45-year-old lawyer, businessman, and a member of the Youth Guidance Commission. In a ten-point program advocating "Mom and Pop" baseball leagues, family fishing clubs, and a teenage canteen, Mr. Tidwell's "basic aim is to prevent delinquency and dependence before it occurs."<sup>25</sup> A late entry in the race, it was apparent that he could not overtake the front runners, and resigned ten days before the election. Lawyers Robert V. Bickers and Abe L. Roberts had also entered the contest, but withdrew a month before the election. A second lady in the race was Mrs. Ila Huff, who had been director of the Girls Club in Memphis for twelve years. She had previously served three terms in the Oklahoma House of Representatives and had been superintendent of the Child Welfare Department in that state. She charged Judge McCain with not separating the dependent and delinquent children.

The Negro candidate for the Judgeship was 34-year-old Rev. Ben L. Hooks. Rev. Hooks, also an attorney, was one of the three founders and the present treasurer of Mutual Federal Savings and Loan

Association. He was a member of the Lincoln League (Republican) and the NAACP, and had run unsuccessfully for the state legislature in 1954. His grandfather, Charles Hooks, was the first Negro Juvenile Court officer in Memphis and operated the first Negro juvenile detention home in the city. He was killed by an escaping juvenile in 1917. His grandmother, Mrs. Julia Hooks, who received her B.A. degree from Berea College in Kentucky, was the second Negro woman in the South to receive a college diploma.<sup>26</sup> Rev. Hooks had received his law degree from DePaul University in Chicago. He believed that a Negro would be particularly effective on the court because of the high number of Negro cases that came before it.

John P. Colton was unopposed for Judge of Division I of the City Court. Judge Beverly Boushe of Division II was opposed by Ray Churchill, who had made an unsuccessful attempt to unseat Judge Colton in 1955. Mr. Churchill charged Judge Boushe with running a "court of injustice and revenue," and with siding with the police in disregard of citizens' rights. While there may have been some truth in his statements, his examples were minor and often reported falsely and out of context. Mr. Churchill was given the endorsement of the CIO Committee on Political Education and of the Negro Volunteer Ticket, who termed Boushe their "long time enemy."

Judge William B. Ingram of Division III of the City Court, the traffic division, was opposed by Attorneys Robert Acklen and Bernie Mullikin. Judge Ingram, who had Negro support, waged a continuous battle against the police department in the name of protecting

individual freedoms. While many of his actions were justified, he was charged with "headline hunting" and "trying to create petty controversies to use for his own political gain."<sup>27</sup> Police Chief James MacDonald said the judge was inconsistent, "he frees vicious drunk drivers on technicalities and turns around to throw the book at another driver who may have a better excuse, really."<sup>28</sup> After the election, The Commercial Appeal urged: "Judge Ingram has demonstrated his courage convincingly. Now let him demonstrate discretion and co-operation."<sup>29</sup>

Joe Hicks, veteran city tax assessor, who was running for his "last term of office," faced two opponents. George Lenow, Jr., an inspector for the City Licenses and Privileges Department, campaigned for a readjustment of taxes through reappraisal of assessments and for a five-year tax waiver for new industry locating in Memphis. Elicuh Stanback, Negro, was also entered in the contest. The weakest of the five Negro candidates, Mr. Stanback was not a member of the Volunteer Ticket, although he carried their endorsement. He said in Memphis "the tax rate is applied equally [to white and colored residents], but the benefits are applied unequally."<sup>30</sup> Therefore he proposed to "force integration on the city by threatening to cut assessments on Negro property by 30 per cent."<sup>31</sup> Mr. Stanback was poorly educated, although he had attended a local college, and many of his votes were pulled in by the appeal of the other Negro candidates to the colored voter.

The last positions to be filled by the voters were the four seats on the Board of Education. Since the candidates were running for specific posts, the possibility of the two Negro candidates being elected

was slight. The four incumbents, John Shea, Julian Bondurant, Mrs. Arthur N. Seessel, Jr., and Mrs. Lawrence Coe, were supported by the city's newspapers and the Dedicated Citizens, and were assured of an easy victory. They did little campaigning, and spent between them only \$107.50 on the campaign.<sup>32</sup>

George M. Anglin, a life insurance agent, received token support in his campaign for Position I on the Board held by incumbent Shea. Mr. Anglin had campaigned for adequate planning for future school expansion. Running for Position II, against Mrs. Seessel, were Rev. Roy Love, M. D. Holmes, Jr., and Dixon T. Gaines, Jr. Mr. Holmes, was an avowed segregationist who dressed in all-white clothing, and Mr. Gaines was running to represent the lower and middle income groups on the Board. Rev. Love, president of the Negro Baptist Pastors Alliance and pastor of Mt. Nebo Baptist Church, had tried to run for the state legislature in 1954 but was stopped by a constitutional ban against ministers in the Tennessee Senate, and was an unsuccessful candidate for the Board of Education in 1955. In 1959, integration was the first plank in his platform, although his approach was calmer than that used by many supporters of desegregation.

For Position III, Henry C. Bunton, T. Mason Ezzell, and Mrs. Natalie K. Canada were opposing Mrs. Coe. The Negroes erred in entering Rev. Bunton against Mrs. Coe, since the incumbent was noted for her moderate stand on integration, and had been the guest speaker at several Negro rallies. Mrs. Canada, a native of Rhode Island, attacked Mrs. Coe for her stand on segregation and promised a strict division of the races

if she were elected. Mr. Ezzell was the president of the Memphis Title Company and was expected to draw a sizeable vote total. Rev. Bunton was pastor of the Mt. Olive Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and had spent the 1957 Christmas season in the Holy Land. He was a graduate of the Iliff School of Theology at the University of Denver and had served as director of youth work for the CME Church in Chicago and as an Army chaplain in Europe during World War II. He also listed integration as his number one aim, but like the other members of the Volunteer Ticket, his approach was moderate, although firm. For position IV, Lloyd Burgen drew token support against incumbent Bondurant.

With the entrance of so many candidates in the municipal election, and without the guiding hand of an organized ticket or a uniform party platform, it seems only logical that various civic organizations and the newspapers would consider it their duty to propose a slate of acceptable candidates. There is also little wonder that these same organizations would urge the white candidates to reduce their numbers in the face of a possible Negro victory. The development of the "Unity Ticket" by the Dedicated Citizens, and the aggressive campaign carried on by the Negro Volunteer Ticket were the two most important developments in the election. Both had depended on the large number of unorganized white candidates for their origin and development.



CHAPTER VIII

THE NEGRO VOTE AND THE 1959 ELECTION



THE NEGRO SPEAKS - As he states his views for the office, Russell B. Sugarmon, Jr., (right) draws the attention of the four leading white candidates in the contest for Commissioner of Public Works. They are (left to right) John Ford Canale, Sam Chambers, William Farris, and Will Fowler.

Remarkable in the organization of the Volunteer Ticket was the fact that integration was not an immediate concern. Instead, the Negro ticket made "an appeal to the Memphis conscience" "on behalf of the Negro candidates and Negro community for a wider participation in municipal matters."<sup>1</sup> The Negro, through this political organ, was seeking "to join the community and be a part of the community's institutions . . . to accept his share of the community load and fight to reduce provocations without destroying the essential elements of progress . . . to work with the white people with a self-dedication to maintain the bonds of brotherhood and love."<sup>2</sup> Negro leaders reminded that "to say that the NAACP had come all the way from New York to inspire the Negro's hope for freedom is a cruel method of turning the fair-minded white people against the Colored candidates. . . . Fair-minded white citizens know that our determination is inspired only by the desire for more participation in government affairs."<sup>3</sup>

The political maturity expressed in these statements received the immediate support of The Commercial Appeal. Although they did not support the election of the Negro candidates, many of their editorials recognized the need of giving the Negro citizens a chance to participate in civic affairs. The stand taken by this paper during the election demonstrated the clear-thinking present in Memphis, and will be as important to the future of the Negro in the South as the election itself. This was the first time in the history of any Southern city, to my knowledge, that a major news medium actively supported improving the political status of the Negro citizens. In an editorial three weeks

before the election, The Commercial Appeal said:

[Memphis must face] up to the reality that if the Negro is to assume leadership and responsibility, he must have the opportunities to do so. If we are to dwell side-by-side in harmony and prosperity, then the white community must offer means to economic advancement.

The Negro should have more voice in the handling of his governmental affairs. Why couldn't the city hall provide for an assistant city attorney, for example, or the municipal or juvenile courts set up a division for Negro problems with members of that race administering the offices?

We provide schools and training for Negroes. Only archaic thinking prevents utilization of those talents for the good of the community and of the Negroes themselves. We do not want social amalgamation. We must, then, afford opportunity and equality before the law and ballot box. It is not only just, it is prudent.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, there were two sides to the Negro campaign, and while one said, "The Negro wants to walk the streets of Memphis with the dignity of a human personality"<sup>5</sup> and asked for participation in government because "the Negro's self-respect is at stake,"<sup>6</sup> the other was more radical and used primarily at the all-Negro gatherings. Here campaign literature urged "Don't listen to 'Uncle Toms,' Vote the Volunteer Ticket!" and promised that the white "demagogues will be buried by such an avalanche of ballots on election day it will take a thousand cans of baking powder to make 'em rise again."<sup>7</sup> The Volunteer Ticket was extremely skillful in handling this dual role. On one hand, the candidates had to appear radical and demand immediate steps to comply with the Supreme Court order on integration in order to attract the Negro vote. On the other hand, they had to maintain a subdued public appearance, interested only in community well being, to gain the support of the "fair-minded" white citizens and prevent the rise of a strong

anti-Negro force. A skillful manipulation of these two approaches was probably the greatest achievement of the Volunteer Ticket and contributed greatly to its good showing.

