



W. J. Parks and Cleveland High School 1920 gridgers. Front row from left: John Windham, James Champion, Dugas Shands, Edgar Linder, Carroll Byrd, and Nick Feduccia. Back row: Frank Howell, Levi, Harry Ward, Jr., W. J. Parks, Richard Davis, Clarence Levi.

The World at War

The occasion brought the war close to many doors and hearts. —

[Cleveland Enterprise] on the day the first trainload of Bolivar County soldiers left the Cleveland station.¹

MRS. KEITH SOMERVILLE, and a group of women led by Re Lewis Sutherland Johnson, organized the Madame Hodnett Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in October, 1916. The other organizing members included Anne Elizabeth Bryan, Maude Russell Cobb, Lillian Backstrom Graham, Edith Gordin Hubbard, Florence Thelma Lee, Pearl Backstrom Leland, Lucy Y. Rawlings McCray, Mary Vick McCray, Ida Lee McLean, Eleanor Somerville Shands, Ethel B. Sutherland, Louise McGehee Sutherland, and Lucy Wilshire Walt. Charter members included Ivy G. Hill, Mary Garland Ingram, Mary Lois Lea, and Olivia Wade.²

The group's first project was the establishment of a library. Keith Somerville paid a visit to the town's two newspaper editors—C.S. Glassco, the "jovial, one-armed" editor of the *Cleveland Enter-*

prise, and Mr. Gray, editor of the resurrected *Bolivar Commercial*. The papers ran articles about the new library. Mrs. Johnson made a plea to her husband, R.B. Johnson, Mayor of Cleveland. The D.A.R. members conducted a door-to-door solicitation for book donations. And by the end of the campaign, they had collected some one-hundred volumes.³

The Methodist Church offered a small space for the collection. The women pasted "Cleveland Public Library" bookplates in each book and two afternoons a week volunteers acted as librarians. "Even from the first it was well patronized for it turned out that there were a number of book-starved people like myself," Keith Somerville wrote.⁴

The women dreamed up ingenious ways of raising funds for the maintenance of the library. They had luncheons, whist parties, and a pig auction. One year they staged a "Society Circus" in the Somerville front yard. The main event of the festival was billed as the chariot race. Bill Simmons, Audley Shands, and Roger Johnson donned togas and raced against each other in small, wooden "kiddie cars." The women made \$300 from the circus.⁵

Eventually the library outgrew the church

room. Ivy Hill offered an upstairs room of the Hill Building. The Town of Cleveland appropriated \$15 a month for the upkeep of the D.A.R. library. They raised the monthly ante to twenty-five dollars and contributed a room in the court house. The D.A.R. hired a succession of young, well-read young ladies to act as librarians. Louise and Virginia Graham McLean, Jenny Mayo Linder, and Keith and Ashton Somerville all worked at the library for the "munificent salary of fifty-cents an afternoon." The D.A.R. library blossomed into the Bolivar County Library.⁶

Meanwhile, the United Daughters of the Confederacy kept busy. In 1915 Helen Clark was chosen as representative of statewide U.D.C. to the national convention in Richmond, Virginia.⁷

Another women's organization, called the Woman's Working Society, banded together in June, 1915, for the expressed purpose of building a Presbyterian Church. The core of the corps included Ivy G. Hill, Mrs. A.C. Graham, Mrs. M.B. Hilton, Mrs. W.H. Rode, Mrs. Robert Hall, and Mrs. W.A. West. They earned money all summer long by selling ice cream on the court house lawn. Then they held rummage and bake sales to pad their funds. And on December 7, 1915, the First Presbyterian Church of Cleveland was organized by Fred Graves, a preacher from Greenville.⁸

The charter members congregated in the Baptist Church. The members were: Mrs. A.C. Graham, and her son Clayton; Mrs. Pearl Hilton; Edward B. Hill, Jr.; Mr. and Mrs. J.R. Beard; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hall; Mr. and Mrs. W.A. West; Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Rode, and their daughter Verna; M.B. Hilton; B.H. Hardee; May Haddon; Gladys Dye; J.H. McCaleb; and Mr. and Mrs. Ed B. Hill. The Hills donated the property at the corner of South Court and Third Avenue for the new church building. Because of construction delays, the church was not completed until 1922.⁹

While the church was being built, the small membership met in various homes, at the court house, and in the Christian Church. C.A. Raymond conducted services. Raymond went off to World War I and John Sligh, a layman, was pastor for a time.¹⁰

Charles E. Guice was called to the pulpit in November, 1921. He served the Presbyterian churches of both Cleveland and Rosedale. Cleveland's church had twenty-eight members. In 1922 a Sunday School was begun in Cleveland. In 1924 the church raised a manse east of the sanctuary. And in 1925 Guice went to work full-time for the growing Cleveland congregation. When Guice resigned in 1926, the congregation called Richard A. Bolling to serve as their pastor. Graham Cassibry was the first child baptized by Bolling. Alice Causey was the second. Both children were blessed with Holy Water brought home from the River Jordan by Ivy Hill. In 1937 the church added a Sunday School annex to its building. In 1951 the educational building was erected. By 1953, the church rolls contained nearly four-hundred names.¹¹

Bolling retired in January, 1962, but he retained the title of Minister Emeritus until his death in November, 1971. Lee M. Gentry took Bolling's place and in 1964-65 the congregation built a new, Colonial style church on Highway 8 West, near Delta State University. The church buildings were formally opened on October 3, 1965. The church was fifty years old.¹²

After Gentry died unexpectedly in 1969, the



church called Wilson Benton. In March of 1882, Benton and over 150 members withdrew from First Presbyterian Church and founded the Covenant Presbyterian Church. W.F. Mansell and Jerrold C. Burnside followed in the First Presbyterian pulpit.¹³

All the organizations planned festivities for Theodore Bilbo Day in Cleveland. Bilbo was to speak at Greenville, then be chauffeured northward to Cleveland for a later speech. Though torrential rains washed out the roads in the early morning, by the afternoon the weather flags were flying warm and sunny. Banners flapped in the May breeze. Over five hundred folks turned out to see the politician. Everything was perfect for Bilbo Day. Except Bilbo did not show. He was delayed by the bad roads from Greenville. He finally got to Cleveland on July 19, 1915. And he spoke for two hours.¹⁴

Members of the Cleveland Tennis Club probably took time off from their game to hear Bilbo speak. In the newspaper of July 1, 1915, the group announced

We have our court in extra good shape and are ready for . . . return games with any doubles players . . . within a radius of 25 miles . . .¹⁵

This served as a metaphorical challenge, also. Cleveland was ready to take on any comers in Bolivar County. Cleveland was emerging as the premier city of the Mississippi Delta.

That same summer, the Cleveland Building & Loan Association opened its doors for local business. The president was W.G. Hardee, business partner to Ed B. Hill. Hill was one of the town's most popular and prosperous citizens. In December of 1915, the same month he helped launch the new Presbyterian Church, Ed B. Hill died and the whole town went into mourning. One of the pall bearers was W.G. Hardee. Little did Hardee know, he himself had less than four months to live.¹⁶

The murder of William Guy Hardee stunned the town of Cleveland. Born in Chester, South Carolina, Hardee joined the law firm of Edward Harris Moore in 1907, then later teamed up with Dave Allen. In 1909 Hardee married Eugenia

Dixon of Beulah and the following year they had their only child, a daughter.¹⁷

On Saturday night, March 11, 1916, W.G. Hardee treated himself to a shave and a haircut. Then he strolled over to his office in the Shelby building, sat down at his desk, and read the evening newspaper. Dave Allen, meanwhile, finished shooting pool and also walked over to the office. Will Rob Graham, who was Ed B. Hill's brother-in-law, was in financial straits. He owed money to several people, including one of Hardee's clients. Graham met the two lawyers at their office to discuss his predicament. An argument ensued. Graham accused Hardee of "taking bread and meat out of the mouths" of Graham's wife and children. Then Graham opened fire on Hardee with two pistols. Hardee died before Dr. F.P. Turner could reach him.¹⁸

Another pioneer died in 1916—W.T. Mathews. Mathews had come to Jones Bayou circa 1886. He had served as supervisor, deputy sheriff, alderman, and mayor. By his second marriage he had two children—Clara and Clyde.¹⁹

Cullie Dew Roberts moved to Cleveland in 1915. The 24-year-old graduate of Mississippi A&M came to town to teach at the Agricultural High School. Roberts fell in love with one of his students, Betty Love, who was ten years his junior. Betty was the ward of Starkey and Elizabeth "Louella" Beevers Taylor. Though they approved of the young teacher, the Taylors were concerned about the age difference between Cullie and Betty. They sent Betty to Vicksburg to finishing school. But her first Christmas home, Cullie presented her with a "huge diamond engagement ring." The couple was married in September, 1917.²⁰

Cullie and Betty moved into a house on Leflore. They had two children: Cullie Taylor and Ellis Starkey. Betty's sister, Lou Ella, also a ward of Starkey Taylor, married Joseph Solomon in Cleveland in 1915. They had one son—Joe L. Solomon. In 1930 the Starkey Taylors celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Starkey died of pneumonia in December, 1935. His wife, Lou Ella, died in 1942.²¹

James Satchfield moved to Cleveland in 1916. He operated one of the first dairy farms in town.

