

MEMPHIS
The City Beautiful

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THE MEMPHIS PLAN

by

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Prepared under the direction of

MERRILL KREMER, INC.

1947

DEDICATED TO
HON. E. H. CRUMP
BY THE
CITY BEAUTIFUL COMMISSION



● R. S. Fredericks, Commissioner of Public Service
City of Memphis, Tennessee



I

Memphis, the Cleanest City In Tennessee

This is not just an idle boast made by her citizens through civic pride. It's an undisputed fact proved by her receipt of awards made by the National Clean Up and Paint Up Campaign Bureau, which annually sponsors nation-wide contests to select the "cleanest town" in each of the forty-eight states. Memphis has proudly received the trophy for cleanest Tennessee city for the past seven years, her first having been awarded in 1940.

And why is Memphis so consistently outstanding in this field? Why does she have a seeming monopoly on the "cleanest town" trophy? Because her citizenry are reaping the bountiful harvest of a tiny seed planted sixteen years ago by Memphis' most prominent citizen and greatest benefactor and humanitarian, the Honorable E. H. Crump. The "seed" is the City Beautiful Commission of Memphis, a department of the city government which, since 1930, has carried out a year-round program of persistent and enthusiastic planning and promoting to make Memphis and her citizens ever-conscious of the Commission's aims for beauty, health and safety of the community. The influence of this large and public spirited group, which automatically includes every citizen of Memphis as a member, is easily apparent on every hand to the gratification of the city officials and leaders of the Commission, the edification of visitors and the satisfaction of all who have helped to bring about the new order of things. It is with pride that the city's 331,200 population views the seven handsome trophies on display at the Commission headquarters, which represent national recognition of the combined efforts of the populace and government. But a much greater amount of satisfaction and civic pride is derived from the viewing of the city itself, which has truly become a "city beautiful."



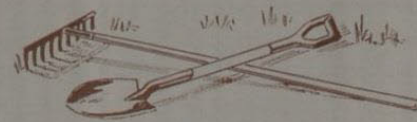
Six of the first prizes awarded Memphis by the National Clean Up and Paint Up Campaign Bureau.

Distigured shacks have been torn down. Flowers bloom where rubbish heaps formerly existed. Dangerous and unsightly hazards to health and safety have been banished. Many of the city's 18,000 vacant lots have been transformed into playgrounds for the recreation and spiritual betterment of her children or into model, neat rows of vegetable gardens. Formerly neglected residential, commercial and industrial buildings have received a new lease on life through repair and up-to-the-minute maintenance. Landowners have been educated to realize the personal and civic value of keeping their property attractive, inviting and fresh looking.

In short, the foresighted vision of its leaders and the unrelenting spirit and efforts behind the City Beautiful's 365-days-a-year campaign has borne and is continuing to bear generous rewards in every section of the fast-growing city as all of her citizens, from those who dwell in the large show-place estates to those who live in the humblest tenements by the railroad tracks, lend their cooperation. The educational program of the Commission, through work with school children, publicity and—most important of all—personal contact, has incorporated into the lives of each and every Memphian the spirit of civic improvement and beautification and the new habits and methods of achieving it. The oldest and youngest alike have learned its ideals, with boys and girls in school being taught the aims and objects of beautification along with the three elementary r's.

The City Beautiful Commission of Memphis, an experimental and pioneer organization of its type, began as the first such group in the United States, so far as can be learned. Though the Commission has served as an example for many similar organizations in the country, Memphis is even now the only city with a separate department to carry out a constant program of cleaning and beautification 365 days of the year, co-ordinating the work of all city departments and civic clubs and workers.

As the movement has grown and cooperation with the program increased, so has the City Beautiful Commission expanded. The present setup of the organization, which is under the able supervision of Robert S. Fredericks, Commissioner of Public Service, and the capable and personal leadership of Mrs. William Bingham Fowler, Commission chairman, is but vaguely akin to the organization as it was originally instituted. The Commission with its two-story building, its staff of executive secretary and seven field workers only faintly resembles the original Commission.