Any hope for a Negro victory depended on a major turnout of the Negro voters. "Negro candidates will win if you vote for them" Volunteer campaign literature prophesied; "They can only be defeated if Negroes do not vote!"<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the chief efforts of the Volunteer Ticket were to get Negroes registered, before the July 21 deadline, and then to get them to the polls a month later. To help them build Negro interest, the Volunteer Ticket held several large political rallies, sometimes with the help of outside celebrities. More than 5,000 persons turned out to hear Rev. Martin Luther King, of Montgomery bus boycott fame, chant "We just want to be free."<sup>9</sup> Another 400 Negroes paid ten dollars a plate to attend a banquet in honor of Mrs. Daisy Bates, leader in the fight to integrate Little Rock schools. Other attempts to insure a large Negro vote included a pre-vote fast and sunrise services at forty colored churches on the morning of the election.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to the Crump tradition, the white candidates made numerous speeches, primarily at civic clubs and on television. Yet it was the Negro campaign that was noted for its "oratorical eloquence." Candidates Sugarmon and Hooks and the influential Negro leader, Lt. George W. Lee (chairman of the Volunteer Ticket steering committee), were the pride of the Negro community for their stirring speeches. In one speech, Rev. Hooks charged that Commissioner Loeb, by urging the

white candidates in the over-crowded Public Works contest to "thin their ranks," had "crucified" the Negro candidates "on the cross of political expediency."<sup>11</sup> Lt. Lee, at the mass meeting with Rev. King, said "We're going to fight 'till hell freezes over and, if necessary, skate across the ice in order to keep freedom moving in the right direction."<sup>12</sup> The desire of the Negro community to co-operate with the whites was a constant theme at every political rally. To show this, Rev. Hooks, in a five-minute telecast, compared the Memphis political situation to the keys of a piano:

Just as full harmony and beauty cannot be achieved by a pianist unless he uses both black and white keys, so Memphis will never reach its full potential as a city unless qualified men of both black and white races are utilized in the conduct of affairs.<sup>13</sup>

It was interesting to note that during the campaign the members of the Volunteer Ticket always appeared as, or in behalf of, the Ticket and never as individual candidates. Sugarmon and Hooks carried a large portion of the campaign burden, but all members of the organization were active. Another interesting feature of the campaign is seen when we review the Bunche report on the Memphis Negro in 1940. Bunche criticized the Negro ministers for not taking an active part in politics and for urging their flocks to stay out of political affairs.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, in the 1959 election three of the five Negro candidates were ministers and a great deal of the support given the Volunteer Ticket came from the Negro clergy. Most of the political rallies were held in the Negro churches. One explanation for the present lead taken by the Negro ministers in urging political equality is that they, of all Negro

citizens, are the freest from the economic pressures of the white community, being dependent entirely on their Negro congregations. Also they are highly respected in their communities and are in a position to influence many people. The political activity of the city's Negro ministers prompted Hambone, a philosophizing "Uncle Tom" cartoon Negro in The Commercial Appeal, to say, "De closer a preacher git to pol'tics, de further he git 'way f'um de Lawd!!!"<sup>15</sup>

Throughout the campaign it was apparent to both white and Negro leaders that the work carried on by the Volunteer Ticket would affect the political status of the Negro throughout the South. The importance of the Negro vote across the nation is seen by the fact that although the Negro candidates did not win, almost every major newspaper in the country carried articles on the election. This interest was certainly justified, for based on the latest available figures (compiled in 1958 by the Southern Regional Council), the 57,100 Negroes registered for the Memphis Municipal Election in 1959, represented 30.81 per cent of the 185,000 registered Negroes in the state of Tennessee and 4.38 per cent of all registered Negroes in the ten Southern states (Virginia was excluded from the tabulation). Further impact of the size of the Negro registration in Memphis is seen when we realize that almost three times as many Negroes were registered in Memphis than in the entire state of Mississippi (20,000 qualified Negro voters) and that colored registration in Memphis was virtually equal to that in the state of South Carolina (with 57,978 Negroes registered). The registration books of neighboring Arkansas carried

only 64,023 Negro voters and Alabama listed but 70,000 eligible colored voters.<sup>16</sup> No wonder Memphis has been called the "voting oasis for Negroes in the entire South."<sup>17</sup>

Although the Volunteer Ticket had increased Negro registration to 57,100, representing 30.4 per cent of the eligible voters in the city, and, based on the vote given Russell Sugarmon in the Public Works contest, had gotten a phenomenal 61.90 per cent of their caste to the polls on election day, they could have no chance of electing one of their members unless the offices were filled by a plurality rather than a majority vote. When the voting laws had been changed to eliminate the single shot technique and when the 1959 election had been moved from November to August, so that if segregation became an issue it would be settled by the voters before school opened, the city fathers believed that they had established blocks that would prevent a Negro being elected to any city office. However, their early preparation had neglected the possibility of numerous white candidates splitting the white vote in a contest, allowing a single Negro candidate for the post to be elected by a plurality vote. Under Crump, when only few opposition candidates appeared, there was no need for a preferential vote (run off election) in either the municipal election or the Democratic primary, as practiced in other Southern states. Consequently, county officials could not foresee the need for a preferential vote after his death, and no provision had been made for one by the time of the 1959 election.

Mr. Sugarmon was given the greatest possibility of being elected because of the absence of a preferential vote and throughout

the campaign the chance for a Negro victory centered around his bid for Commissioner of Public Works. Rev. Hooks was also given a better-than-average chance to cash in on the present voting system in his campaign for Juvenile Court Judge. Despite the fact that Miss McCain had been judge of the Juvenile Court for two terms and that white candidates Canale, Farris, Fowler, and Chambers in the Public Works contest had been active in politics, none of the six white entries in each of the two contests was a seasoned campaigner, and none were well known to the public. There was serious question whether any one of them would be able to become thoroughly identified with the voters by election time. The two Negro candidates for the Board of Education, Reverends Bunton and Love, faced fewer white opponents (and each had a well-known incumbent to buck), and thus were not given the odds that Sugarmon and Hooks received. Mr. Stanback, although supported by the Volunteer Ticket, was given almost no chance to defeat long-time incumbent Joe Hicks for the Tax Assessor's position.

Realizing that the election of a Negro to the City Commission rested on the absence of a preferential vote, an early attempt was made by Commissioner Loeb to secure legislation allowing a run off vote for the election. But this would have required a special act of the Tennessee Legislature and Governor Buford Ellington said he knew of "no emergency" that would make him call a special session of the legislature to enact a run off law for Memphis.<sup>18</sup> The governor considered it a local problem and did not feel that it was his responsibility to make up for the county's mistake in not providing for a second election.



Still convinced that City Commission members should be elected by majorities, and not simply required to receive more votes than any of the other candidates, Commissioner Loeb said he intended "to search for another legal method"<sup>19</sup> of preventing Sugarmon's election.

The first alternative method proposed was to hold an unofficial run off election for the candidates for Public Works Commissioner and pay for it out of the city treasury rather than with state funds. However, the city attorney questioned the legality of using \$40,000 in public funds for an unofficial election, and the plan was discarded.<sup>20</sup> Another plan, in the same vein of thought, was to get the white candidates in the contest to agree to a voluntary primary, with the two receiving the highest votes to compete in the August 20 election. But again the cost was prohibitive, and at least one of the six white candidates was unwilling to enter such a plan on a "gentleman's agreement." A system used in some Florida cities was also suggested as a possible solution. "Each candidate who enters a race is required to put up a \$2,500 bond. If one candidate gets 51 per cent of the votes in the election the money is refunded in full. If not, the deposits are used to finance a run off election."<sup>21</sup> Yet this system was not applicable when the campaign was already underway, and it was obvious that any system would have to be acceptable to the white entries in the contest as well as to the general public.

As the election day approached and public sentiment became more concerned about the possibility of Mr. Sugarmon's election, a host of additional suggestions were made. Some of the approaches were

ridiculous, such as the attempt to get Al Sugarman, a white employe of the Public Works Department, to enter the contest to confuse the Negro voters.<sup>22</sup> Others, however, were more realistic even if they were not acceptable. On this side came the suggestion that Sugarman be appointed to a responsible city office, such as a city attorney, and thus remove him from the election. When these approaches failed, two solutions were presented which received wide approval and were important to the outcome of the election. These suggestions were: (1) to receive the endorsement of a number of prominent civic leaders, politicians, and the newspapers for one candidate in each race threatened by a Negro entry, in the hope that a bandwagon movement would be started, and (2) to conduct a "straw vote" to determine the leading candidate in each race and urge the low men in the poll to withdraw in favor of the strong white candidate. These methods should be discussed.

The second of the two solutions, that an unbiased party conduct a poll to determine voter preference before the election, came to light when it was discovered that "any number of responsible citizens are now saying openly that, while having a favorite, they would willingly switch to the candidate who is apparently out front"<sup>23</sup> to prevent the election of a Negro. The Commercial Appeal decided to conduct a series of public opinion polls, believing them to be both newsworthy and a service to the public. However, their polls were unrepresentative, poorly conducted, badly biased, and reported in a misleading manner. In four polls conducted throughout the city, a total of 1322 voters (924 whites and 398 Negroes) were expected to

forecast the outcome of a vote in excess of 129,000. The only correct polling procedure used in the survey was that in each of the sample votes 30 per cent of the participants were Negro, corresponding to the colored percentage of the total registration.

The first poll was conducted on July 18, two days before registration ended, a month prior to the election, several days before all the candidates had qualified for office, and weeks before the average citizen had made up his mind on which of the many candidates to support. The poll was conducted in precinct 51-2, which was billed as a "typical precinct" because it had voted for winners in 1955 and because its 27 per cent Negro registration ran close to the city average. Yet the precinct was in one of the poorest sections of the city, was composed largely of Italian workers, and was a transient rather than permanent neighborhood (as indicated by the fact that "about 22 per cent of the 235 Negroes" who were listed as registered voters "had moved . . . and about 28 per cent" of the 680 registered "white residents had moved"<sup>24</sup> since the election four years before). Thus the area could hardly be called representative of the entire city. The precinct was also unrepresentative in that nearly half of the voters who had not moved either refused to co-operate, had not made up their minds, or were not at home when the pollsters made their survey. In all, only 26 per cent of the Negro and 37 per cent of the white voters participated in the poll.<sup>25</sup>

The poll was also poorly managed. While the object of the survey was to determine the leading candidate in the Public Works and

Juvenile Court races, all fourteen offices appeared on the sample ballot and people were expected to choose from forty-one listed candidates. Some pollsters attempted to influence the outcome of the poll by suggesting to reluctant white voters that they mark the sample ballot for certain candidates in the contests in which Negroes were entered, to prevent the election of a minority candidate. While the ballots did not list the color of the candidates, the pollsters were all too willing to remind the white voters that Sugarmon was not to receive their "X". The additional effort used to get the white votes and fact that the Negroes were reportedly asked not to participate in the survey and reveal their true strength combined to give higher representation to the white voters.

When the poll was completed, William B. 'Will' Fowler led in the Public Works race with 104 votes, John Ford Canale was second with 62, then came Sam Chambers with 54 votes, Sugarmon was fourth with 37, and William Farris was fifth of the then eight candidates with 21 votes. Rev. Hooks placed third in the Juvenile Court contest, with Miss McCain taking the lead and Mrs. Ila Huff placing a poor second. The incumbents on the Board of Education and for the other City Commission posts led by commanding majorities.

The three subsequent polls were conducted under similar conditions, except that voters were polled in widely scattered areas rather than in a single precinct. In each poll 261 whites and 112 Negroes were surveyed. In the second poll only the names in the Public Works and Juvenile Court contests were presented, but the third and

fourth polls again used the complete ballot in their surveys. Fowler again led in the second poll, Canale was second, Sugarmon third, and then Chambers and Farris. Incumbent McCain held her lead in the Juvenile Court contest by a commanding majority, while Mrs. Huff was again second and Rev. Hooks third.<sup>26</sup>

While the first two polls were not conducted on the soundest of polling principles, they were at least presented in an honest and straight-forward manner. However, during the ten days between Poll No. 2 and Poll No. 3 The Commercial Appeal had made its endorsement of candidates in the election and had decided that William Farris, rather than Will Fowler, should be given their support. Mr. Moore was given preference over Stanley Dillard for Commissioner of Finances and Institutions. Consequently, the third and fourth polls were presented in a misleading manner to give support to these men. "Farris Gains Most Support In Third Survey of Voters"<sup>27</sup> read the headline of Poll No. 3. Yet, voters had to read two paragraphs before they realized that candidate Canale had actually received the most votes in the poll and that Farris had merely risen from fifth to second place. Moore was also shown to be "gaining" on his opponent.