He was married to Virginia Elizabeth Shappley and they had five children—James, Gladys, Posey, Terry, and Claude. Satchfield served as town constable for a while under W.E. Watts.²²

Corinne Howry, a teacher at Coffeenville, was hired to teach in the agricultural high school around 1916. Then she took a job with the Cleveland schools. Corinne taught for seven years, until she married Hugh Franklin Causey. They had two children: Alice and Harriet. Causey, who moved to town in 1918, practiced law with Shands and Elmore. After the Causeys married they lived with Ivy G. Hill until their house on South Court was finished.²³

The Elmore's lived next door to the Causeys. Mrs. Elmore was the organist at the Baptist Church. The Dakins lived across the street. The Weilenmans and Catchings also lived in the neighborhood.²⁴

Martin Luther Carver first visited Cleveland in November, 1916. His Webster County farm had succumbed to the boll weevil and Carver was looking for greener pastures. Carver rented a farm northwest of town in the McCain School Community, where McKnight Road and the Stanton addition were later constructed. In December he moved his wife, Roxie Hazzard Carver, four daughters, one son, and two granddaughters to the new farm. The daughters were Ethel Carver Beck, Helen Carver Mize, Edna Carver Fuller, and Earl Carver Dean. The son was Cephas Carver. One of the granddaughters, Irene Mize Naron, later recalled that first Christmas in Cleveland. The three-year-old Irene posed for a photographic portrait. A passing train scared her so much, she scrunched up her face as the bulb popped.²⁵

John William Mize was a farmer. He moved to Cleveland with his father-in-law. John and Helen had five children: Irene, a set of twins—William Ervin and Johnny Erlin, Ethelene, and Roger Barton Mize, who was named for R.B. Johnson. Two of Mize's best friends were Clifford Thweatt who ran his burial service out of the back of R.B. Johnson's hardware store, and county attorney Fred Clark. Mize helped build the Morrison Chapel Church.²⁶

Cleveland was a booming town. According to a 1916 census conducted by the State Board of Health for the purpose of malaria control, the town of Cleveland had 1,412 inhabitants, plus 114 students and teachers at the Agricultural College. The town boasted a new playhouse—the Regent. And two movie houses, the Princess and the Lyric. That same year the main streets of the town were gravelled and \$3,500 worth of bonds were issued for the extension of concrete sidewalks.²⁷

The amenities of city life attracted the Joseph Kearney family to Cleveland in 1916. Kearney moved his daughters—Lona, Juanita, Edna, and Kate, and son—Hugh Kearney, into a home at 202 North Victoria Avenue. According to Lona Kearney,

We came to Cleveland because there were four girls in the family and according to [my] father, girls needed music, dancing, and a good education.²⁸

Kearney bought a feed store on Sharpe Avenue and he also ran a grocery. After moving to Cleveland, Kearney had two more daughters—Joanne and Billye. The Kearneys belonged to the Baptist Church. Lona Kearney was a member of the 4-H Club. She was the first girl from her club to attend a national 4-H convention in Chicago. For a time Lona owned the highest registered milk cow in Bolivar County. The cow was a gift from her grandfather in Missouri.²⁹

The Cleveland High School was enlarged for the fall term of 1916. An annex, which included an auditorium, was added to the main building by Nott & Ward. The faculty for the year included Prof. Jonathan Smith, Miss Humphreys, Miss Wiley, Miss Florence Lea, Miss Peavey, Miss Antley, and Miss Lois Lea. And surely the senior class of boys sensed their halcyon days would soon end.³⁰

In December, 1916, the brand new Manning Hotel opened for business. The two-story brick hostelry on Sharpe Avenue was run by J.P. Manning, presumably, a relative of the hotel's founder, Mary Manning. J.P. Manning apparently maintained the old hotel as an annex. The new luxury

hotel had steam heat and running hot and cold water in each room.³¹

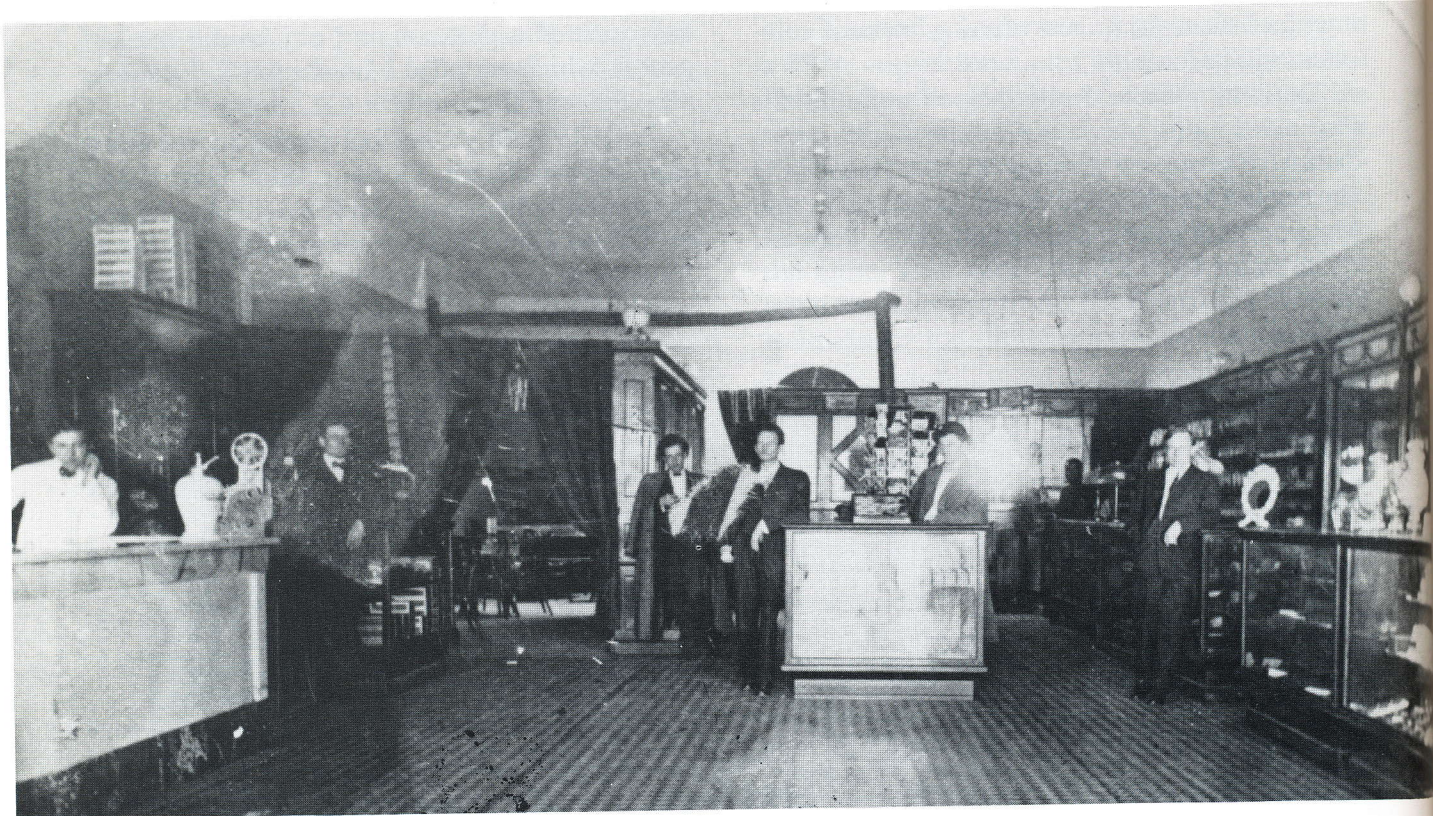
In 1917 Victor Smith helped organize the First Christian Church of Cleveland. For over a decade a group of people—the seedbed of the Christian Church—had been gathering at the Masonic Hall or the court house. W.L. Pearman

had donated a piece of property to the congregation, which included Mrs. Leake E. Edwards, Mrs. Sidney Hill, and Mrs. C.L. Smith.³²

In 1919 contractor S.C. Davis built a sanctuary for the church. On Valentine's Day, 1914, the church building was dedicated. The minister on that occasion, and for many years, was Dr. J.



A. S. Davis pulls his daughter, Addie and her friend. Mary Belle Ellis, along South Sharpe Avenue, 1914.



Roby Drug Store.

Murray Taylor of Memphis. He was followed by other preachers including Talley, Reynolds, E.K. Latimer, W. Gaines Lynch, J.R. Havener, Robert F. Bristol, Edward Rudicel, Eugene Murray and J.T. Beale. In 1945 the church bought a manse for its ministers.³³

The new year of 1917 brought tension, uncertainty, and unabashed patriotism. In the spring the United States forces joined the global fracas. America, and Cleveland, went to the Great War. In Cleveland the war campaign was kicked off with a county-wide, show-your-colors, wave-the-flag rally on Thursday, April 19, 1917. Dr. E.R. McLean was chairman of the gathering. The Rev. T.M. Bradley, who had replaced Brother Smoot at the Methodist Church, delivered the invocation.³⁴

Over 2,000 people congregated at the court house. Children climbed the Confederate monument to get a better view of the passing parade. The King's Daughters marched past. The D.A.R.

float depicted George and Martha Washington, played by Sutherland Johnson and Virginia Graham McLean. Virginia Walt dressed up as "Miss Liberty." The automobile of Mrs. J.C. Roberts was made to resemble a submarine and Mesdames Roberts, Winston, Todd, and Bradley were dressed in full Red Cross regalia. T.S. Owen gave a rousing oration on the merits of conservation, rationing, and the war effort. A.W. Shands spoke on nationalism. And other local luminaries spurred the patriots on with speech and song.³⁵

By May, the front page of the newspaper was asplashed with draft information and ads for Liberty Bonds. Registration date was set for June 5, but the first trainload of Bolivar County boys did not depart until the first week of March, 1918. Forty white men and 105 black men embarked for Camp Pike. Bolivar County furnished more soldiers for the cause than any other county in Mississippi.³⁶

War times had a profound impact on the folks

back home. The economy was altered. Certain goods were scarce. Families greeted the mail train with ambivalence. And churches were packed.