II

Inception and Adoption of the City Beautiful Commission

A little more than sixteen years ago the City Beautiful Commission of Memphis did not exist either in fact or fancy. Then, in 1929, the organization and its ideals were envisioned by Memphis' first citizen, Hon. E. H. Crump, who served as the first Mayor of Memphis under our present Commission form of government and was subsequently elected to that high office three times. Mr. Crump also represented the Memphis district in Congress for two terms (1931-1935), retiring voluntarily because, as he expressed it, "Washington is too far from Memphis."

Though Mr. Crump has long since retired from political office and is engaging in private business, he has by no means ceased to be interested in the improvement of Memphis or the betterment of conditions for her citizens. Without receiving one cent of remuneration, he is still available as counselor and friend to all who seek his advice in both public and private matters.

An insight into the mind and heart of the man may be gained through the relating of an incident that supplied the inspiration for the creation of the City Beautiful Commission, one of the great benefits Mr. Crump has envisioned and sponsored for Memphis and her people.

It was on a bleak wintery day in the early part of 1929 that the Commission was born as the brain-child of Mr. Crump. Standing behind the Post Office with the Mayor of Memphis, he watched a late afternoon train slowly chug past, enroute to Chicago. As the series of cars rolled on their way along the river front, he noticed the faces of passengers pressed against the windows, taking their last glance at the bluffs and skyline of Memphis. Idly he wondered what impression of the city they would carry with them to their distant homes and thoughtfully and with critical objectivity he began to scan the

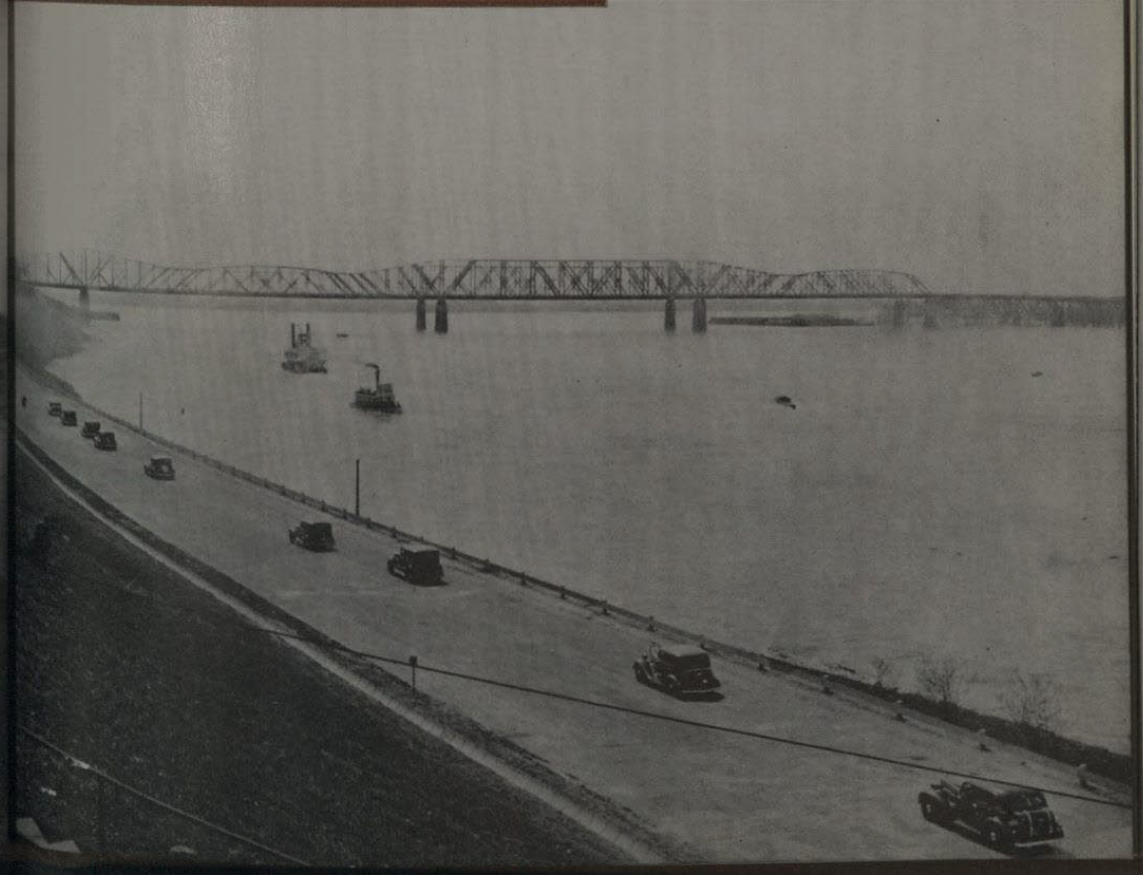
landscape. The picture was a dismal one. Ill-kept and dilapidated river shanties formed a jagged line along the water front near the railroad tracks. Some of these rickety shacks leaned to the side, ready to give up the struggle, and all of them needed painting to cover up their dingy grime. Trash and paper blew about the streets or nestled close to the buildings. Dead weeds stood firmly planted and shoulder-deep among the houses and choked large areas in the yawning gully by the tracks. Yes, the picture was dismal. But, more than that, it was an embarrassing one for a Memphian to view.