By the fourth poll, a week later, Farris held a commanding lead in the Public Works contest, Sugarmon had risen to second place, then came Canale, Fowler, and Chambers. Dillard still led Moore, although the sub-head in the newspaper's report of the poll read, "Jimmy Moore advances in campaign to unseat Dillard."<sup>28</sup> Miss McCain continued her lead in the Juvenile Court Judge race and Rev. Hooks

placed second in both the third and fourth polls. By poll No. 4 Mrs. Huff had dropped to fourth place in the then five-man race. Hearn Tidwell had withdrawn from the Juvenile Court contest between the third and fourth polls, but it is doubtful if his decision was based on the survey returns. His withdrawal was of little importance, since he was not a strong enough candidate to have really affected the outcome had he remained in the race.

Both of the latter polls were obvious attempts to create new support for the newspaper candidates and to convince Mr. Fowler that he should resign before the election. However, Dillard published the poll results showing that he was the leading candidate for his race, and until the fourth survey Mr. Fowler believed that he was still the people's choice. Thus until five days before the election the polls had not accomplished their purpose, to get a leading white candidate in either contest to withdraw, and instead had given some candidates an undue feeling of security. The polls also failed in that those who were not shown to be on top by the survey resented the newspaper's behavior in attempting to mold public opinion and refused to abide by the results of the poll.

The other major strategy used to minimize the chances of a Negro being elected, a problem which was drawing concern throughout the South, was to unite the support of many important citizens and politicians behind one candidate in each race in the hope that the public would follow their endorsements. The principal force in this line was the Dedicated Citizens Committee, which was a continuation of

the Orgill campaign organization after the Mayor had decided not to run for re-election. The DCC presented a "Unity Ticket" of candidates who had pledged themselves to "maintain community patterns of segregation by all legal means."<sup>29</sup> Support was given to William Farris for Commissioner of Public Works, but the Committee could not decide on a suitable candidate in the Juvenile Court Judge contest. Endorsement was also given the four incumbent members of the Board of Education, although Mrs. Coe was considered moderate on the integration issue. Her endorsement was credited with her excellent work on the Board, despite her liberal views, her long time support of the Orgill clan, and the chance that her Negro opponent, Rev. Bunton, would be elected if support were given to a lesser known white for the position.<sup>30</sup>

The Memphis Press-Scimitar immediately gave its support to the DCC candidates, and The Commercial Appeal came to the same conclusions when their slate of candidates was presented a few weeks later. Both newspapers gave their support to Miss McCain for re-election as Judge of the Juvenile Court. When Edmund Orgill returned to the Mayor's office, after recovery from the operation that had caused his withdrawal from the campaign, he also gave his support to the DCC candidates. Although Commissioners Loeb and Armour did not wish to endorse candidates for other positions, leading figures in their campaign organizations supported the "Unity Ticket." Despite its strong backing, the efforts of the "Unity Ticket" were hindered by the other organizations that endorsed opposing candidates. Mr. Fowler had the support of former Mayor Chandler and others formerly associated

with the Crump machine, Mr. Canale was endorsed by the Business and Professional Men of Memphis and by the Veterans for Better Government, while Mr. Chambers received the support of several labor councils. The Veterans had also endorsed two new candidates for the Board of Education positions held by Mrs. Coe and Mrs. Seessel (the two positions in which Negroes were candidates).

Thus while the Dedicated Citizens Committee was more successful than The Commercial Appeal poll in drawing public support behind Mr. Farris, the endorsement of other Public Works aspirants prevented the withdrawal of any major candidate in the race, and it was doubtful if the "Unity Ticket" alone could prevent the election of Mr. Sugarmon. Other means had to be used, and it required a combination of forces to secure the withdrawal of Will Fowler five days before the election. Many citizens, the newspapers, and the Mid-South, felt that Commissioner Loeb, who was assured election as Mayor, and Commissioner Armour, who faced only token opposition for re-election as Commissioner of Public Safety and Vice-Mayor, should join in support of one candidate. Yet there was no assurance that the candidate of their choice would be elected, and if another gained the post it would be hard for the new commission to provide the unity that the city so badly needed. Instead, the two commissioners met with the four leading white candidates for the post and urged them to "thin their ranks" for the good of the city.<sup>31</sup> But there was still no agreement over who was the "strong" candidate in the race, and which were the "weak". All were convinced either by the poll, by an endorsement, or by a disbelief of both, that they were the



leading candidate, and each announced that he was in the race to the finish.

When Will Fowler withdrew on August 15, a day after the Loeb-Armour meeting, there was "shock and surprise" over why he, who was obviously one of the two front running white candidates, had resigned instead of the weaker Canale or Chambers. Mr. Fowler said,

It is apparent that no other candidate in the race for public works commissioner is willing to make any sacrifice. I have no desire to be a hero but simply to follow the dictates of my own conscience. . . . In the interests of my city and its people I am withdrawing from the race for commissioner of public works with the hope that this will solve the problem. I'm not a quitter but the time comes in every man's life when he should put his country, his city and its people above any selfish ambition.<sup>32</sup>

However, informed sources point to a behind the scenes deal and additional pressure that helped persuade Mr. Fowler to leave the race. Frank Ahlgren, editor of The Commercial Appeal, met with the Fowler organization after the Loeb meeting and presented the outcome of the fourth poll (which listed Fowler in fourth place), explaining that he had no chance to win and that by staying in the race he was helping to elect Mr. Sugarman. In compensation for his withdrawal, it was reported that a rather ingenious deal was presented. Mr. Loeb would resign from the commission after the election (under the pretext of using the next four months to prepare himself for the Mayor's office) and the City Commission would appoint Will Fowler temporary Public Works Commissioner (until Mr. Farris was inaugurated on January 1, 1960), which would allow him to retire at a higher salary than his present job as city engineer would provide (which was further reported to be the chief

reason that Mr. Fowler was running anyway).<sup>33</sup> However, the public acclaim that he received for his "unselfish" act in the face of "disaster" prevented the plan from materializing.

The withdrawal of Will Fowler clinched the bandwagon movement for Mr. Farris, and while he received less than 45% of the vote, he was elected over the Negro candidate. It is impossible to show where the Fowler votes were cast, but it can be assumed that the majority of them were given Mr. Farris. In the official tabulation, Farris received 58,925 votes, Sugarmon pulled 35,348 (the highest vote total a Negro had ever received in the county), Canale was a poor third with 19,297 votes, Chambers received 13,090, and Fowler (who resigned too late to remove his name from the ballot) was still given 2,218 votes.

The Negroes placed second in each of the other contests that they had entered, although none pulled the vote total received by Mr. Sugarmon. Miss McCain was re-elected Judge of the Juvenile Court with 53,604 votes, while Rev. Hooks received 32,205 votes from the Negro wards. Joseph B. McCartie was third in the race with 22,652 votes and Mrs. Ila Huff was given only 16,481 favorable ballots. In the Board of Education contests, Rev. Love polled 31,901 votes for Position II against incumbent Mrs. Seessel's 54,736. The third running white candidate received only 23,563 votes. For Position III, Mrs. Coe retained her seat by receiving 55,740 votes to Rev. Bunton's 28,774. Neither of the two white opponents received a 15,000 vote total. Elishue Stanback also placed second in the Tax Assessor's race, receiving 25,064 votes,

while incumbent Joe Hicks was given 74,337 votes to return him to office. The other white candidate was a poor third in the election.<sup>34</sup>

Although the Public Works contest drew the most interest during the campaign, because of the race issue, much excitement centered around Henry Loeb's bid for the Mayor's office and Jimmy Moore's attempt to unseat Stanley Dillard on the City Commission. The Negroes played an important part in these contests, although they did not have a candidate of their own entered. The Southern Regional Council, in a survey of Southern states, "found that many Negroes already registered have seen their vote shrink in importance as racists sought to make support by Negro citizens a liability rather than an asset."<sup>35</sup> This, however, was not true in Memphis. In addition to the voice they had in support of the five candidates of their race, their support of certain white candidates for other posts was most welcome.

During the campaign the white candidates endorsed by the Negro groups, and several who were not, appeared at Negro rallies to make a bid for the Negro vote. The Volunteer Ticket reminded that the "Negro represents a protest vote."<sup>36</sup> Before their endorsement of white candidates was made, the Negroes said, "let them know we're dissatisfied, and that if they want our vote we want something for the Negro in return."<sup>37</sup> It was apparent from the outset of the campaign that this "protest vote" would be used against Henry Loeb. He had received Negro support when he ran for the City Commission in 1955, but the Negroes now felt that he was their outspoken enemy, and that someone else should receive their votes. Although the Negroes had also been

dissatisfied with the aid given them by Mayor Orgill, who received their support in 1955 and in his 1958 bid for the Governor's seat, it was certain that he would have retained their backing had he remained in the campaign. Instead the colored vote was given to Partee Flemming, a minor candidate with no chance of a victory. The Negro protest was also levied against Commissioner Dillard, and Jimmy Moore received their endorsement in his campaign for Commissioner of Finances and Institutions. Mr. Moore, according to Sugarmon, was more acceptable to the Negroes than either Loeb or Orgill had been, and it was hoped that he would be of service to them when elected. The Negroes made no endorsement of candidates in the Vice-Mayor's race, where police brutality was an issue, finding both Commissioner Armour and his weak opponent to be unacceptable to them. Commissioner Dwyer was supported for re-election, and William Ingram received the Negro vote in his campaign for re-election as Judge of Division III of the City Court because of his attack on the police department. Ray Churchill was given Negro backing for Judge of Division II of the City Court as a protest against Judge Boushe, who was not felt to give equal justice to Negro citizens.

While the Negro endorsement of white candidates was an important aspect of the campaign, the desire for the election of men who could co-operate to bring progressive leadership to the city was even more important. It was essential that men be elected to the City Commission who could work with each other for the "good of Memphis," and that a divided commission not be returned to stop progress for another four years. The desire for unity had been overshadowed in the

Public Works contest, because of the entry of a Negro candidate, but without the Negro issue in the other contests the central theme of unity could be given more attention. Again the Dedicated Citizens Committee, with their "Unity Ticket," were important in helping the voters decide from the long list of independent candidates.

At the time of its formation, after Mr. Orgill withdrew from the Mayor's race, the "immediate aim of the DCC [was] to encourage candidates to inform the electorate of their stand on nine specific issues."<sup>38</sup> Endorsement by the Committee was made partially on the basis of the answers received on these questions. The DCC favored the appointment of a charter committee to study possible changes in the form of local government, consolidation of duplicate functions within the city and county, division of school taxes on an average daily attendance basis, rapid annexation of adjacent built-up communities, a complete reappraisal of assessments, continued segregation, and the enactment of a "Little Hatch Act" for city employees. Except for their stand on segregation, the Dedicated Citizens closely resembled the former Orgill organization, the Good Local Government League, and was promptly labeled "GLUG GLUG, JR." by the anti-Orgill forces.

When the "Unity Ticket" was announced, support was given to Henry Loeb for Mayor, Claude Armour for Vice-Mayor and Commissioner of Fire and Police, John T. Dwyer for Commissioner of Public Service, James W. 'Jimmy' Moore for Commissioner of Finances and Institutions, and William Farris for Commissioner of Public Works. Mr. Farris and Mr. Moore, of course, received the most attention. This selection was

also given the backing of The Commercial Appeal, the Memphis Press-Scimitar, and Mayor Orgill. However, each of the endorsed candidates quickly made it clear that they were still independents and that the endorsement of one candidate by the "Unity Ticket" did not necessarily mean that the other endorsed candidates supported him. This led some to doubt the ability of the Dedicated Citizens, or any other civic-minded organization, to supply the city with a united commission, feeling that disunity was probably inherent in the commission form of government. Again, the presentation of a unified slate of officers by the DCC was hindered by the endorsement of other candidates by other organizations, also in the name of "unity, harmony, and progress."