Both the Methodist and Baptist churches began building new homes during the First World War. For some people, such as Simmie, Ola, and Earline Thrash, who lived just north of Cleveland, this was the nearest Baptist Church. The Thrashes, therefore, attended the Church of the Nazarene. On May 3, 1917, the Baptists slid a cornerstone into place for their new sanctuary at the corner of Court and North Bolivar streets. And the very next month the Methodists broke ground for their new church on Court Street. They put down their cornerstone on July 1, 1917. By August, the Baptists had moved into their new home.³⁷

Grover C. Ingram also moved into a new home around 1917. Ingram and his wife, Laura Ellen Permenter, had been married five years when they came to Cleveland. They had five children: Grover E., Linwood P., Glenda, Garth S., and Dorothy. Ingram was a rural mail carrier, a farmer, and, for sixteen years, Cleveland's Chief of Police.³⁸

Wiley Glazure Lowery came to Cleveland in

1917. He was a jeweler and watch repairman. Lowery was married to Virginia Alma Patterson. They had four children: Lettie Louise, Wiley Gilbert, Virginia Merle, and Robert Glynn. The Lowerys lived on Sunflower near the families of F.A. Howell, Milton Champion, Jim McLean, Jimmy Chiles, and Homer Sledge. W.G. Lowery was an alderman for more than one term.³⁹

Malcolm A. Webb moved to Cleveland in 1917. He was a farmer. He and his wife, Mildred Word Gideon, had five children: Malcolm Webb, Jr., Ina Mae, Marion, Ruth, and Mildred. Another child, Mabe Dewey Webb-Nelson was born to Malcolm by a previous marriage.⁴⁰

The year 1917 also brought J.W. Hayles to Cleveland as a cashier for the railroad. A year later, Hayles went to work as bookkeeper for J.L. Smith on Zumbro Plantation. In 1926 Hayles opened his own cotton buying business. And in 1933 he joined forces with Anderson-Clayton Co., the largest cotton buying outfit in the world.⁴¹

Federal Compress of Memphis built a branch office in Cleveland in 1917. J.C. Russel was hired as the manager. The compress stored cotton for farmers.⁴²



First Methodist Church just before completion, 1918.

A flurry of activity in the Cleveland community accompanied the valiant World War I effort. Red Cross headquarters were established above C.R. Smith's Department Store. Two of Smith's employees were Will Escue and Alonzo Smith Kelso, who was called Lon by the townsfolk. Lon moved to Cleveland around 1915. He was married to Eula Barcroft and they had one son: Richard A. Kelso. The Kelsos lived on South Bolivar, then on Leflore. Kelso operated a bakery for a while and from 1921 to 1956 he owned a successful dry cleaning business.⁴³

On Smith's vacant lot, next door to Kamien's, L.M. Hamilton opened a photography studio in a tent. And in the summer of 1917, local grocers banded together to found the Valley Wholesale Grocery. Incorporators included Mrs. Ed B. Hill; J.B. Bond; G.E. Carson; J.D. Evans; Roy Lampard; E.J. Nowell; J.L. Smith; Leo Shoenholz; S.E. Tribble; L.Q. Strong; W.T. Winston; and R.M. Dakin.⁴⁴

Robert Mercena Dakin lived in Boyle. He had a grocery store, for a time ran a livery stable (1908-1912), and farmed. R.M. was married to Maggie Tallulah Lipscomb. In 1919 his home burned and the family moved to Cleveland. They lived in the Ivy G. Hill house for a while, then they moved to 312 South Leflore, then they moved away to Laughlin. The Dakins returned in 1932 and lived with R.M.'s mother on North Court. Then they moved into their own house at 501 South Court. And there Maggie Dakin died on October 17, 1954. R.M. died ten months later.⁴⁵

R.M. Dakin was a great believer in innovation. According to family historian, Elizabeth Dakin

He grew cotton, of course, but also such things as wheat, alfalfa, sorghum (for syrup making), English peas, peaches, beef cattle, and soy beans. [He was] one of the first in this area to install a dryer in his cotton gin, he found it worked fine for cotton, but didn't do so well when he tried to dry peaches.⁴⁶

Late in his life, Dakin sold mules and horses from a trade lot where Cleveland City Hall was

later erected. He owned Bolivar Auction Company, "which for several years held weekly livestock sales on the spot where Holiday Inn is located." He owned much property in Cleveland proper. He founded Delta Burial Association. He served as District Drainage Commissioner. He campaigned for his nephew, W.E. Kent, in Kent's successful bids for county sheriff. Dakin was a trustee of the public school. He was a member, and director, of the Staple Cotton Association. He was a Mason and a member of the Exchange Club.⁴⁷

Willie Earle Kent, the first child of R.M. Dakin's oldest sister, was a World War I veteran. After the war he moved to Cleveland to work with his uncle R.M. In 1922 he married Miriam Woolbert, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leon Woolbert of Cleveland. In 1930 Kent took over the management of Dakin's large farm. Kent served as sheriff from 1944 to 1948. He was re-elected in 1951. He served but a few days of his second term before he died. He and Miriam were childless.⁴⁸

R.M. and Maggie had no children. However, over the years, they took in three orphans: Maggie's niece, Willie Lipscomb; Robert Lee and Mary Elizabeth Hindman. Mary Elizabeth died as a child in 1921. Willie Lipscomb married Harter Thomas. They had two daughters: Margaret and Esther. Esther died in infancy. Willie and Harter divorced and she moved to Cleveland with her daughter, Margaret. "Miss Willie" Thomas lived for years in the R.M. Dakin home. In the 1940s, she was officially adopted by the Dakins.⁴⁹

So was Robert Hindman. Robert worked for his father at the gin and on the farm for years. Then he worked for the Mississippi Highway Department. He married Ann Shirley in 1936.⁵⁰

Dakin's mother, Elizabeth, had come to town in 1917 following the death of her husband, Leonidas, a Confederate War veteran. In 1919, the year her son moved to town, Elizabeth bought a house on North Court from E.H. Wray. When the First Baptist Church sanctuary was built, the Dakin home was moved to Maple Street. She died in that house on February 10,

1932. She was a member of the First Methodist Church. She was buried in the Cleveland Cemetery with her family.⁵¹

In 1918, the first large gasoline tank in Cleveland was installed at the service station at the corner of Sunflower and Sharpe. The station was owned by Lee Davis and his son, Kirby. Folks lined the sidewalks as a team of horses tugged the tank through town. J.L. Solomon, Sr., and his son, H.O. "Hamp" Solomon, owners of Solomon Transfer Company, oversaw the shipping of the tank by rail. Ed Golden and L.D. Haynes guided the horses along Sharpe.⁵²

In the early days of 1918, Superintendent of the Agricultural High School W.H. Smith reported that eight-hundred students were in class, including approximately fifty new students. Understandably, enrolment at the school was flagging. Smith bent over backwards to assure war veterans that they could return to college after the fighting, without losing credit. But the days of the Bolivar County Agricultural High School were numbered.⁵³

The pages of the newspapers of 1918 and 1919 were filled with letters and news from soldiers. W.W. Boone and Tubby Johnson wrote from France. John Floyd was at Camp Shelby. Cal Busby joined the Navy in San Diego. Drs. F.P. Turner and E.R. McLean were sent to Fort Oglethorpe. C.K. Glassco wrote from his watch on the Rhine.⁵⁴

While the soldiers were abroad, America changed. Industrialization took a permanent foothold. Women invaded the workplace. Black men returned from the front with a new sense of equality. And John Barleycorn died after a long illness. In January, 1918, Mississippi became the first state in the nation to ratify the Prohibition Amendment.⁵⁵