Then another picture took form in the mind of Mr. Crump. He envisioned a transformed shore line, one which Memphis would be proud to display to her visitors. A beautiful scenic driveway would wind along the river's edge, with gracefully swaying Paul Scarlet roses bordering the riverside and majestic trees running along the shore side, both accompanying the visitor the full length. Neatly clipped lawns would replace the gangling weeds, and landscaped slopes would outlaw the deep gully. Memphis' clean streets would be free from trash, and her buildings would "have their faces washed" and kept clean. The river front, heretofore the "back door" of the city, would become its "front door," as it naturally is, with its cleanliness as a welcome mat to all comers. Nor would it be just the first and last spots seen by tourists that would be beautified. The whole city would be transformed into a beautiful, healthy and safe place.



Before and after pictures of the Mississippi
River banks at Memphis.

Upper photographs were made in 1929
before City Beautiful Commission
was formed.



To the natural homemakers, the women of Memphis, should go the job of being official "housekeepers" of the community. Mr. Crump mused. A city-wide housecleaning was badly needed, and an organization of women should be established to keep the city as neat as the interior of a model home. He determined that a leader must be selected, headquarters set up and a definite program launched to indoctrinate the people with the desire to improve their surroundings.

The plan took shape slowly, due to the urgency of other matters. The city attorney drew up an ordinance creating what was to be known as the City Beautiful Commission of Memphis. After various minute details were ironed out, the ordinance was passed by the City Commission and on July 1, 1930, was adopted. In its present form, the ordinance under which the Commission is authorized is:

(No. 189b.) COMMISSION TO BE UNDER GENERAL CONTROL OF DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE—DUTIES OF COMMISSION—*The City Beautiful Commission shall be under the general control of the Commissioner of Public Service, and the duties and powers of said Commission shall be to study, investigate, develop and carry out plans for improving the health, sanitation, safety and cleanliness of the City of Memphis by beautifying the streets, highways, alleys, bayous, lots, yards and other similar places in said city; to aid in the prevention of fires, diseases and other casualties by the removal and elimination of trash and other debris from the streets, highways, alleys, lots, yards, plots and other similar places; to encourage the placing, planting and preservation of trees, flowers, plants, shrubbery and other objects of ornamentation in said city; protect song birds and other wild fowl; advise with and recommend plans to other agencies of the city for the beautification of said city and otherwise promote public interest in the general improvement of the appearance of said city; provided, however, that nothing herein shall be construed to abridge or change the powers and duties of the other commissions, departments, boards and like agencies of the City of Memphis.*



Another set of before and after pictures showing the spectacular Riverside Drive along the Mississippi River.