When the election was over, all of the "Unity Ticket" commissioners had been elected, most by substantial majorities. Henry Loeb walked into the Mayor's office with 85,292 votes (the highest given any candidate), while Mr. Flemming pulled only 32,193 votes, chiefly from the Negro areas. Mr. Armour was returned as Vice-Mayor with 80,831 votes to his opponent's 12,338. Jimmy Moore won a decisive election over Stanley Dillard for Commissioner of Finances and Institutions, being given 66,314 favorable ballots, while Mr. Dillard received 45,209 votes. It was apparent that Mr. Moore could attribute his victory to the top heavy vote received in the Negro precincts, although he was favored in many white areas, also. John T. Dwyer retained his office as Commissioner of Public Service by defeating Mr. Taliaferro 72,888 to 39,580.<sup>39</sup> And, as we have seen, William Farris was elected Commissioner of Public Works over the Negro candidate, Sugarmon. The

incumbents for the three divisions of the City Court, the Juvenile Court Judge, Tax Assessor, and the Board of Education, were all re-elected by substantial majorities, although the Negro bloc of approximately 30,000 votes went to the candidates they supported.

B.

"Beyond a list of innovations such as a record total vote and a field of nothing but independent white candidates, . . . the election affirmed certain basic political philosophies."<sup>40</sup> The first supported, but modified, Heard's observation that "Negroes behave like other groups of common origin . . . they stick together when their interests as a group are at stake. . . . When their political rights are at issue, they oppose with a high degree of solidarity candidates who challenge their right to vote, and they support those who uphold it."<sup>41</sup> In Memphis, however, the right to vote was a long established tradition, and a higher order of political rights, the privilege to seek public office, was being challenged. Still the Negro vote was extremely cohesive in behalf of the candidates, both white and colored, who were supported by the Volunteer Ticket. Their vote was probably more unified, because of their long history of ballot box participation, than Negroes in other cities whose "right to vote" was in jeopardy.

The cohesiveness of the Negro vote can be seen by the following correlations. Diagram 1 shows the relationship between the percentage of registered Negroes in each Memphis precinct and the percentage vote that each precinct returned for Russell Sugarmon. The supposition to be tested in this scatter-diagram is that an increase

in the percentage of Negro population should bring a corresponding increase in the percentage of the vote returned to the Negro candidate. A perfect correlation would be 1.00 and presented as a 45 degree line on the graph. The unanimity of the Negro vote was revealed by a phenomenally high correlation,  $r = .99$ , indicating that 98.01 per cent of the precincts in the city returned votes for Sugarmon in direct relation to their Negro percentage of the voters.

The correlation between the Negro voter percentage of each precinct and the percentage vote given Partee Flemming for Mayor indicates the solidarity of the Negro support of a white candidate (Diagram 2). The correlation between the "protest vote" given Mr. Flemming and the percentage of Negro registration by precincts was  $r = .98$ . In Diagram 3, a high degree of correlation is also seen between the percent of Negro voters and support of Jimmy Moore. Here the correlation was  $r = .88$ , indicating that 77.44 per cent of the precincts returned votes for Mr. Moore in direct relation to their percentage of registered Negroes. The lower coefficient of correlation given Mr. Moore reflects more the white support of the candidate rather than a failure of the Negro voters to follow the endorsement of the Volunteer Ticket. However, there was more defection among the Negro voters in this race than in those previously mention.

Further indication of the unanimity of the Negro vote can be seen in Map 5, which shows the precincts returning majority votes for the candidates supported by the Volunteer Ticket. Thirty-four of the thirty-seven precincts in which more than half of the registered voters



were Negro returned a majority of their vote for Sugarmon, Flemming, and Moore. Two of the Negro precincts gave majorities only to Sugarmon and Moore, while precinct 13-3, which was the only Negro precinct failing to give at least 51 per cent of its vote to Sugarmon (although it gave 46 per cent), returned a majority vote for Mr. Moore. A comparison with Map 3 shows how this vote corresponds with the distribution of Negro voters. Map 5 also shows the white precincts voting in the majority for Jimmy Moore. By checking this against Table 8-1, we can see that many of the precincts in the eastern part of the city that voted for Moore also returned a higher percentage of their vote to Mr. Sugarmon than the percentage of their registered voters that were Negro.

Inspection of these three graphs reveals a still more significant political truth, that is "that an aroused majority can rise up to display its strength even as can a determined minority."<sup>42</sup> The tremendous registration drive sponsored by the Volunteer Ticket prompted a corresponding increase in registration in white areas. The threat of Mr. Sugarmon's election inspired the majority to an unusually fervent interest, and the percentage of white voters at the polls on election day was some eight points higher than in the Negro wards. As shown in Chapter II of this essay, the vote total for the various offices changed according to the Negro interest in the race, yet the variation in voter participation was reflected more in the white than in the Negro wards.

Examination of Diagram 1 shows that a great majority of the dots (each representing a precinct) lie below the 45 degree line

(perfect correlation) showing that there was a tendency in all wards for the percentage vote for Sugarmon to be lower than the percentage of registered Negroes (or the percentage vote against the Negro higher than the percentage of registered whites). Also the cluster of precinct dots around the origin (0) shows that while Sugarmon received more votes than registered Negroes in some white precincts, the all-white precincts vary only 3 per cent (from 0 to 3 per cent of the votes given to Sugarmon), while the all-Negro wards, those with 100 per cent Negro registration, gave from 88 to 97 per cent of their vote to the candidate of their caste, a variance of 9 percentage points. A similar observation can be made in Diagram 2. Here the wards without Negro voters returned between 4 and 8 per cent of their vote for Mr. Flemming, while the all-Negro precincts varied between giving 75 and 95 per cent of their vote to the anti-Loeb candidate. In neither the Flemming nor the Sugarmon correlation did a Negro precinct give 100 per cent of their votes to the Negro supported candidates. This all adds up to show that Negroes are capable of supporting candidates for reasons other than the racial issue, while white voters find all Negro candidates unacceptable.

TABLE 8-1

Ward-Precinct	Percentage Vote Given			
	Percentage Negro	Sugarmon	Flemming	Moore
1	44	28	23	46
2	13	8	11	47
4	29	13	15	54
5	98	94	84	87
6	41	27	37	59
7-1	85	69	53	66
7-2	99	98	95	94
8	42	35	32	50
9-1	49	37	29	51
9-2	38	27	22	45
11-1	100	96	90	94
11-2	100	94	87	88
12	81	73	65	74
13-1	96	66	63	80
13-2	68	66	58	72
13-3	53	46	46	59
14-1	96	95	91	92
14-2	71	74	67	73
15	18	14	15	53
16-1	0	1	8	45
16-2	2	3	8	44
16-3	1	3	8	50
17-1	10	8	12	52
17-2	2	2	6	52
17-3	13	13	15	53
17-4	10	9	45	49
18	8	7	9	48
19	8	11	11	47
20-1	2	2	7	55
20-2	2	3	9	49
20-3	3	3	10	48
21-1	23	19	19	46
21-2	10	7	12	32
21-3	97	93	85	88
22	68	72	62	67
23	14	14	20	47
24-1	100	88	75	81
24-2	99	93	88	89
25-1	93	86	97	89
25-2	18	17	19	42

Ward-Precinct	Percentage Vote Given			
	Percentage Negro	Sugarmon	Flemming	Moore
25-3	13	13	16	33
26-1	37	35	32	51
26-2	81	79	75	80
27-1	15	11	13	42
27-2	66	59	58	67
28-1	1	3	5	51
28-2	1	3	6	54
29-1	11	10	12	48
29-2	97	93	85	86
30	3	2	7	58
31-1	4	2	7	43
31-2	17	11	16	42
31-3	32	16	20	45
31-4	25	28	27	59
32-1	3	2	8	42
32-2	98	93	79	89
33-1	3	2	11	50
33-2	2	2	5	34
34-1	12	10	11	32
34-2	62	57	51	63
35-1	97	93	84	82
35-2	99	94	91	90
35-3	100	95	91	92
36-1	2	5	4	55
36-2	0	2	7	44
36-3	0	2	6	48
37-1	93	84	73	80
37-2	49	49	43	70
38-1	0	2	4	45
38-2	0	1	7	34
38-3	0	0	7	40
38-4	0	0	5	42
39	95	90	83	86
40-1	90	80	71	74
40-2	22	22	23	55
41-1	99	94	84	86
41-2	21	22	18	56
41-3	92	92	91	89
42-1	10	6	10	37
42-2	59	54	48	72

Ward-Precinct	Percentage Vote Given			
	Percentage Negro	Sugarmon	Flemming	Moore
43-1	0	1	5	44
43-2	0	1	6	42
43-3	100	96	95	95
44-1	0	1	7	50
44-2	0	3	6	62
44-3	2	3	5	62
44-4	0	3	5	62
44-5	19	33	31	56
45-1	2	3	6	58
45-2	3	3	1	47
45-3	0	2	7	47
45-4	0	2	6	57
46-1	1	5	6	59
46-2	0	2	7	46
46-3	0	1	6	53
47-1	56	52	44	61
47-2	42	28	28	54
47-3	0	0	6	44
48	98	95	61	92
49-1	0	0	5	32
49-2	1	1	5	36
50-1	53	73	66	68
50-2	17	15	16	39
51-1	89	83	74	80
51-2	27	25	25	49
52-1	14	12	14	51
52-2	1	1	7	44
52-3	34	31	28	52
53-1	0	0	6	42
53-2	0	0	5	41
54-1	0	1	7	44
54-2	0	1	6	48
55	0	2	7	62
56	8	10	10	66
57	1	2	7	64
58-1	0	2	6	51
58-2	5	3	9	47
58-3	0	0	6	40
58-4	0	1	7	42
58-5	0	2	5	57

Ward-Precinct	Percentage Vote Given			
	Percentage Negro	Sugarmon	Flemming	Moore
59-1	0	1	5	39
59-2	0	1	8	46
59-3	1	1	6	44
60-1	14	10	13	43
60-2	9	5	9	40
60-3	91	93	92	92
61	98	94	88	88
62	0	0	4	42
63	0	1	5	44
64	4	6	6	63
65-1	0	2	7	54
65-2	6	7	11	59
66-1	0	2	5	53
66-2	0	1	4	53
67	2	3	6	53
68-1	0	2	8	54
68-2	0	3	7	66
69	1	1	5	36
70-1	0	0	5	46
70-2	1	1	6	46
71	5	5	6	50
72-1	0	0	5	49
72-2	0	1	6	47

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION



IN MEMORY OF A LEADER - The Hon. Clifford Davis, U.S. Representative from Shelby County, delivers the dedication address at the unveiling of a statue of Edward Hull Crump.

While little has been done since the election to elevate the political standing of the Negro citizens, much has been accomplished in the lines of unity and progress. The threat of Sugarmon's election forced united action by Loeb and Armour, who had seldom seen eye-to-eye during the past four years, and they developed a respect for each other which has been carried into the new commission. Although the two new members on the commission, Moore and Farris, have at times demonstrated a lack of political know-how, they appear willing to learn and are certainly more co-operative than the past commissioners. Even Mr. Dwyer seems to be giving in to the new spirit of unity, and as a result many long overdue changes have been effected by the Loeb Commission during its first few months in office.