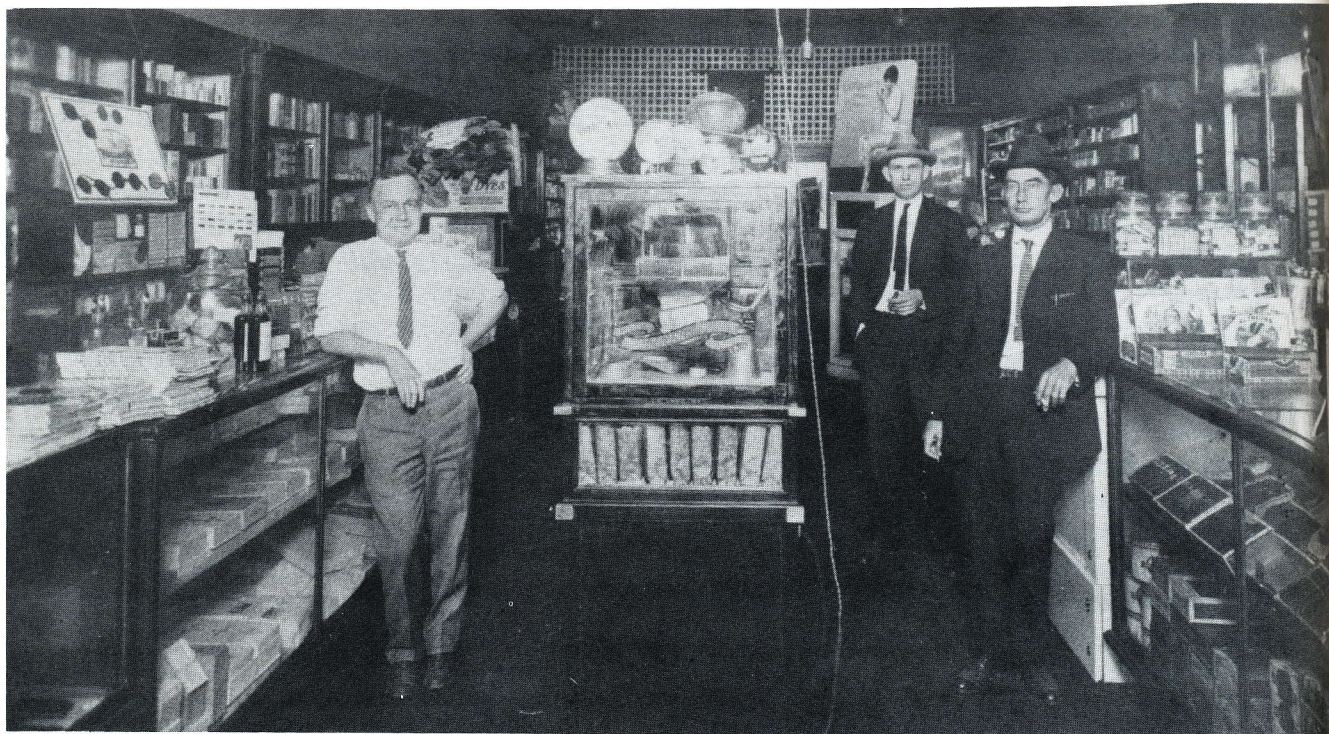
In Cleveland, there was a concerted effort to clean up the town, make the streets safe for democracy, wash out mouths with soap, and minds with religion. R.T. Megibben, manager of the Regent Theatre, felt the heat of high morality when he began showing moving pictures on Sunday afternoon. In an open letter to the commu-

nity he outlined his stance. Megibben assured readers that it was "not so much that I wanted the additional revenue." In his three-point platform, he said motion pictures contributed to good morals. He said the Sabbath was for resting and there was no better place to rest than at the movies. And he said folks in New York City packed the art galleries on Sunday afternoons to see pictures that did not move. Why shouldn't Clevelanders be allowed to sit in his art gallery and view masterpieces that did move. On the bill that week were "When a Woman Sins," starring Theda Bara, and "For Husbands Only."⁵⁶

Around this time, W.T. Ellis bought the Regent Theatre from R.T. Megibben. Ellis rolled into Cleveland the first day of 1913. Three years later he had saved enough money to open a drug store. In 1919 Ellis pitched a tent downtown and began showing silent picture shows as a hobby. Ellis' avocation became his vocation. In 1923, Ellis bought a building next door to H.M. Ward Lumber Co., and opened the Regent. And in 1928 Ellis was among the first theatre managers to install sound in his establishment to accommodate the new "talking pictures." Ellis eventually opened the Ellis Theatre on Court St. And after World War II, he sold his drugstore to John Ward.⁵⁷

As young men filtered home, there was a changing of the guard in downtown Cleveland. Most of the town's pioneers were old, or deceased, and businesses changed hands. Many of the returning folks had been born and reared in Cleveland; some had not. Nevertheless, this was a new wave of citizenry, a second wind, new blood. Men and women in their twenties were raring for the Roaring Twenties.

During the year 1919, H.D. Todd and E.P. Swain took over the Shuler Drug Store. Harry Weinstein turned all of his merchandise over to the brothers Kamien. Ed Roby sold his drug store to his brothers—Lucius and June. Two men named Abel and Heidel bought J.W. Bishop's coal and transfer business. The Whittington Garage was sold to C.E. Horne and D.F. Darby. And J.P. Manning sold his hotel and cafe to Gus and Tony



Ellis Drug Store.

Brocato in the spring of 1919. Tony was home from Italy where he had driven an ambulance during the war.⁵⁸

Brocato became the proprietor of the City Barber Shop, in a building built by C.R. Smith, in 1920. Brocato eventually sold the business to a man named Garner, and he sold the barbershop to Marshall Beach.⁵⁹

Mistlow Gardens was opened in 1919. Dr. Rudolph Mohlenhoff, a veterinarian, built a greenhouse for his wife. According to business papers

This is one of the existing greenhouses today. Soon, the greenhouse was filled with many blooming plants and flowers. She gave many of these to her friends who wanted to give them to people who were sick or had sorrow in their family. She realized that this was costing her so much to grow the plants that she decided to start a flower shop. She named the flower shop Mistlow Gardens because the mist was low on the back of her lot.⁶⁰

Black laborers flocked to post-war Cleveland,

with the promise of steady work and fair treatment. Among those who moved to Cleveland around 1919 were Will Guy, Lizzie Needham, Ike Lee, Blissie Carpenter, Lieutenant Clark, and Lee Harris. Lee Harris moved on to Mound Bayou and became a successful farmer.⁶¹

Other men from Cleveland who moved on to Mound Bayou included Luke Thomas. Thomas and his twin brother, Matthew, also of Cleveland, opened the Thomas Bros. Drug Store in Mound Bayou.⁶²

Cleveland of 1919 attracted people from all over the country. The railroad brought hordes of settlers and fortune-seekers from Illinois. Folks of later years talked of a Durant connection, and of a northward migration from Boyle. But there was no single emanation point.

Robert Edgar Jackson moved into Cleveland in early 1919. Jackson was a state senator and criminal court judge from Liberty, Mississippi. He was married to Edith Bates and they had three children: Charles N., Jean, and Robert E., Jr. Jackson joined the law firm of Shands & Simmons

when he came to Cleveland. The Shands group represented the railroad. The Jacksons lived on South Leflore between the W.H. Myers (Bedwell) home and the Kelso house.⁶³

William Wyatt Simmons also came to Cleveland around this time to practice with Audley Shands. Simmons was married to Mary Clarke. Though the Simmons had no children of their own, they were guardians of twin nieces—Nan and Sarah. The Simmons family lived at 408 South Leflore. Their neighbors included the families of Rufus P. Walt, S.R. Davis, John C. Russel, Abe Somerville, and Audley Shands. Simmons was district attorney from 1920–24, and Mayor of Cleveland from 1935 to 1938.⁶⁴

Another lawyer, Louis Carlyle Hallam, moved to Cleveland in the early days of 1919. Hallam was married to Hattibel Wilkinson. They had two children: Louis C. Hallam, Jr., and Clarena Hallam Cain. The Hallams lived on Leflore St. near Map Shuler, Harry Weinstein, and Nap Cassibry. For a time, Hallam was district attorney for Hinds County before moving to Cleveland.⁶⁵

The spring of 1919 witnessed another tragic fire in Cleveland. The school building burned to the ground. School reopened on April 14, with classes at the Agricultural High School, the Masonic Hall, and the old Baptist Church. School Principal J.T. Smith asked most students to furnish their own drinking cups. The school fire set the stage for consolidated schools in the town of Cleveland.⁶⁶

In 1921 Robert Emory Wiggins, Jr., took over the family grocery store after his father's death. Robert Sr., was an early Cleveland pioneer. He was married to Frances Ferris from Shaw. They had two sons: Robert Jr., and another son who died as a child; and five daughters: Minnie, Kate, Maydie, Robbie, and Fanny. Fanny was among the first singers in the First United Methodist Church choir. After Robert, Sr., died, the Wiggins farmland was sold and divided up. The women married and moved away. Robert Jr., known as Bob, stayed on to run the grocery.⁶⁷

Bob married Sylvia Brannon in 1918. Sylvia's mother, Georgia, ran a boarding house on South Pearman. Georgia lost a son during the 1918 fe-

ver epidemic. In 1927 Georgia Brannon moved to a house at 216 South Leflore. She died there in 1943. She left her daughter, Sylvia, and one son, Gunter Brannon. Sylvia Brannon Wiggins had five children by Bob. They were Peggy Wiggins Grant, James Albert Wiggins, Dr. Robert E. Wiggins II, Betty Jean Wiggins, and Anne Claire Wiggins Dismuke. According to James Albert Wiggins

Sylvia had to become the bread-winner for her own brood in 1934 and saw to it that each of her children attended and graduated from Delta State. For many years she supported herself and her family laboring and serving Delta State students through the cafe across the street from the campus, College Inn. There, she says, she spent her happiest years.⁶⁸

Women, too, started businesses in post-World War I Cleveland. Mittie Ray opened the Ingle-nook Tea Room in a corner of P.E. Morris' Electrical Shop. The tea room advertised "inviting seats and a large Victrola to satisfy music lovers." And in January of 1920, Cleveland's first beauty parlor was opened next door to the Style Shop.⁶⁹

On November 14, 1919, a group of Cleveland women congregated at the Agricultural High School to organize a literary club. From this meeting emerged the Cleveland Woman's Club. The women, at first, met at homes. Then, after 1924, they began convening in the Firemen's Club Room on the second floor of City Hall. During the tenure of President Mrs. Walter Merritt, the women voted to build a club house. The building was finished in 1926. The hall was furnished with wicker furniture from the defunct Bogue Phalia Outing Club. Each member carried a chair to the meetings. According to 1926 president Elizabeth Mitchel, the club's "Opening Tea" was one of the social highlights of the year.⁷⁰

In 1930 a spinoff group, the Garden Club, became a federated organization in its own right. But the Woman's Club continued to nurture the growth of the community. A 1972 capsule history of the club stated

During the 1940's and World War II, the club was outstanding in its patriotic services—the



Sam Camise and daughter Rose in the Camise store.

club house was used for teaching home nursing in the National Defense Program, and for making surgical dressings for American Red Cross. The ladies assisted in alphabetizing ration cards and even purchased a \$100 war bond.