Mrs. E. G. Willingham, who was noted for her work in civic, patriotic and cultural fields, was chosen chairman of the new organization. Serving with her as vice chairman was Mrs. William B. Fowler, outstanding leader of Memphis women, who was later to take over the reins as chairman.

A tour of the city by handcar was made shortly before the Commission formally went to work. A small group of railroad and city officials accompanied the women's committee on this tour of inspection, which allowed a study of existing conditions throughout the city.

This trip of inspection lasted four hours and took a route along the river front, through the industrial sections of Memphis and even out to the city limits. The motorized handcar traveled all the most important rail entrances to the city.

A small office was set up in the Nineteenth Century Club, local woman's club, for headquarters for the Commission. From this small space activities of the organization were carried on by the chairman, the splendid group of civic minded women who served with her on the Commission and a paid executive secretary. All members of the Commission serve without compensation.



III

Infancy of City Beautiful Commission

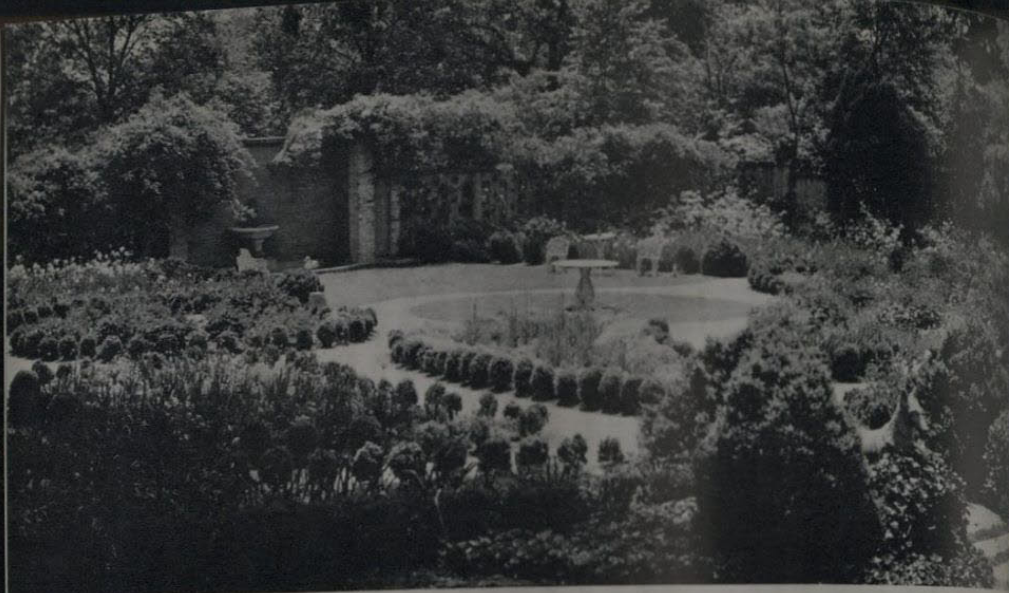
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As the nation was in the grip of a financial depression when the City Beautiful Commission began to function, it was thought by some citizens that perhaps the time was not opportune for such a program. But it was not the intention of the Commission to sponsor costly undertakings or to urge the public into contributing to expensive projects.

The new organization made its first bid for public cooperation at a mass meeting held at the Nineteenth Century Club Auditorium in October, 1930. The beautification project was explained as one which required patience, intelligence and integrity. It was a matter of education, the accomplishment of which would take time. More than 250 of the foremost citizens were present, including city officials and representatives of the various civic clubs. They heard the aims of the Commission in speeches made by officials and were told that the new organization would become one of the greatest agencies for public good formed in Memphis, if it could receive support of the populace. Cooperation was the fundamental requisite to the functioning of the Commission. When the city was cleaned, it would be the responsibility of the citizens to help keep it clean. Merely passing ordinances and increasing governmental activities would be a vain move toward city beautification, they were told.