Since January 1, 1960, the city has approved a tax boost to \$2.15 per \$100 of assessed property (up from \$1.80) and the Memphis Light, Gas & Water Division has also increased its rates. The major portion of the additional funds have been given to the Board of Education for expansion of facilities and for a needed raise in teacher salaries. (It is interesting to note that the three highest paid teachers in the city are the principals of the three largest Negro high schools.) Some of the additional revenue has been set aside for city planning and to help make the civic center and a new airport, which are still on the drawing boards, a reality. Much headway has been made toward consolidation of city and county schools, and toward combining duplicate functions in the two tax departments. But more important, perhaps, are the increased meetings with state and county



officials, which have returned efficiency and respect to the city government. Mayor Loeb has also initiated luncheon meetings with the mayors of other Shelby County towns in an effort to promote unified interest and understanding on county-wide problems.

Of interest during the next few years will be the political future of Mayor Loeb. Many persons question whether or not Mr. Loeb will attempt, or be able to, build a new political organization around his public support. Like Crump, he entered office during a period of political unrest, has proven himself to be an efficient administrator, and has the personal appeal that carried Mr. Crump into office fifty years earlier. Once before, the city surrendered its freedom of choice for the sake of efficiency, order, and progress, and many feel that a new machine can be built on the same principle. However, I doubt that this will occur. It has taken the city two municipal elections to realize that an effective city government can only be maintained by active participation of the entire community. While I am sure that Mr. Loeb will retain his popularity, I also believe that the 1959 election has taught a lesson that cannot be easily forgotten.

Although the Volunteer Ticket failed to place a member of its race in a city office, its activity in the 1959 election enables us to draw some conclusions concerning Negro participation in Memphis politics and, perhaps, make some remarks on possible "future trends" in Negro voting in the South. First, the activity of the Volunteer Ticket reflects a political maturity uncommon to the Southern Negro, and we can only assume that it has come from the Negro's long established right

to use the Memphis ballot box. Despite the fact that the Negro vote was maintained by a political organization that manipulated the Negro (and the white) vote at will, it enabled the Negro to grow with the ballot and to learn to use it to his advantage. The dependency of the Negro vote on the Crump machine was of value in still another way: it allowed the white citizens to accept Negro voting as a part of the progressive movement and the Crump era, without developing the hostility that is still present in other areas where Negro leaders strive for this right on their own.

A second observation that can be made concerning the Memphis Negro is a reiteration of the political truth, that "progress in one field strengthens the Negro's ability to advance in other fields."<sup>1</sup> We have already seen that with the right to vote, which he used to his advantage, Mr. Crump gave the Memphis Negro a fairer share of the city's services than received by Negroes in other Southern cities. The same political maxim was carried into the 1959 election, where the development of a strong political organization to support Negro candidates drew the backing of "fair-minded" white citizens for placing colored leaders in appointed offices.

With a slightly different twist, this same idea can be seen in the fact that political maturity can bring a mature approach to other civic problems. This can be demonstrated by the activity of the Memphis Negro in the "sit-in" demonstrations of the spring of this year. Demonstrations in Memphis were held in Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, the Memphis Museum, and the Public Library, rather than at a ten cent store

lunch counter, suggesting that white supremacy leaves the Negro with a more important hunger: that of knowledge. Certainly a mature approach of this nature will be more effective than a demonstration of students rallied by professional news agencies and outside Negro organizations.<sup>2</sup>

A third conclusion that can be drawn from the 1959 election is that to be effective in municipal affairs, a Negro organization must be led by reliable middle or upper class Negro businessmen and ministers and not by the Negro Republican leaders, who are traditionally interested in national, rather than (the more meaningful) local politics. Although Republican leaders were active in the Volunteer Ticket, they were not the backbone of the organization. The development of a forceful Negro organization, based on Negro talent, as we have seen, is a product of the established right of ballot box participation, but paradoxically, this maturity could only be developed in full after the death of the Crump machine. For while Crump gave the Negro his vote, he also made it impossible, or at least fruitless, for the Negro to use this vote against his candidates. Such activity would have lost the Negro the advantages he gained from his ballot (in support of Crump) by giving it to a candidate incapable of being elected.

It is significant to realize why the Negro was given a vote by the Crump machine, in opposition to all patterns of Southern feeling. Dr. William H. Riker supplies a generalized answer: "The great difficulty of suffrage extension is that those who extend it necessarily jeopardize their political future. Hence, party leaders can be persuaded to disturb politics with new participants only by the hope of

perpetuating their temporary majority with a supply of fresh supporters."<sup>3</sup> This brings to the surface the fourth, and perhaps most important, observation that can be deduced from the 1959 election. That is, that while the Negro can push for political equality, and can develop an organization capable of becoming a serious threat to white supremacy in the city government, it is impossible for the colored citizen to gain more than the whites are willing to give. A minority in all Southern cities (only Washington, D.C. has a majority of its population Negro), the Negro is destined to remain on the sidelines in politics unless he can demonstrate to the white citizen that it is to their advantage to develop and use the Negro skills. This is adapting to the political world the economic stand taken by Booker T. Washington at the turn of the century (that it was to the advantage of the whites to hire Negroes), and thus by-passes the approach used by W. E. B. DuBois and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Mr. Crump saw the advantage of developing the Negro vote, and both he and the Negro prospered because of it. The Commercial Appeal has now announced that it has seen the advantage of Negro participation on a higher level of civic responsibility, and when it is able to convince its readers of this fact, Memphis will take one of the largest steps toward progress ever made in a Southern town. But, this is a step that must be taken by the Memphis white, not the Negro citizen. The Negro, through his activity in the 1959 election can show that he is mature enough to accept this responsibility, but the

offer must be made by those in power: the white citizens.

It is here that the Memphis election gives us some indication of "future trends" in Negro politics in the South. The conclusions I have drawn from the Negro in Memphis politics can provide a pattern for political activity in other Negro areas. Voting must necessarily be the first step, then can come the economic advantages of the ballot (the services Moore will have to give in return for the Negro vote), then independent Negro leadership, and finally the mature state of office holding. While it takes time to complete these stages in developing full Negro equality, and consequently full self-respect, in politics, it need not take the fifty years that it has required in Memphis. Still, each step can come only through the acceptance of the white citizen to this pattern of Negro development, and to their willingness to disregard white supremacy at each of these points.

While this appears to be too much to hope for, especially in the light of increased Negro demands for integration of public facilities, it is just these demands which should hasten the steps toward Negro office holding. As dissatisfaction of the inferior position in which they are held in the South mounts, it seems inevitable that the Negro will attempt to "strike back" at the white majority through physical violence and terrorism. Racial riots, I believe, can only be prevented by placing Negro leaders in positions where they can check the use of force in their own caste, and where they have a chance to demonstrate their civic responsibility. A Negro officer on the Juvenile Court to handle Negro cases, a Negro city judge for the same reason, and

finally Negro representation on the city commission, all seem to be to the advantage of the white as well as the Negro citizen. But none can come without the willingness of the white citizens to extend to the Negroes of their area the first step toward civic responsibility: the right to the ballot.

Summed up, the ballot box is the refreshing source of rededication to the American way of doing things. It is the instrument of inspiration to try for civic betterment. It is protection against things inimical to our scheme of life.

When we use it we strengthen ourselves. That is why it is good to have spirited elections and community-wide participation.<sup>4</sup>

In so stating, the Memphis that Crump built, the Memphis that was down in Dixie, has reached a level of political maturity unattainable in other Southern cities, and has become the political, as well as economic, leader in the Mid-South.

APPENDIX I

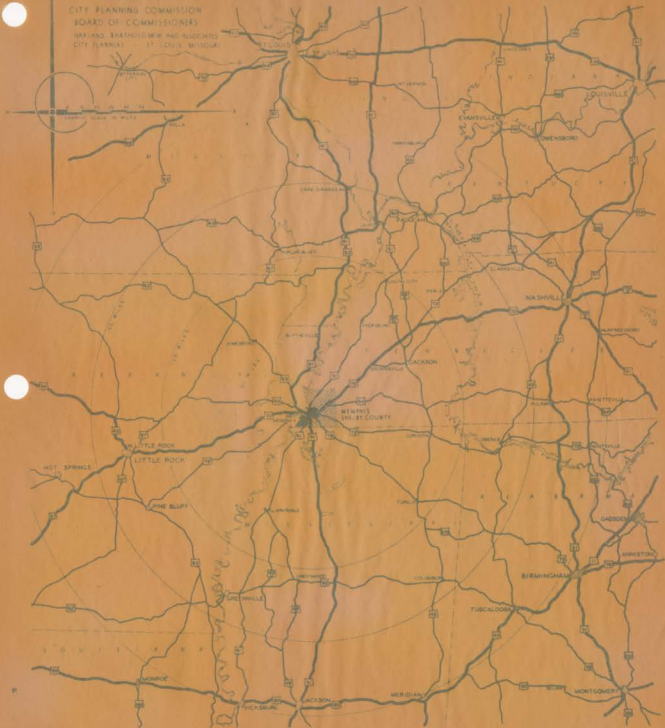
MAPS

1	The Growth of Memphis . . . . .	186
2	Distribution of Parks, Parkways, and Playgrounds. .	187
3	Distribution of Negro Population . . . . .	188
4	Geographic Location . . . . .	189
5	Precincts Voting for Candidates Supported by the Volunteer Ticket . . . . .	190

# MEMPHIS TENNESSEE

Map 4

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
HAYLAND BRIDGEMAN AND ASSOCIATES  
CITY PLANNERS - ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI



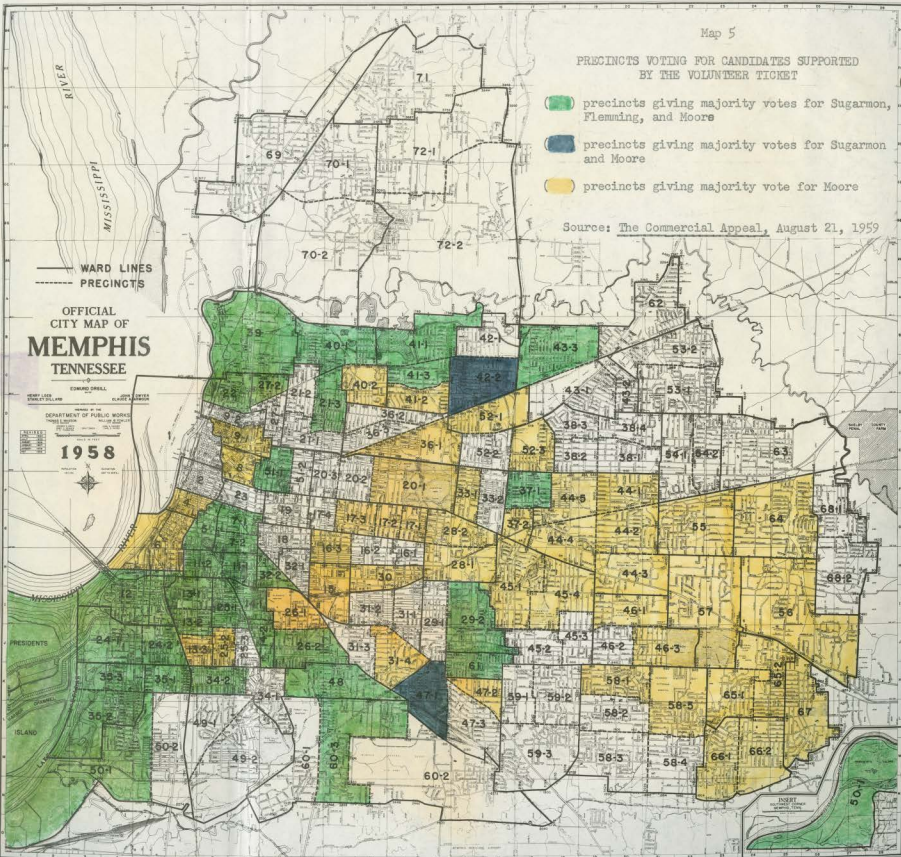
# GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