In the 50's, the Woman's Club spearheaded a community drive for a public library, raising nearly \$10,000. In 1958, when the Board of Supervisors established the Bolivar County Library with headquarters in Cleveland, these funds were used for handsome custom built shelving.⁷¹

New people, new housing, new buildings, new businesses. Cleveland was on a roll. The population of Cleveland in 1920 was 1,674. Up nearly 700 people in ten years. In 1920 total value of agricultural products in Bolivar County surpassed all other counties in the South. Cleveland established a full-time health department that same year, and the Home Light & Ice Plant

announced major expansion of services. “. . . Our growth in the recent years has been so phenomenally rapid that the capacity of the plant fell behind the demands that were made on it.”⁷²

David S. Bachman moved to Cleveland in the summer of 1919. Bachman was hired by C.R. Smith as manager of sales at Smith's elegant department store. He remained manager for some time, then he sold specialty merchandise to merchants. Bachman was married to Manie Diggs in 1908. They had three daughters: Eugenia, Harriet, and Charlotte. The first Bachman home was on Sunflower St. across from Mistlow Gardens. Neighbors included the Mohlenhoffs; Will Escue, who worked at the C.R. Smith Store; W.L. Gray, editor of the *Bolivar County Democrat*, the J.L. Sanders family, with children Carl and Demarius; the Champions; the Damons; and Louise and Harry Sanders, who was a school bus driver. The

Bachmans moved onto First Avenue, then in 1921 they bought a house at 306 South Bolivar.⁷³

In 1919, William Hyland Bobb moved to Cleveland. He was a Mason, a Shriner, and an Episcopalian. Bobb was married to Evangeline Hawkins and they had one son, William Hawkins Bobb, born in September, 1916.⁷⁴

In 1920 W.H. Bobb's Men's Clothing Store opened next to R.B. Johnson's Hardware Store in the Hill block. Tarver Height was the manager. In January, 1920, Dee Darby moved to town to learn automobile repair work. He later became a car salesman. Another barber shop was begun by A. Brocato and A.V. Fertitas in the new C.R. Smith building. And on Tuesday morning, June 29, 1920, the first bottle of Coke from the Coca Cola Bottling Plant of Cleveland rolled off the conveyor belt. Mr. Strange was the manager.⁷⁵

There were, of course, drawbacks to Cleveland's spiralling growth. In March of 1920, the Cleveland Cemetery Association pleaded for more money. Tombstones were broken. The grass was high. The weeds were thick. "There has been trouble of late in hogs wandering over the grounds and rooting up the graves."⁷⁶

Soon thereafter, Pvt. Charles Mullins of Cleveland received a full military funeral at the Cleveland Cemetery. Methodist minister T.M. Bradley conducted the services. Pall bearers included Lt. A.B. Sparkman; and Pvts. Floyd Dean, G.S. Sally, Willie Baker, T.G. Livingston, Hester E. McCain, Carl Fletcher, and Wm. C. McBride. The saluting squad consisted of Capt. E.R. McLean; Lt. A.D. Somerville; and Pvts. Edley Horton, Aubrey M. Jobe, J.R. Shillings, Artis McCullor, Walter Williams, and David W. Tucker. C.K. Glassco was the bugler.⁷⁷

Both Dr. W.A. Carpenter and Edward H. Green moved to Cleveland in 1920. Carpenter went into practice with E.R. McLean. Carpenter and his wife, Virgie Moore, had five sons—James Albert, Thomas Travis, Edwin Burgess, Bernard Rush, and William Albert, Jr. Edward H. Green moved to Cleveland from Boyle. A graduate of Millsaps, Green joined forces with John T. Smith of Cleveland. The law firm of Smith & Green was well-respected.⁷⁸

In 1920, farmer Isaac Wilkins Dedwylder moved his wife, Harriet Mariah, and their son, Edward, J. to Cleveland to be near another son, Dr. Rosier Davis Dedwylder. According to the Dedwylder family papers

[Wilkins] Dedwylder did not live to know the beginnings of mechanized farming in the Delta—he operated his farm with mules, riding his farmland on his grey mare, Nelly. His ramrod-straight appearance was in keeping with his character and personality; he was an exacting man, expecting as much from himself as he did from others. Mrs. Dedwylder was, as was her husband, happy in Cleveland despite the fact that she never stopped longing for the hills of Clarke County. She was an avid gardener; the rose garden she laid out—although the plants have been changed many times—still exists at the family home one mile east of Cleveland on the Ruleville Road, a home known to the family as "The Grove."

This grove figured in one of the many stories told to third generation members of the family by a beloved neighbor who had preceded the Dedwylders to Cleveland many years—Mr. Emil Seelbinder. He would spellbind the children telling of the time he was traveling from Cleveland to his home past the grove carrying some bacon among the provisions he was taking to his home. Wolves smelled the meat and forced Mr. Seelbinder to spend several hours of the night in "that tree right out there." Harriet Dedwylder died at The Grove in 1926, Wilkins in 1930.⁷⁹

Rosier Davis Dedwylder was born in 1882. He graduated from the University of Alabama Medical College in 1907 and moved to Cleveland in 1914. He directed the Bolivar County Health Department. And in 1919 he married his laboratory technician Mary Ruby Tyrone. The Dedwylders had three children—Rosier Tyrone, Wilkins Winslow, and Harriet Leander.⁸⁰

In local circles, Rosier was known affectionately as "Dr. Ded." According to historian Elsie Ann Ervin, this monicker was inappropriate.

In twenty-eight years as County Health Officer in populous Bolivar County, Mississippi, he and his helpers transformed this territory from stagnant swampland, in which every glass of water was a death trap, to a region of contented, healthy citizens, with health conditions rivaling those of any other county in the South.⁸¹

Dedwylder came to town to inaugurate the Bolivar County Health Department. He was a public health pioneer. In the summer of 1920 he was appointed the first full-time County Health Officer in Mississippi. The main office was in Cleveland. A branch office was opened in Rosedale. Pattie R. Sanders was the public health nurse there. Dedwylder fought tenaciously against malaria by draining swamps and stagnant pools of water, and by advocating screens on windows and doors. He was the first doctor in the South to administer toxin/antitoxin vaccinations to prevent diphtheria. The first program was in Merigold in 1921. And he battled syphilis, typhoid, and other dread diseases.⁸²

Dedwylder was a vital man with a variety of interests. He loved music, and reading mysteries, and dogfights. He suffered a heart attack in February, 1948, as he was climbing the steps to his office. A few days later he died. In December of 1950, a new capacious and well-equipped public health center was opened on Court Street. The clinic was named for the man who gave his life for the public health of Bolivar County and the world—Dr. Rosier Dedwylder.⁸³

As the winter of 1920 approached, the major topic in Cleveland was not a visit by Ilya Tolstoi—son of the famous author Count Leo Tolstoi—who was in town in November to speak about the Russian Revolution at a lecture series at the Agricultural High School. The major issue in Cleveland was that old orange nemesis: Fire.⁸⁴

Every winter, when wood stoves and cook stoves were stoked up, accidents happened. A stopped-up flue, or glowing coals, or a rusted-out stove floor could lead to extensive damage, and, in the worst cases, loss of life. On September 15, a massive fire swept through the Valley Wholesale Grocery building. The newspaper leaned especially hard on the firefighters. The paper called the firemen "sleepy heads . . . half clad in their haste to reach the scene." And they decried the "inefficiency of the fire department (which is department in name only.)" What will happen, the paper put forth, when the Big Fire occurs?⁸⁵

The gauntlet was thrown down. The challenge to the community was clear. The newspaper, and concerned citizens, were calling for a bonafide, organized volunteer fire department. And the young men of Cleveland rose to the occasion. Less than a week after the fire, thirty folks gathered at the court house and founded the Cleveland Volunteer Fire Department. The first signatures on the department roster were S.W. Bigger; A.L. Jones; C.A. Feduccia; J.E. Strange; W.H. Bobb; A.Y. Doyle; J.W. Smith; C.K. Glasco, secretary; J.L. Jones, assistant chief; and C.C. Thweatt, chief. Dues were six dollars a year.⁸⁶

In October the city ordered a fire truck with ladders, a chemical tank, and other equipment. The city installed a fire whistle at the Home Light & Ice Plant and it was first tested on Tuesday, October 12, 1920. In December, 750 extra feet of fire hose arrived. And in January, 1921, the



new fire truck arrived. The truck was a Model "T" Ford with a crank starter. The volunteers drove proudly through town in a spontaneous parade. The firemen immediately set about to build a fire-house. The garage was designed with a sloped floor, in case the truck was difficult to crank.⁸⁷