The movement was met with enthusiasm, and support for the year-round beautification campaign undertaken by the Commission was pledged by the leaders of the various women's clubs, business and professional clubs, church organizations and philanthropic societies, school organizations and civic clubs.

The Board of Commissioners began with eleven members, whose special assignments were: chairmanship, secretaryship and directors of publicity, public utilities, speakers bureau, high-



One of the fine private gardens in Memphis.
The Commission encourages home beautification.

ways, trees, flowers and shrubs, industrial and commercial, vacant lots, health and sanitation and schools.

The wheels began to grind slowly but surely in the city-wide workings of the new governmental agency. No attempt was made at spectacular splurges toward beautification. Cheap sensational stunts were out of line with the aims of the group, which preferred rather to build gradually and firmly that lasting results might be gained. It was a matter of education primarily, for without the whole-hearted support of every man, woman and child in the city, there could be no success of the movement of the City Beautiful Commission, which was the only such organization of its kind anywhere as far as could be learned.

In the very beginning, the work of the Commission was built around the idea of making Memphis flower-conscious and promoting development of flower gardens, trees and shrubs for general beautification. From that, it grew to include elimination of unsightly and insanitary spots to make for beautification.

A scanning of the highlights of the pioneer period of the Commission shows that the group soon gained the hearty cooperation of all and made great headway and progress toward its goal.

The press and radio accorded the work much needed publicity, with special reporters being assigned by the newspapers to contact the organization for its latest developments. Feature stories chronicled the activities and spread word to the various sections of the city. The newspapers truly aided in indoctrinating the public. The Commission was "hot" news.

Mere publicity has never been the organization's means of reaching the public through the papers. Publicity—such as discussing plans, ideals and other generalities—has been frowned

upon by the group. The Commission, instead, prefers to appear in print because specific actions and definite programs it has undertaken are deemed newsworthy by the press. The City Beautiful has cooperated with the local papers—and papers of other cities upon request—by members of the staff preparing articles which are taken to the papers. In this way, Commission workers and reporters become personally acquainted and better understanding is promoted.

The public also received a clearer understanding of the pioneer functions of the organization through letters sent to property owners and renters by the new governmental office itself.

One of the first groups of letters distributed by the Commission concerned itself with "cleaning the face of the city," the aim which Mr. Crump had dreamed of when he first planned the organization. Letters were written to owners of unsightly vacant lots, to more than 400 places of business, to the railroad terminal superintendents, outdoor advertising firms and other business and utility concerns explaining the group's purpose and soliciting cooperation in maintaining their property in a clean and attractive manner. Attention was called to needed improvements in appearance of these outdoor spaces, and helpful suggestions were made. No one was told "You must do such and such," for the Commission chose not to dictate but to advise and counsel as a friend. The results of this work proved most gratifying. Follow-up letters of congratulations and commendation were sent to the individuals and corporations who improved their property, and many of these commendations were framed and hung in the various business offices. Beginning with this first attempt at general cleaning and beautification, the Commission has always maintained a policy of expressing its appreciation for completed improvements. Personal follow-up letters are written after results of each request are checked.

Another campaign of the days of the organization's infancy was one instituted for the use of regulation garbage cans, proper disposal of ashes and elimination of general fire, health and safety hazards. Cooperation was sought and obtained from industrial plants, commercial places of business and homeowners. This campaign, which proved the work of the Commission had the support of the citizens because of its splendid reception and cooperation, was instituted not just for the purpose of beautification and neatness in appearance of premises. It also served to eliminate fire hazards and to promote better sanitation for the protection of Memphians.



Fine example of what can be done
in cleaning up public buildings.