LEGEND  
— INTERSTATE ROUTES  
— OTHER FEDERAL ROUTES



PRECINCTS VOTING FOR CANDIDATES SUPPORTED  
BY THE VOLUNTEER TICKET

- precincts giving majority votes for Sugarman, Fleming, and Moore
- precincts giving majority votes for Sugarman and Moore
- precincts giving majority vote for Moore

Source: The Commercial Appeal, August 21, 1959

THE GROWTH OF MEMPHIS

- original city, 1826
- annex. 1901-1910
- annexation 1826-1840
- annex. 1911-1920
- annexation 1841-1860
- annex. 1921-1930
- annexation 1861-1890
- annex. 1931-1950
- annexation 1891-1900
- annex. 1951-1955
- ( ) annexation 1956-1959

Source: Memphis Department of Public Works

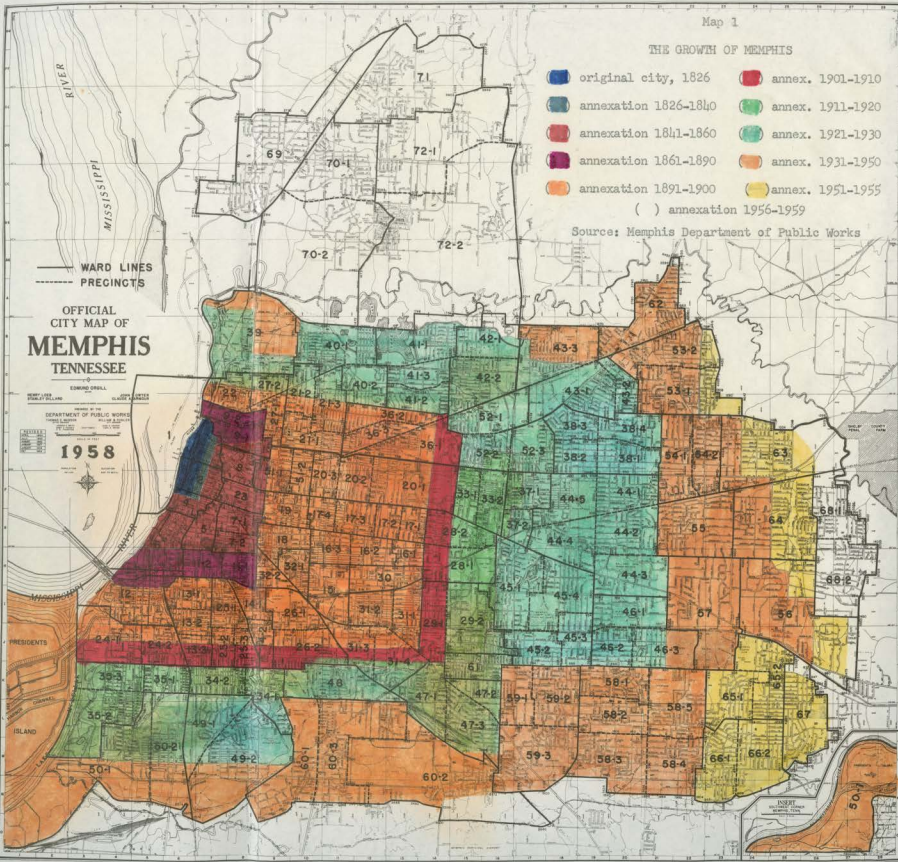
OFFICIAL  
CITY MAP OF  
**MEMPHIS**  
TENNESSEE

EMERSON HILL





LEWIS AND CLARK

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
CITY OF MEMPHIS

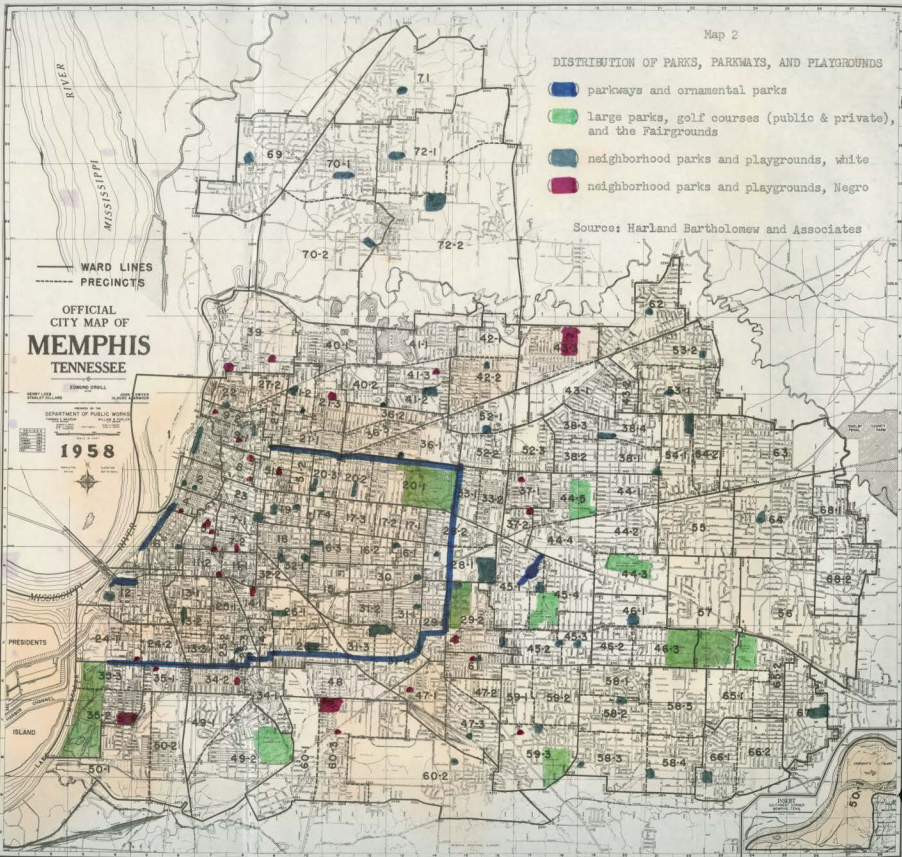
1958



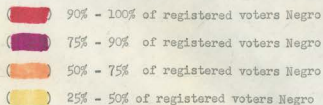
## DISTRIBUTION OF PARKS, PARKWAYS, AND PLAYGROUNDS

-  parkways and ornamental parks
-  large parks, golf courses (public & private), and the Fairgrounds
-  neighborhood parks and playgrounds, white
-  neighborhood parks and playgrounds, Negro

Source: Harland Bartholomew and Associates



## DISTRIBUTION OF NEGRO VOTERS



Source: Shelby County Election Commission

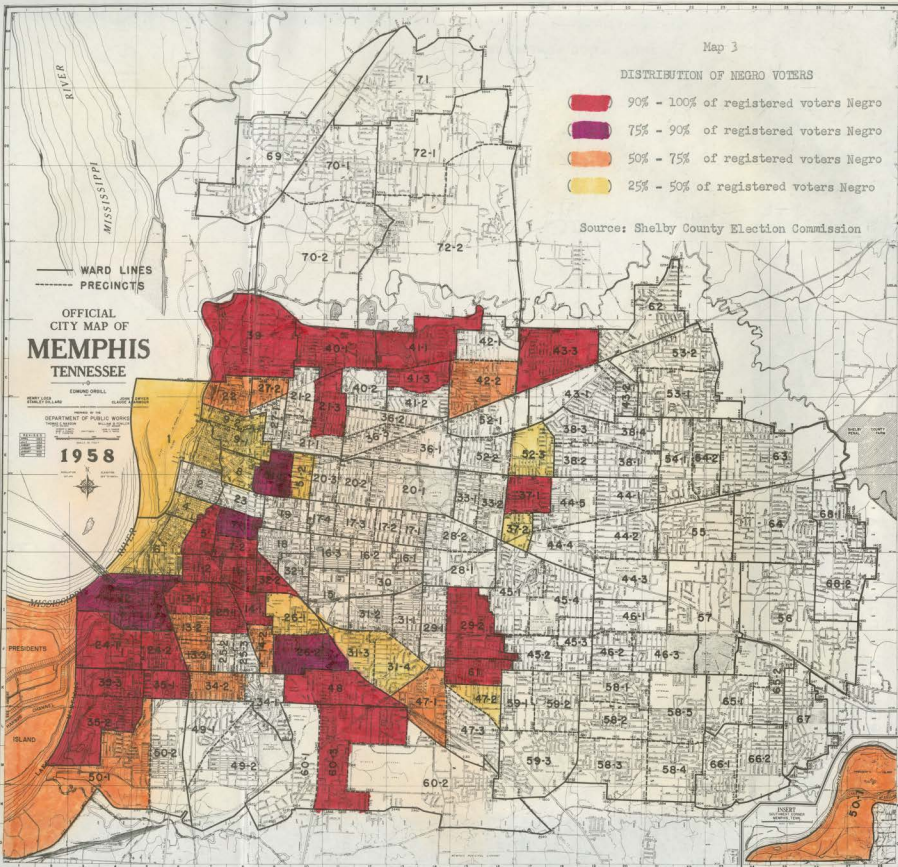
— WARD LINES  
 - - - - - PREGINGS

OFFICIAL  
 CITY MAP OF  
**MEMPHIS**  
 TENNESSEE

EDWARD ORRILL

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
 OFFICE OF THE CITY ENGINEER