Ironically, two weeks after the first fire truck rolled into town, the "Big Fire" came. Five stores were destroyed in the C.R. Smith block: L.H. Trimm's Bakery, William Kervis Grocery & Meat Market, H.M. Talip's Grocery, M. Ollie's Dry Goods Store, and Humphreys & Co., cotton company. The whistle wailed. The men responded gallantly. The new nozzles and 950 feet of hose worked like a charm. But the water pressure was inadequate to quell the raging fire. Still,

the town cheered its new firefighting squad.⁸⁸

But Cleveland was such a rough frontier town in the early Twentieth Century, there were about as many shootings as there were fires. So the designated signal was unreliable. The streets were so unsafe that a night marshal, Walter E. Smith, was hired by the city. In February, 1921, Smith engaged in a shootout with Wingfield Gibson. Both men died.⁸⁹

Cleveland Mayor L.Q. Strong also thought the streets were unsafe because of mad dogs that roamed the town at will. Strong said he could hear the screams of children taking the Pasteur treatment in the office above his. He led a crack-down on unmuzzled dogs in the city and an ordinance was passed.⁹⁰



Cleveland Volunteer Fire Department and Firemen's Club, circa 1921. Front row: J. P. Minyard, E. M. Watson, R. B. Middleton, J. L. Jones, Ben M. Pearman, C. K. Glassco, Sr., Leo Shoenholz, John Davis, C. C. Thweatt. Back row: W. H. Bobb, Lawrence Feduccia, A. H. Doyle, Bill Smith.

Weatherall, Dr. Dedwylder, and James K. Fulson, Cleveland's first sanitary inspector.

The new fire department was again called to arms in April when the Bolivar Street home of Starkey Taylor burned down. The department could not save the Taylor house, but, because of their training and quickness, homes belonging to P.B. Woollard, H.M. Laudig, B.W.L. Bedford, and a barn of Mrs. E.T. Clark's, were spared.⁹¹

Camaraderie among the firemen was cemented by their perilous times together. Naturally, the young men began to socialize with each other. In May of 1921, the group commandeered the old Baptist Church, called a "honky tonk" by the newspaper, for their Firemen's Club. They scheduled regular meetings there for the 1st Friday of each month. But the club soon came to represent much more than a convention hall. The Firemen's Club was the focal point for the Roaring Twenties in Cleveland. And to kick off the decade, the firemen staged a grand opening dance on June 8, 1921.⁹²

The Cleveland Dance Club was organized on June 13, 1921. William Berger was the president. Walter Champion was vice-president. The group—composed of single folks and young married couples—held dances at the Firemen's Club every Monday night from 9:30 to 1.⁹³

On the Fourth of July, the whole town assembled on the court house lawn for an Independence Day celebration. Longino Dean was the man of the hour. He caught the greased pig and he won the pie-eating contest. Ben Pearman won the Fat Man's Race. Johnny Windham won the potato sack race. And, to top it all off, Bob Love's Orchestra played for a dance that night at, of course, the Firemen's Club.⁹⁴

But the Firemen's Club was not the only gathering place in the bulging town of Cleveland. On Monday night, July 18th, W.C. Handy returned to the Delta city where he gleaned lucrative "enlightenment" about his native music. Handy played the Regent Theatre.⁹⁵

Two weeks later, J.W. Davis remodeled his pool hall on Main St. He installed ceiling fans, and partitions to hide the billiard tables from the street windows. Talk at the pool room probably centered around a Cleveland favorite son, Bill Wade, who was racing a Studebaker Special Six

down in New Orleans. Wade was winning every road race in sight. Trash from Davis' pool hall, and from homes and businesses all over Cleveland, was picked up on the first Tuesday of each month, as the city instituted the first regularly scheduled garbage pickup in September of 1921.⁹⁶

Bernard Egbert McDearman and his wife, Lora Brock, moved to Cleveland in 1921. McDearman was an engineer for W.W. Boone Construction Company, and the Bolivar County Drainage Districts System. McDearman served as city engineer from 1940 to 1969. Between 1940 and 1946, McDearman was Brigadier General and commanding officer of the Mississippi State Guard. The McDearmans lived at 202 South Bolivar from 1923 to 1966. The McDearmans were active in the Methodist Church. They had two children: Anne Faye and Bernard.⁹⁷

In 1921 an Episcopal parish was formed in Bolivar County. The mission was comprised of Grace Church in Rosedale and Calvary Church in Cleveland. And one priest served both congregations. Charter members of Calvary Episcopal Church included Mrs. W.H. Bobb, Mrs. Walter Christmas, Mrs. Fred Clark, Mr. and Mrs. W.S. Gray, Mrs. L.C. Hallam, Mrs. E.R. McLean, Mrs. Lotta Moss, Mrs. A.C. Pearman, Mrs. Henry Ringold, Mrs. C.C. Jacobs, and Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Russel.⁹⁸

By 1925 the church had fifty-two communicants. In 1928 the Calvary Church congregation built a yellow stucco sanctuary on South Court Street. The church was dedicated in 1937 by Bishop Theodore Bratton. Priests who have served the parish include Halsey Werlein, Jr., Duncan Gray, Sr., William Tate Young, C.A. Ross, Albert Mollegen, Cecil Jones, Sr., James Emerson, Sumner Guerry, Duncan Gray, Jr., B.C. Causey, Clifton McInnis, Jr., R.A. Park, T.J. Henry, Ray Pradat, James Pulliam, E. Lucien Malone, and John Brewster.⁹⁹

W.J. Parks, Sr., rode into Cleveland on the Peavine in 1921. "I thought I didn't know anyone in Cleveland, but the first person I saw was George Causey whom I knew as a student at Mississippi College," Parks recalled in a 1977 inter-

view. Parks was invited to the Pearman Avenue home of C.R. Smith, who was Causey's employer. The next house he visited was the home of the school superintendent near the public school. "I never thought that I might live in that same house for 30 or more years," Parks said.¹⁰⁰

Parks lived in a room at the school. He took his meals at the teachers' home and the Floyd Hotel. His second year in Cleveland, Parks lived with the Laudig family and tutored their son, Aaron. Parks married Lillian Pearman, in the late 1920s. She was the daughter of Cleveland founder, W.L. Pearman. Though Parks had been hired as a math teacher and sports coach, his first few days in Cleveland were spent with Austin Shipman, sweeping and cleaning the new school building. Parks described himself as a "glorified janitor." But he was much, much more.¹⁰¹

Over the years, W.J. Parks endeared himself to his students. In the early 1930s, Parks became superintendent of the Cleveland Consolidated Schools. He later recalled two of his finest students: I.A. Kamien, Jr., and Margaret Wade. Of Kamien, Parks said he was "a scholar in math, in

fact, all subjects, and whose paper I always checked first so I would know the correct answers and know what grades to give other people."¹⁰²

Parks said, "My wife always said the reason for Miss Wade's success was that I was her coach and taught her what she knows. I know better and have said so."¹⁰³

Law and order took a backward step in the first days of 1922. A news item on the front page of the *Cleveland Enterprise* told of a daring robbery at the town post office. On Tuesday morning, January 3, Postmaster L.A. Hill entered the post office, as usual, at about 5:30. As he unlocked the door he was accosted by two men and "covered with guns." The men, Hill later told authorities, bound and gagged him, then stole about \$1,000 and fled in an automobile. Hill worked his gag loose and called to a passerby for assistance.¹⁰⁴

About three weeks later another news item appeared in the paper. This squib announced that Mrs. Ida Roberts had been appointed postmistress. Mrs. Roberts, the paper continued, "will fill

Girls Basketball Team, Cleveland High School, 1922. (Left to Right) Coash Maureen Boudreaux, Mary Windham, Margaret

Roberts, Dorothy Nott, Eloise Smith, Lista Mae Johns, Katherine Sligh.



the unexpired term of Former Postmaster Hill who is under \$6,000 bond for alleged conspiracy in the post office robbery.¹⁰⁵

The town fathers were determined to push Cleveland ahead. The great debate of 1922 was over the paving of Main Street, already called Sharpe by some folks. In late April the populace voted down a measure to pour concrete on Sharpe and College streets and Speedway. But by August a 40 foot-wide concrete track was being smoothed down on Sharpe between Sunflower and Collins.¹⁰⁶

The promise of paved streets was good news to the White Star Bus Line which began servicing Bolivar County in March of 1922. The bus, driven by line manager C.H. Judd, began at Cleveland at 6:30 each morning. Then dashed to Ruleville in time to meet the 7 a.m. train. Then it returned to Cleveland, went on to Pace and Rosedale, and wound up back in Cleveland. The route was repeated twice daily.¹⁰⁷

Folks from all over rode the bus to Cleveland on Saturday, March 25, 1922, for the open house at the Cleveland Public Library in their new rooms—B.W.L. Bedford's old offices—above the Cleveland State Bank. Library dues were \$1.50 a year. The D.A.R. still ran the show. And on May 10, 1922, the Presbyterians laid down their cornerstone for a new sanctuary.¹⁰⁸

K.P. Cross moved to Cleveland in 1922 from Edwards, Mississippi, with his mother and father, Tom and Lena Cross, eight sisters, and two brothers. K.P. worked at the cotton compress and for Boots Jones Cotton Co. In May of 1926, K.P. married Henrietta Lyes. They had fourteen children.¹⁰⁹