A plan for development of twenty-seven model gardens in different parts of the city was made and the first one was sponsored at one of the prominent street corners of the residential-commercial sections of the city by a civic group. It was hoped through this plan to point out the possibilities of improvement on vacant plots and encourage the beautification of other similar sites. Ten local nurseries agreed to plant three plots each and three in the Negro sections at a discount of 30 per cent off their regular price. An advisory group was formed consisting of the superintendent of the Memphis Park Commission, a landscape architect and the editor of one of the farm publications. Regular meetings were held by the committee, which encouraged all phases of beautification.

One of the first steps taken by the City Beautiful was to enlist the cooperation of school children. Members of the group were cognizant of the fact that the children could and should become one of the strongest forces in the new movement. They were the future leaders of the community. They were imbued with the zeal and energy of youth and could become a very active element in the program. As the Commission soon learned, they possessed a keen appreciation of the aim of making Memphis a "city beautiful."

The first appeal to children was made through a play entitled "Civic Friends and Foes," which was enacted on all the city playgrounds October 18, 1930, by the Recreation Department of the Memphis Park Commission. Various means of achieving civic improvements and means of retarding it were personified and depicted in the drama.

Each ensuing year, an essay contest was held in all the city schools, both white and colored, with cash prizes offered for the best. Results of these contests were both gratifying and amazing to the Commission, for the members found youth was not only lending the program its complete cooperation, but it had gained an insight into the ideals and methods of the campaign.

The spirit of the endeavor grew with Memphis youth until, on February 24, 1934—not quite four years after the Commission was established—Mrs. W. B. Fowler and her co-workers organized a Junior City Beautiful Council. Representatives in the Commission were a boy and a girl selected from each of the five senior high schools by the principals. The group elected its officers and held meetings once a month. The council sponsored a poster contest in connection with the Memphis Cotton Carnival of 1934, among its many activities. As an outgrowth of the group, garden clubs were formed in many of the schools, with senior advisors appointed. Questionnaires sent through the schools from time to time furnished a two-fold purpose. They kept before the children and their parents the program of the Commission, and they furnished an effective means of ascertaining what the school children and their parents were doing in the way of furthering beautification. These questionnaires were used as part of the extensive all-out program sponsored by the Commission annually during the various Clean Up Campaigns, which are especially publicized concerted efforts at cleaning and beautifying during one week, usually in April. The school children's questionnaires at these times are especially effective in gaining a tabulation of steps children have taken to make their homes cleaner, safer and more beautiful.

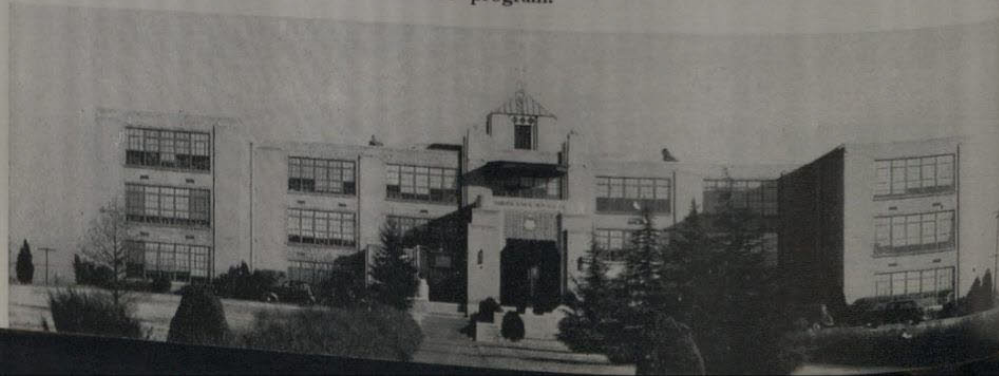
One of the projects undertaken in the second year of the Commission was beautification of public school grounds. A plan was adopted with the agreement of the Memphis Park Commission and the Board of Education whereby a new group of schools would be improved each year during the planting season until all the schools in the city were attractively landscaped and planted. This has been achieved, and now plans for landscaping the grounds of new schools are submitted at the time structural plans are obtained. Landscaping has become a fundamental part of the preliminary work done before a school is ready to open.