1958



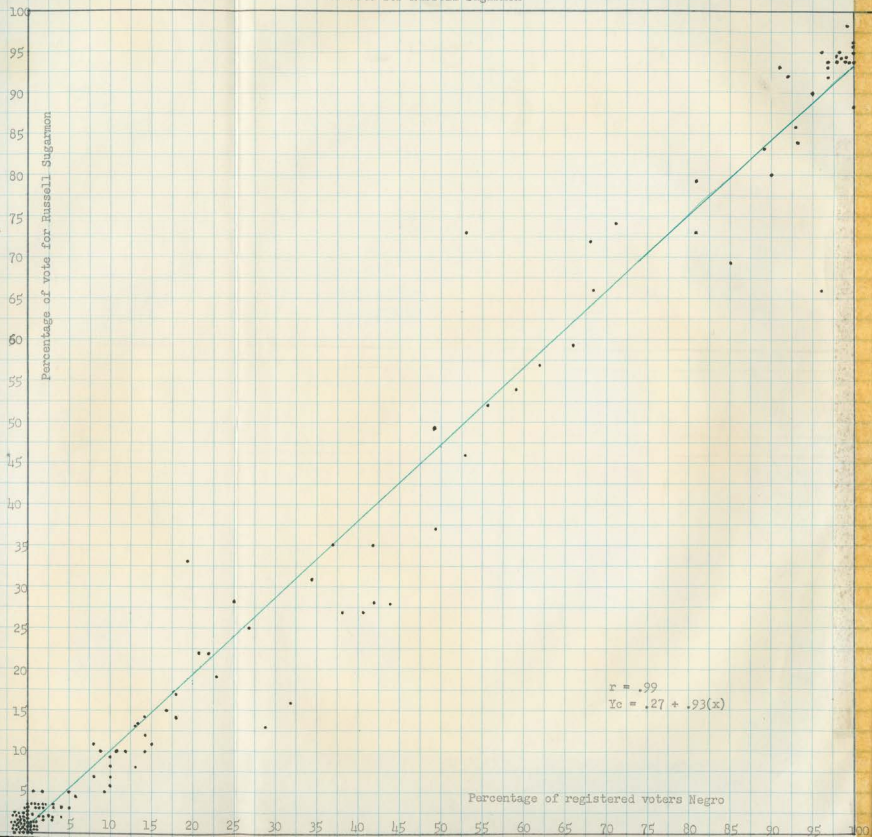
APPENDIX II  
SCATTER DIAGRAMS

- 1 Correlation Between Percentage of Registered Negroes in Memphis Precincts and Percentage of Vote for Sugarmon . . 192
- 2 Correlation Between Percentage of Registered Negroes in Memphis Precincts and Percentage of Vote for Flemming . . 193
- 3 Correlation Between Percentage of Registered Negroes in Memphis Precincts and Percentage of Vote for Moore . . . 194

Figure -1

Scatter diagram showing correlation between percentage of registered Negroes in Memphis precincts and percentage of vote for Russell Sugarmon

Percentage of vote for Russell Sugarmon



$$r = .99$$
$$Y_c = .27 + .93(x)$$

Percentage of registered voters Negro

Figure -2

Scatter diagram showing correlation between percentage of registered Negroes in Memphis precincts and percentage of vote for Partee Fleming

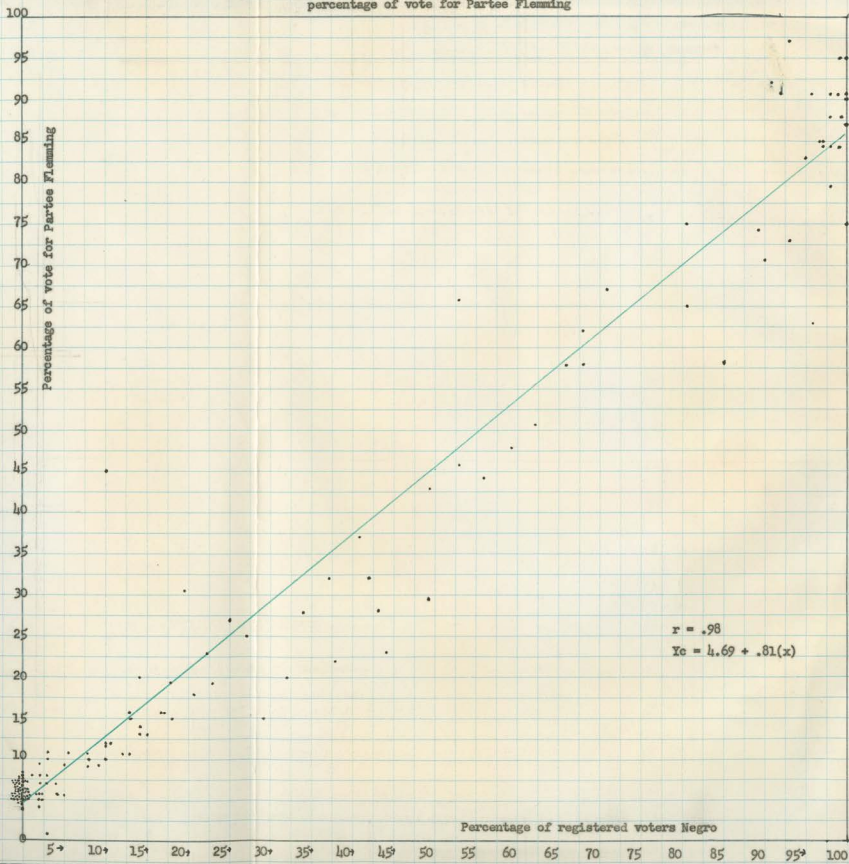
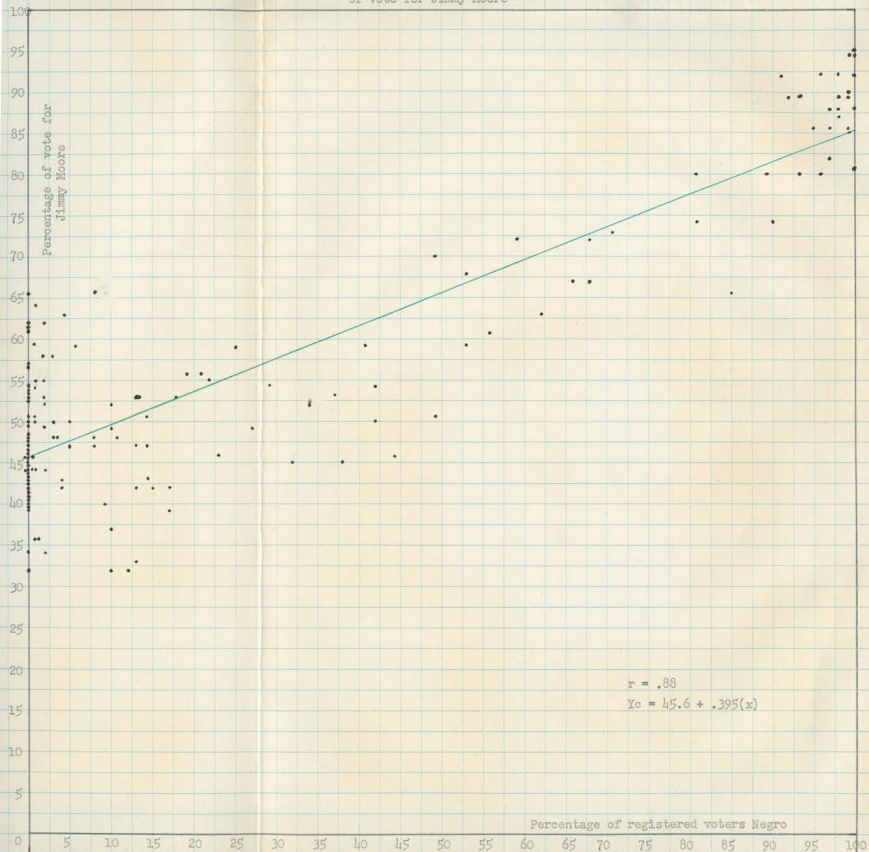


Figure -3

Scatter diagram showing correlation between percentage of registered Negroes in Memphis precincts and percentage of vote for Jimmy Moore





FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

<sup>1</sup>V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics in State and Nation (New York, 1949), p. 5

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 517

<sup>3</sup>John Dollard, Caste and Class in a Southern Town (Garden City, New York, 1957), pp. 210-211

<sup>4</sup>Shields McIlwaine, Memphis Down in Dixie (New York, 1948), p. 322

<sup>5</sup>Dollard, op. cit., p. 211

Chapter II

<sup>1</sup>The Commercial Appeal, July 12, 1959

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, August 21, 1959

<sup>3</sup>The Commercial Appeal, August 20, 1959

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., August 21, 1959

<sup>5</sup>Memphis Press-Scimitar, August 26, 1959

<sup>6</sup>The Commercial Appeal, August 23, 1959

<sup>7</sup>Ralph Bunche, "Political Status of the Negro" (unpublished manuscript prepared for the Gunnar Myrdal study, on microfilm in the Library of Congress), Chapter XI, p. 965

<sup>8</sup>The Commercial Appeal, August 20, 1959

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., August 14, 1959

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., August 9, 1959 (editorial)

<sup>11</sup>Key, op. cit., p. 72

<sup>12</sup>The Commercial Appeal, August 2, 1959

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., August 2, 1959

<sup>14</sup>Russell Sugarmon, Jr., statement made in a political speech at the Parkway Gardens Presbyterian Church, Memphis, July 28, 1959

<sup>15</sup>New York Times, August 21, 1959

<sup>16</sup>The Commercial Appeal, November 5, 1958

<sup>17</sup>Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy (New York, 1957), p. 20

<sup>18</sup>George W. Lee, from literature prepared for the Volunteer Ticket, summer, 1959

<sup>19</sup>The Commercial Appeal, July 5, 1959

<sup>20</sup>The New York Times, August 16, 1959

<sup>21</sup>Ibid, August 16, 1959

### Chapter III

<sup>1</sup>Gerald M. Capers, Jr., Biography of a River Town (Chapel Hill, 1939), Forward

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 10

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 80

<sup>4</sup>McIlwaine, op. cit., p. 89

<sup>5</sup>Capers, op. cit., Forward

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 79

<sup>7</sup>Judge J. P. Young, Standard History of Memphis, Tennessee (Knoxville, 1912), p. 76

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p. 115

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, p. 141

<sup>10</sup>William D. Miller, Memphis During the Progressive Era, 1900-1917 (Madison, 1957), p. 5

<sup>11</sup>McIlwaine, op. cit., p. 124

<sup>12</sup>Capers, op. cit., p. 162

- 13Young, op. cit., pp. 168-169
- 14Ibid, p. 182
- 15Miller, op. cit., p. 7
- 16Ibid, p. 7
- 17Ibid, p. 6
- 18Ibid, p. 8
- 19Ibid, p. 43
- 20Ibid, pp. 43-44
- 21Ibid, p. 45
- 22Ibid, p. 55
- 23Ibid, p. 59
- 24Ibid, p. 49
- 25Ibid, p. 88
- 26Ibid, p. 92
- 27Ibid, p. 63
- 28Ibid, p. 65
- 29Ibid, p. 68
- 30Memphis Chamber of Commerce
- 31Harland Bartholomew and Associates, "Comprehensive Plan, Memphis, Tennessee" (St. Louis, 1955), p. 80
- 32Ibid, pp. 7-8
- 33Memphis Chamber of Commerce
- 34Malcolm Adams, City Editor of The Commercial Appeal (interview)
- 35The Commercial Appeal, October 22, 1959
- 36Malcolm Adams (interview)
- 37The subdivision is located either in precinct 50-1, or just south of it outside the city limits.