Henrietta, who was born in Cleveland, was the second child of Lonnie Caleb and Alice Lyes of Edwards. She was one of five children. The other four children were: Melinda, born in Edwards; Ruth, McKinley, and Mary, all born in Cleveland. The Lyes lived and worked on the Seelbinder farm. Henrietta attended a two-room school in Cleveland near the Nowell Lumber Company. There were two teachers in the school—one upstairs and one downstairs. The school had eight grades. One of the teachers was

Mr. Taylor, a one-armed man. The other teacher was Mr. Snowden. This school later became the Cleveland Colored Consolidated School. Thirteen of Henrietta's children graduated from this school, and later graduated from college.¹¹⁰

Henrietta attended St. Paul Church at the corner of Chrisman and South Street. Ivy G. Hill and other white citizens of Cleveland taught Sunday School on Sunday afternoons at the church. Nick Bradley was the pastor.¹¹¹

Henrietta Cross served on the advisory committee of the Community Action Program for fifteen years. Lonnie Lyes was a trustee for the public school. Another trustee was Herman M. Nailor. Nailor owned a store at the corner of Ruby and Pearl. Nailor, too, attended St. Paul's Baptist Church, where he was a deacon. Nailor's daughter, Ernestine, was a well-respected school teacher.¹¹²

H.K. Harpole opened the Cleveland Service Station in 1922. It was the first drive-in gas sta-

K. P. Cross, Jr.



tion in town. One of Harpole's attendants was F.W. Bishop, Sr. In 1933, Bishop bought the station. Attendants who worked for him included Amos Clay, Buster Tims, a man nicknamed "Shorty", and Napoleon Robinson, who was stabbed to death on the job one night.¹¹³

In May, 1922, the whole town was astir because of a star. Marie Wells of Cleveland, who was a headliner in the Broadway musical "Merry Widow," returned and delighted her hometown crowd with song and dance shows at the Regent Theatre. Proceeds from the spectacle went to the newly organized Cleveland Parents and Teachers Association. Marie returned a year later in her first motion picture, supporting Roy Stewart, in "The Love Brand." The Regent was packed to capacity.¹¹⁴

As the leaves of '22 began to fall, there was talk of court house renovation. In September, a company was contracted to completely refurbish the old court house. That same season, the Cleveland High School football team won the county championship by beating Boyle. Cleveland scored 72 points. Eleven touchdowns were run by Laudig, Milstead, Bagwell, Feduccia, Linder, and Staples. The game was contested by Boyle because of a question of the eligibility of one of the Cleveland players. But Cleveland was vindicated by the state athletic association and kept the trophy.¹¹⁵

The Cleveland Rotary Club was also founded in the autumn of 1922. The first meeting was November 21, 1922. R.N. Somerville was appointed temporary president. M.L. Thompson was chosen secretary for the time being. Other Cleveland members included W.R. Moore, C.R. Smith, Edgar Brown, I.A. Kamien, Leo Shoenholz, E.R. McLean, W.T. Townsend, O.F. Brugge, R.B. Johnson, Ed Nott, Noble Churchill, W.W. Boone, W.T. Winston, H.H. Elmore, and A.W. Shands. The club set aside Wednesdays for their weekly meetings. In January of 1923, the Rotary Club moved into new quarters over the Cleveland State Bank.¹¹⁶

The day after the Rotary Club was founded, the Volunteer Fire Department hosted a blowout banquet. Nearly a hundred people gathered for

the feast. Roastmaster A.W. Shands called everyone to the table. He asked M.L. Thompson to give a brief history of the fire squad. He asked J.T. Smith why the country was so bone dry. He asked Edgar Brown to thank all the distinguished guests for coming. He asked Abe Somerville why he hung his pants so high. He asked Tom Hyer about how to grow hair. He asked District Attorney W.W. Simmons how to drink whisky and not get caught.¹¹⁷

A mysterious man, who identified himself only as E.C., or Exalted Cyclops, led one-hundred members of the white-hooded Ku Klux Klan on a march through Cleveland on December 4, 1922. The following Thursday he sent a letter to the local newspaper outlining the Klan's positions on law and order.¹¹⁸

Young John Ross also made the papers in early December because he won a trip to the Chicago Stock Show by growing more sweet potatoes—130 bushels—than anyone else in Bolivar County in 1922.¹¹⁹

As the first days of 1922 were violent, so were the final days. In mid-December service station owner, and town father, Lee Davis was gunned down on his door step on a Sunday evening. He did not live to see the second annual Community Christmas Tree sponsored by the PTA. The tree was trimmed a few days before Christmas. A reward of \$1,250 was offered for Davis' murderer.¹²⁰

C.S. Glassco's favorite word for active citizens was "live wire." In the 1920's, pride in Cleveland increased and the live wires bundled together as hyperactive civic groups. The PTA brought contralto Cora Cook back to the school auditorium in March of 1923 for a return engagement. Her rendition of "Danny Boy" proved so moving, the audience would not let her leave the stage until she had sung the ballad again. In the spring, the PTA teamed up with the Rotary Club to raise over \$2,000 for playground equipment for school children. Later in the year, R.N. Somerville and other Rotarians entertained Governor-elect Henry L. Whitfield.¹²¹

Under the faithful, watchful eye of the DAR, the Cleveland Public Library continued to pros-

per. Though the books were shuttled from the Methodist Church to the Shelby Building to the Hill Building within a year, by May of 1923, the collection was open to the public Wednesday and Saturday afternoons from 4 to 6 p.m. The library committee included D.A.R. faithfuls Keith Frazier Somerville, Ida Lee McLean, and Re Sutherland Johnson.¹²²



The Cleveland Rotary Club leaving on a trip to Hot Springs Arkansas, in 1922.

The DAR also sponsored a sustained drive throughout 1923 for the planting and maintenance of a double row of four-hundred pin oaks on Memorial Drive between Cleveland and Boyle. Various live wire groups raised donations at a dollar per tree. The trees were planted to honor the twenty-five servicemen of Bolivar County who gave their lives in World War I. Over the years, the trees withstood high winds and droughts. At one point the ground was so dry, a bucket brigade was formed to water the trees. Folks tied their cows to the trees. The livestock ate some of the young trees and pulled other saplings out of the ground. A fierce February ice storm in 1951 caused severe damage to the trees. Future ice and wind storms took their toll on the trees. In 1971, the DAR posted a bronze plaque on Memorial Drive listing those for whom the trees had been planted. In 1975 the organization again appealed to the live wire groups and funds were raised for the care and repair of the noble stand of trees. And in 1976 the trees were recognized in the book *Famous and Historical Trees*, compiled by the American Forestry Association.¹²³

Mrs. W.G. Rimmer moved to Cleveland in 1923. Mrs. Rimmer had worked for various insurance agencies in Jackson and Memphis before settling with Robb & Bruggee of Cleveland. Eventually, Mrs. Rimmer opened her own insurance agency.¹²⁴

In the early Twenties, more and more Catholic families moved into the Delta. And the Bishop of the church was thinking seriously of founding a parish in the Jones Bayou town. Thus were planted the seeds of Our Lady of Victories Parish.¹²⁵

The story behind the parish began in 1907 with the settlement of three Italian families in the Cleveland area. By 1923, there were an estimated 100–150 Catholics in the Cleveland area. Between 1907 and 1924, mass was celebrated in Cleveland during the week and on Sundays when there was a fifth Sunday in the month. Services were held in private homes, the Masonic Hall, or the court house.¹²⁶

In 1923 the Bishop agreed with the priest in

Shelby who felt that Cleveland would prove a more central and beneficial location for a new Catholic church. Money from the sale of the Shelby rectory, and additional funds from the Extension Society, were earmarked for a three-room church to be built on a lot on Collins Street in Cleveland. The church was completed in December, 1923. And on April 23, 1924, E. Victor Rotondo became the first priest of Our Lady of Victories Parish. Rotondo, an accomplished violinist, became a beloved figure in the Cleveland community.¹²⁷

According to Father Rotondo

[The new church] was a very poor building, not painted, there was not even a cross to indicate that it was a Catholic Church, the material: cheap and ugly lumber. The lot was full of holes . . . No electric fixtures had been installed; they had to use small birthday candles. As soon as they entered into the Church its appearance was even worse than the exterior. There were two ugly posts in the middle to sustain the roof, the lumber used was full of black spots, there were no pews, no altar, the back rooms intended to be the pastor's residence were no better: poor little bed, old furniture from the rectory at Shelby, books and kitchen tools were mingled together; there was no water and lack of the most elementary convenience.¹²⁸

Father Rotondo gradually whipped the church into shape. He bought a dozen new pews and erected an altar salvaged from a Duncan church. Eventually the building was wired, plumbed, wall-papered, painted, cleaned-up, and made quite presentable. But there remained a serious problem of drainage. Heavy rains devastated the building. So Rotondo began to shop around for a new location for the parish church.¹²⁹

In 1927, Rotondo convinced the Bishop to authorize the purchase of a new lot on First Avenue, stretching from Court to Shelby Street. A new rectory was built immediately. And a decade later, the construction of a new, larger church, was completed. The 200-seat church was dedicated on January 8, 1939.¹³⁰

Rotondo served from 1924 to 1946. He was followed by: Peter Quinn, 1946–48; John Nie-

meyer, 1948–51; Eamon Mullen, 1951–54; James J. Curley, 1954–55; John Bryan, 1955–58; Patrick J. Hannelly, 1958–67; and John Leonard, 1967–76.¹³¹