Just as the Commission did not limit its activities to adults, it also did not exclude the Negro population from cooperation in its program. One brief month after its legal adoption, the first large mass meeting of Negroes was held on August 4, 1930. The large audience heard the project outlined by the mayor and Commission chairman, and a plea for cooperation and an invitation to the Negroes to participate in its functions were made.

Early in its infancy the City Beautiful program, which was proving so successful in Memphis, was extended into Shelby County as one of its early steps of expansion was taken. County agricultural and home demonstration agents worked in close conjunction with the Commission. Contests were held at intervals to stimulate wide-spread interest in beautification, and regular meetings were held at the city Municipal Auditorium. Adoption of the program marked the beginning of an extensive beautification of county school grounds, highways and selected community plots.

The spring of 1932 saw the commencement of one of the Commission's most outstanding and best known projects. In one of the choice residential sections of Memphis is a large subdivision known as Chickasaw Gardens. Here is located the Memphis Museum, appropriately called the Pink Palace. The museum and subdivision in which it is included is one of the city's most beautiful show places. Through the center of the plot runs an attractive lake, complete with summer house and numerous automobile and foot bridges leading across its waters. This setting was natural for the Commission's work. The lake in itself was scenic, yet there was still room for improvement and further

Modern public schools are landscaped by experts in co-operation with City Beautiful program.



Colorful Chickasaw Gardens and Memphis Museum attract thousands of tourists.

beautification. The organization determined to outline its shores with a continuous line of Southern magnolias, official tree of the Commission. The grove is known as Magnolia Tribute Circle, and it was dedicated and the first four trees planted in a ceremony May 8 of that year. Sixty-five trees have been planted and named for citizens deemed worthy of this honor for their unselfish service to Memphis in religion, education, social progress, business and civic endeavors to make the city one of good abode. A ceremony was held each year on Mother's Day to dedicate these trees to men and women chosen by a secret committee from nominations made by the public. The circle was completed in 1944, and the Commission is at present inviting suggestions from the public for another tribute circle.

The first of a series of annual plant exchanges was sponsored by the Commission in December of 1932. Open to the public, it was held at the municipal Curb Market.

Between October 8-14, 1933, a corps of 200 men of the Works Progress Administration cleared off 1000 vacant lots and disposed of 8000 tons of trash in cooperation with the City Beautiful Commission and Memphis civic groups. The Commission held a special educational campaign November 27-December 9 to maintain the good effects of this program. A series of addresses was given over the radio and before clubs and various city organizations in addition to special newspaper coverage.

One of the outstanding contributions in the way of gardening and garden knowledge was made by the Memphis Civic Garden Club, a unit of the City Beautiful Commission. This group, the first to offer such a public service, held open meetings free to all, at which practical talks and demonstrations by leading authorities on different phases of gardening were given. Prior to establishment of this custom, such information was available only through the few exclusive garden clubs. Reception

of the plan was more than satisfactory, for the public wholeheartedly endorsed it, with an average attendance of 150 women being recorded at the monthly meetings in the Memphis Museum.

Outstanding achievement of the first five years of the City Beautiful was the Memphis Civic Garden Club, which brought about a democratic trend, with the women attending its meeting returning to their own communities and forming neighborhood garden clubs. As a matter of record, there was but one garden club in Memphis at the time of the Commission's adoption. Now there are over sixty garden clubs, which in the main have received their inspiration to organize from the Commission. The City Beautiful, in its first five years, had succeeded in reaching a cross-section of homemakers and developing ambition on the part of all citizens to make of their home grounds attractive spots. Today there are many families enjoying outdoor living rooms, patios and open garden nooks. This has come as a result of the work of the Commission.