<sup>38</sup>The Commercial Appeal, August 30, 1959

<sup>39</sup>Memphis Chamber of Commerce

<sup>40</sup>Ibid

<sup>41</sup>Lt. George W. Lee, Beale Street, Where the Blues Began (New York, 1934), pp. 168-70

<sup>42</sup>Harland Bartholomew and Associates, op. cit., pp 2, 5

<sup>43</sup>Chamber of Commerce

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<sup>1</sup>John Gunther, "Inside U.S.A.," Readers' Digest, May, 1947, p. 69

<sup>2</sup>Charles Van Devander, "Mailed Fist in Tennessee," American Mercury, May, 1944, p. 539

<sup>3</sup>Agnes E. Meyer in The Washington Post, 1946, quoted in The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954

<sup>4</sup>The Commercial Appeal (editorial), October 17, 1954

<sup>5</sup>The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954

<sup>6</sup>Miller, op. cit., p. 159

<sup>7</sup>The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, October 17, 1954

<sup>9</sup>E. H. Grump, quoted in The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954

<sup>10</sup>Miller, op. cit., p. 138

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, p. 149

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, p. 139

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, p. 139

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, p. 154

<sup>15</sup>The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954

<sup>16</sup>Miller, op. cit., p. 160

- 17 Ibid, p. 161
- 18 The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954
- 19 Ibid, August 16, 1959
- 20 E. H. Crump advertisement in The Commercial Appeal, October 30, 1927
- 21 Miller, op. cit., p. 163
- 22 The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954
- 23 Ibid, October 17, 1954
- 24 Miller, op. cit., pp. 164-65
- 25 Ibid, pp. 165-66
- 26 Ibid, p. 167
- 27 Ibid, p. 167
- 28 The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954
- 29 Miller, op. cit., p. 172
- 30 The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954
- 31 McIlwaine, op. cit., p. 375
- 32 Miller, op. cit., p. 173
- 33 The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954
- 34 E. H. Crump, Jr., quoted in The Commercial Appeal, August 17, 1959
- 35 The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954
- 36 Ibid, October 17, 1954
- 37 Ibid, October 17, 1954
- 38 Miller, op. cit., p. 177
- 39 Ibid, p. 177
- 40 The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954
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- 42 Miller, op. cit., p. 225
- 43 Ibid, p. 190
- 44 The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954
- 45 Miller, op. cit., p. 186
- 46 McIlwaine, op. cit., p. 338
- 47 The Commercial Appeal, December 10, 1940
- 48 Miller, op. cit., p. 13
- 49 Heard, op. cit., p. 198
- 50 Bunche, op. cit., p. 1136
- 51 Ibid, p. 1137
- 52 Key, op. cit., p. 74
- 53 McIlwaine, op. cit., p. 376
- 54 Bunche, op. cit., title to chapter XI
- 55 Ibid, p. 1140
- 56 Ibid, Chapter X, p. 1085
- 57 Ibid, p. 1086
- 58 McIlwaine, op. cit., p. 377
- 59 The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954
- 60 Ibid, October 17, 1954
- 61 Time, November 1, 1937, p. 22
- 62 Ibid, p. 22
- 63 The Commercial Appeal, August 16, 1959
- 64 Time, November 1, 1937, p. 22
- 65 Van Devander, op. cit., p. 540
- 66 Key, op. cit., p. 58
- 67 The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954

<sup>68</sup>Ibid, October 17, 1954

<sup>69</sup>Key, op. cit., p. 68

<sup>70</sup>Alfred H. Kelly and Winfred A. Harbison, The American Constitution (New York, 1955), p. 612

#### Chapter V

<sup>1</sup>John Gunther, "Inside U.S.A.," Readers' Digest, May, 1947, p. 71

<sup>2</sup>E. H. Crump quoted in The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954

<sup>3</sup>Governor Frank Clement quoted in The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954

<sup>4</sup>Key, op. cit., p. 63

<sup>5</sup>The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, October 17, 1954

<sup>7</sup>Life, August 12, 1946, p. 27

<sup>8</sup>The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, October 17, 1954

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, October 17, 1954

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, October 17, 1954

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, October 17, 1954

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, October 17, 1954

<sup>14</sup>Key, op. cit., p. 69

<sup>15</sup>The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954, editorial

<sup>16</sup>Ibid, October 17, 1954

<sup>17</sup>Key, op. cit., p. 69

<sup>18</sup>Memphis Press-Scimitar, January 4, 1947

<sup>19</sup>The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, October 17, 1954

- 21Key, op. cit., p. 68
- 22The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954
- 23Robert Marks, political reporter, The Commercial Appeal
- 24The Commercial Appeal, January 24, 1936
- 25Ibid, August 5, 1940, political advertisement
- 26Ibid, July 15, 1948
- 27Newsweek, March 18, 1946, p. 32
- 28The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954
- 29Time, February 19, 1945, p. 56
- 30Key, op. cit., p. 58
- 31Harold B. Hinton, "Crump of Tennessee: Portrait of a Boss," New York Times Magazine, September 29, 1946, p. 15
- 32Key, op. cit., p. 70

#### Chapter VI

- 1The Commercial Appeal, October 17, 1954
- 2Ibid, October 18, 1954
- 3Ibid, November 11, 1955
- 4Ibid, October 16, 1955 (editorial)
- 5Ibid, October 16, 1955 (editorial)
- 6Ibid, October 11, 1955
- 7Official tabulation from the Shelby County Election Commission
- 8The Commercial Appeal, November 5, 1955
- 9Ibid, November 11, 1955
- 10Shelby County Election Commission
- 11The Commercial Appeal, November 6, 1955 (editorial)



- 12 Ibid, November 6, 1955 (editorial)
- 13 Ibid, November 9, 1955 (political advertisement)
- 14 Ibid, November 9, 1955 (political advertisement)
- 15 Ibid, November 9, 1955 (political advertisement)
- 16 Ibid, October 30, 1955
- 17 Ibid, November 5, 1955
- 18 Ibid, November 6, 1955
- 19 Ibid, November 6, 1955 (editorial)
- 20 Shelby County Election Commission
- 21 Frank Ahlgren, editor The Commercial Appeal
- 22 James E. Harpster, chairman of the Political Action Committee of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce
- 23 The Commercial Appeal, March 23, 1956
- 24 Ibid, May 1, 1956
- 25 George Grider, president of the Good Local Government League, quoted in The Commercial Appeal, July 16, 1956
- 26 The Commercial Appeal, July 6, 1956
- 27 Ibid, May 12, 1957
- 28 Ibid, May 12, 1957
- 29 Ibid, May 12, 1957
- 30 Shelby County Election Commission
- 31 The Commercial Appeal, October 14, 1958
- 32 Ibid, October 14, 1958
- 33 Memphis Press-Scimitar, August 8, 1958
- 34 The Commercial Appeal, October 14, 1958
- 35 Ibid, October 15, 1958
- 36 Ibid, October 15, 1958

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- 1 Edmund Orgill quoted in The Commercial Appeal, January 1, 1960
- 2 The Commercial Appeal, August 11, 1957 and May 22, 1959
- 3 Ibid, May 3, 1959
- 4 Ibid, August 13, 1959
- 5 Memphis Press-Scimitar, July 23, 1959
- 6 The Commercial Appeal, August 4, 1959
- 7 Memphis Press-Scimitar, August 19, 1959
- 8 Ibid, August 13, 1959
- 9 The Commercial Appeal, June 26, 1959
- 10 Frank Ahlgren, editor, The Commercial Appeal
- 11 Memphis Press-Scimitar, August 17, 1959
- 12 The Commercial Appeal, August 2, 1959 (editorial)
- 13 Memphis Press-Scimitar, August 12, 1959
- 14 The Commercial Appeal, August 19, 1959
- 15 Ibid, May 28, 1959
- 16 Noore telephone message, August 12, 1959
- 17 Ibid, August 17, 1959
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- 20 The New York Times, August 17, 1959
- 21 Memphis Press-Scimitar, July 2, 1959
- 22 Ibid, August 14, 1959
- 23 The Commercial Appeal, August 16, 1959
- 24 Memphis Press-Scimitar, August 19, 1959 (editorial)
- 25 Ibid, July 28, 1959

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- 27 The Commercial Appeal, August 18, 1959
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- 29 Ibid., August 22, 1959 (editorial)
- 30 Eliehue Stanback, letter to The Commercial Appeal, May, 1959
- 31 Eliehue Stanback quoted in Memphis Press-Scimitar, July 29, 1959
- 32 The Commercial Appeal, August 21, 1959

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- 1 The Commercial Appeal, August 16, 1959 (political advertisement)
- 2 Ibid., August 16, 1959, (political advertisement)
- 3 Ibid., August 16, 1959, (political advertisement)
- 4 The Commercial Appeal, August 2, 1959 (editorial)
- 5 Memphis Press-Scimitar, July 16, 1959
- 6 Volunteer Ticket campaign literature
- 7 The Commercial Appeal, August 14, 1959
- 8 Volunteer Ticket campaign literature
- 9 The Commercial Appeal, August 1, 1959
- 10 Ibid., August 14, 1959
- 11 Memphis Press-Scimitar, August 18, 1959
- 12 The Commercial Appeal, August 1, 1959
- 13 Ibid., August 20, 1959
- 14 Bunche, op. cit., p. 781
- 15 "Hambone's Meditations," The Commercial Appeal, January 12, 1960
- 16 The Commercial Appeal, August 30, 1959
- 17 Bunche, op. cit., p. 965

- 18 Memphis Press-Scimitar, June 15, 1959
- 19 Ibid, June 15, 1959
- 20 The Commercial Appeal, June 19, 1959
- 21 Ibid, July 28, 1959
- 22 Memphis Press-Scimitar, July 3, 1959
- 23 The Commercial Appeal, June 28, 1959
- 24 Ibid, July 22, 1959
- 25 Ibid, July 22, 1959
- 26 Ibid, July 25, 1959
- 27 Ibid, August 9, 1959
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- 29 Dedicated Citizens Committee campaign literature, No. 8 in platform
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- 31 Ibid, August 14, 1959
- 32 Ibid, August 16, 1959
- 33 Ibid, August 23, 1959
- 34 Memphis Press-Scimitar, August 26, 1959
- 35 The Commercial Appeal, August 30, 1959
- 36 Volunteer Ticket campaign literature
- 37 Memphis Press-Scimitar, July 8, 1959
- 38 The Commercial Appeal, July 13, 1959
- 39 Memphis Press-Scimitar, August 26, 1959
- 40 The Commercial Appeal, August 23, 1959
- 41 Heard, *op. cit.*, p. 210
- 42 The Commercial Appeal, August 23, 1959

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<sup>1</sup>H. D. Price, The Negro and Southern Politics: A Chapter of Florida History (New York, 1957), p. 108

<sup>2</sup>The governor of Tennessee has charged that some of the "sit-ins" in Nashville were staged by representatives of the Columbia Broadcasting System in an attempt to provide interesting television viewing.

<sup>3</sup>William H. Riker, Democracy in the United States (New York, 1953), p. 41

<sup>4</sup>The Commercial Appeal, August 16, 1959 (editorial)

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Adams, Malcolm, city editor of The Commercial Appeal (I worked under Mr. Adams for three months during the summer of 1959; he was always willing to supply information useful in this essay).

Ahlgren, Frank, editor, The Commercial Appeal, interviewed on August 11, 1959

Coppock, Paul, member of the Tennessee Historical Society and an editorial writer on The Commercial Appeal, interviewed on June 28, 1959



Drew, Katie Sue, librarian of The Commercial Appeal, (she was of tremendous help in locating articles on Mr. Crump in the morgue and in making available past issues of the newspaper).

Gray, Robert, political reporter for The Commercial Appeal

Harpster, James, chairman of the political action committee of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce, interviewed on June 30, 1959. (He also supplied literature on the economic growth of the city.)

Hilburn, Mrs. Margaret, registrar of the Shelby County Election Commission (she supplied voting statistics on past elections, information on the distribution of Negro voters, and made available the records of her office throughout the summer).

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In addition many hours were spent with other members of The Commercial Appeal staff, citizens of Memphis, store owners, and others whom I thought could supply information on the political history and attitude of the city.