Over the years, the parish prospered. In 1924 the parish register listed eighty members. By 1929 the number had doubled. In 1934 the church served 195 folks. And in 1939 there were 259 people on the roll. By 1948, 342 Catholics belonged to the church. That figure rose by 100 per cent, to 442, over the next six years. The 1966 parish report listed 466 members. And in the fiftieth anniversary year, the parish served 160 families, or 615 members.¹³²

In 1958 the church constructed a parish center, named for Father Rotondo, between the rectory and sanctuary. Then in October, 1962, the church bought a lot on Bishop Road and unveiled plans for expansion. Work on the new church was encouraged by an earthquake which “rocked the Church” on Sunday, June 4, 1967. By January, 1968, the old church was considered a hazardous liability and services were moved to the Rotondo Center. In October of 1970, the new Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church was dedicated. And in March, 1974, a new rectory was completed on Shelby Street. Construction of a new Parish Center began in January, 1975. But a mysterious fire

delayed completion of the building until December, 1975.¹³³

In 1923 Cleveland doctors—McLean, Turner, Carpenter, Sparkman, and Howell—met with other physicians and business leaders from the county for the very first serious discussion of a permanent hospital for Cleveland. Another live wire organization, the American Legionnaires of Glen Crosby Post 165, decided membership was at last large enough to warrant a permanent meeting place.¹³⁴

The post sponsored a successful July Fourth Celebration and an essay contest, won by Anthony Feduccia. The theme was: “Why All Ex-Soldiers of World War Should Join the American Legion.”¹³⁵

Fourth of July celebrations were an immense treat for the dudes and flappers of the Twenties. In 1924 the legionnaires again sponsored an Independence Day extravaganza. The handbill boasted:

The Fourth of July 1924 . . . sponsored by the American Legion . . . 10,000 Pounds of Good things to Eat, including free barbeque . . . 20,000 people . . . Valuable Prizes, including a new Ford bumper and a Clymer windshield spotlight. World Famous Carnival, including 30 beautiful girls for dancing partners . . . Baseball,



Speeches, Prize Fights, including a 5-man Battle Royal . . . Fireworks: Torches, Bombs, Shells, Rockets, and other special pyrotechnic displays including the Rotary Emblem, American Legion Emblem, the U.S. Flag, and Niagara Falls, all depicted by a colorful array of fireworks . . . and a Ten O'Clock Dance, featuring a 7-piece jazz orchestra. According to publicity literature, "It's better to be there than to be sorry for the rest of your life."¹³⁶

People came from all over the county, including nearby Zumbro Plantation. Zumbro was the land that belonged to Joe L. Smith, one of Bolivar County's most influential citizens in the first half of the Twentieth Century.¹³⁷

When the local folks gathered for the 1924 celebration, they had many things to mull over. There was the new drug store—Lee's—which had replaced Todd's Pharmacy. Lee offered free drinks, a jazz orchestra, and ice cream for the ladies at his grand opening. A second truck, a "REO" speedwagon had been purchased for the fire department. Cleveland attorney Lucy Somerville became the first woman to serve on the Mississippi State Board of Law Examiners. She was appointed by Governor Whitfield. There was a new bank in town—the Bank of Cleveland, a branch of the Bank of Grenada. The new bank took over the business and deposits of the Cotton Exchange Bank on Friday, March 14, 1924. Harry Huntzicker had opened Cleveland Sanitary Plumbing in the old Coca Cola building next door to the Standard Auto Co. The black community of Cleveland attended Brother Burke Culpepper's Revival at the Camp Holiness tabernacle in May. A.M. Snowden reported on the revival for the newspaper. And work progressed on the new City Hall being built on the west side of the tracks, between the court house and the rail road.¹³⁸

Surely the Independence Day revelers discussed the new Klingman Chevrolet Co.. The firm was run by a former teacher at the agricultural high school, A.T. Wilson. Wilson taught at the school from 1915 to 1917. Then he went to Detroit for training courses in the automobile business. In 1932 J.O. Bradford joined Wislon's

firm and the business name was changed to Cleveland Motor Co.¹³⁹

No doubt, conversation also turned to an article being written by R.L. Clayton, secretary of the local Chamber of Commerce, for the 1924 edition of "The Mississippi Builder". In the section on Cleveland, Clayton boasted

In post office receipts, bank clearings, cotton receipts and gross business clearings, Cleveland ranks fourth in the list of towns in the Mississippi Delta and the smallest of these other towns has a population nearly four times as large as Cleveland.¹⁴⁰

Clayton wrote that Bolivar County produced more, and better, cotton than most other counties in Mississippi. The county ranked twenty-first in the value of agricultural products among all counties of the United States, and first among counties in the South, according to the Department of Agriculture. The county was the largest in area, population, and assessed valuation in the state. There were 290 miles of hard-surfaced roads.¹⁴¹

The Cleveland Public School of 1924, Clayton continued, with an enrolment of 1300 students, was the largest of its kind in the world. Cleveland was also the home of four churches—Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Christian—led by "clear visioned, consecrated members of the clergy." Cleveland offered a good fire department and new "motor truck fire apparatus." The efficiency of the fire department had reduced insurance rates by twenty per cent in the town. Cleveland could also boast of a well-equipped and free hospital; mosquito control; numerous clubs and societies; two banks; railroad shops; a cotton compress; two hotels; three restaurants; four drug stores; two large department stores; a bakery; three hardware stores; lumber and brick yards; two newspapers; five garages and automobile sales rooms; two barber shops; a jewelry store; grocery stores, dry goods shops, and other shops "of a miscellaneous nature of business;" and a picture show.¹⁴²

Conversation also kept the ball rolling at the dedication of Cleveland's brand new City Hall and Fire Station in September of 1924. The social event was heightened by the annual banquet of

the Volunteer Fire Department. The two-story municipal building housed offices for the mayor and city clerk, a dormitory for several firemen, and a banquet hall. Judge Elmore was toastmaster for the fete. Others in attendance were department physician E.R. McLean,; Mayor R.B. Johnson; A.M. Mallory; Ed Nott; A.D. Somerville; W.W. Simmons; Dr. Merritt; Edgar Brown; J.C. Roberts,; I.A. Kamien; M.L. Thompson; C.R. Smith; Dr. Turner; E.W. Watson; Lawrence Feduccia; Fire Chief C.C. Thweatt; Asst. Chief Geo. B. Causey; and Secretary R.B. Middleton.¹⁴³

Surely some of the revelers at the Fourth of July event were members of the newly formed Morrison Chapel Baptist Church. The church was begun by Mrs. D.A. Tedder, who wanted a Sunday school for her children in their community, two miles northwest of Cleveland. Four classes of Sunday school were instituted early in 1924 in a two-room tenant house on Morrison Chapel Road. Bob Crosby was the first superintendent.¹⁴⁴

The group's first preacher was John Lovett, of Sunflower Plantation, who began in April 1924 to hold once monthly services. A plate was passed in the fall and Lovett raised enough money to buy a new suit of clothes. Land for a church building was donated by Mrs. G.W. Morrison. In March, 1925, the sanctuary was completed.¹⁴⁵

The first diaconate of the church consisted of G.W. Fletcher, Edgar Stanton, and R.E. Griffin. The church's first clerk was Ernest McKnight. After B.L. McKee conducted a rousing revival in the summer of 1925, he was asked to stay on as the church's pastor. McKee, of First Baptist Church, Cleveland, stayed at Morrison Chapel Baptist Church for half a year.¹⁴⁶

Clariece Conner helped organize the church's Young People's Union. John Gore was the church pastor in 1926-27. Alvie L. McKnight occupied the pulpit from 1928 until 1932. During McKnight's term, the church added Sunday school rooms. An auditorium was added during L.D. Morgan's 1933-34 term. M.O. Patterson then became preacher. He stayed with the church for six months and was the first pastor with a regular salary: \$50 a month.¹⁴⁷

Other pastors between the years of 1936 and 1950 included Dolphus Hardin, J.W. Siler, Lee McGowin, Joe W. Sturdivant, Curtis Askew, and Roy Isbell. R.S. Bradford, who served in 1950-51, was the church's first full time preacher. He was followed by Paul Sullivan and J.W. Oliver. Oliver eventually organized the Yale Street Baptist Church in Cleveland.¹⁴⁸

James B. Head was the church's pastor when a new sanctuary was built in 1954. Head was followed by Leon Emery. B.W. Bridges took the reins in 1961. Everett Martin was pastor in 1962-63. And Jack Farmer was the church's preacher from 1963-65.¹⁴⁹

Tillman Rodabaugh was the pastor from 1965 to 1967. Dewitt Mitchell served the next five years. And Wayne Gullett became the church's 22nd minister in 1975. The church was fifty years old. At the fiftieth anniversary celebration these charter members were honored: Clara Belle Causey, Essie Stanton, Gladys McKnight, Mrs. Shelton Fletcher, Mrs. John Lovett, Mrs. R.E. Griffin, Mrs. Charlie McKnight, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Crosby, Mrs. George Fletcher, and Mrs. Jake Shillings.¹⁵⁰

Without a doubt, conversation at the Fourth of July celebration eventually turned to the new Delta Teachers College proposed for Cleveland. For this was the hot topic of the mid-Twenties, and a major turning point in the history of Cleveland and the Mississippi Delta.