During the first five years of the Commission's activities, it labored successfully to indoctrinate the people with a desire to obtain for Memphis the organization's three-fold aim at beauty, health and sanitation. This accomplished, the period of feeling its way along and experimentation was coming to an end, and the infant Commission was ready to undergo a new period of development and growth.



IV Adolescence of City Beautiful Commission

With the beginning of 1936 the City Beautiful Commission entered into a new era. Its infancy and childhood were past, and now it was ready for a period of adolescent development—a period of rapid growth and influence. It was ready to stride sturdily and confidently on the solid foundation which had been built.

On January 1, Mrs. W. B. Fowler, who had served as vice chairman during its five and a half years, took over the reins of general chairman, the position which she still holds.

The ten years of her administration in the Commission and its fine record of achievement during the decade stand as an unparalleled tribute to her capable leadership, untiring effort and unselfish devotion to civic betterment. From the young but well-managed infant she has lead the Commission through its middle period of growth to its full fledged maturity, wherein its efforts have gained for Memphis the title of cleanest city in Tennessee for the past seven years. In all of these praiseworthy efforts, Mrs. Fowler has had the wholehearted cooperation and tireless assistance of those who have served so well with her on the City Beautiful Commission.

With the induction into office of Mrs. Fowler, a great expansion program was launched immediately. Regular monthly meetings of the organization were inaugurated and the Board of Commissioners was enlarged and now includes twenty members.

It was soon apparent that the Commission had outgrown its surroundings because of the increased volume of work and activities instituted by the new regime. Larger headquarters were therefore obtained.

Whereas all contact had been previously direct from the office with individuals or cooperating clubs, it was apparent that the

necessity had arisen for an Extension Division to serve as contact between the Commission and the population. Through the keen vision of the chairman, this division, one of the most important parts of the Commission, was effected the first day of September, 1936. As the most effective means of reaching the people in every neighborhood, a plan was evolved whereby a woman would be appointed as special chairman in each of the 52 civil districts, or wards, of the city. An invitation meeting was held with each ward represented, and it met with such enthusiastic reception that a permanent organization was immediately adopted and regular monthly meetings inaugurated. No dues have ever been imposed in this group.

These ward chairmen, with the Board of Commissioners, since the day of that first meeting have formed the nucleus of the organization. Briefly, their duties are to represent the City Beautiful in their district, to promote the work in their immediate territories and serve as contact between their neighbors and the parent organization.

After her appointment to the new Extension Division, each district chairman in turn organized a City Beautiful Club in her neighborhood, through which work could be executed with more efficiency. Members of individual units were in attendance at each monthly meeting, where projects were outlined and discussed and material distributed for dissemination. Assistance of the ward chairmen has been of excellent value to the Commission in creating good will and making the City Beautiful program better understood and appreciated.

It was also during the beginning of the adolescent stage of the Commission's growth that the staff of employees was enlarged. In February, 1937, services of a landscape architect were made possible through cooperation of the Memphis Park Commission. Headquarters for this new employe were in the City Beautiful offices, and his function was to advise district chairmen about their projects and public plantings. He edited the Commission's monthly bulletin, entitled "City Beautiful News," which included timely topics and announcements of activities of all the ward clubs, pointed out places of interest, outlined programs of development, and also gave seasonal information on gardening. During 1939 he made a ward by ward survey of the entire city with the various district chairmen, after which recommendations for general improvement and beautification of the wards were rendered the individual units.

One typical example of how his work was carried out in a practical and illustrative manner is to be seen in a "shrub shower" given by one ward unit for a new homeowner in its district as a model for good planting. The Commission's land-

scape architect made a detailed drawing of placement of shrubbery and plants in the yard, lending advice as to selection of plants for ornamentation and their growing qualities.

Services of the architect were rendered the district units until 1942, when the manpower shortage created by war caused its discontinuance.

The year 1937 also saw the adoption of another phase of public service rendered by the Commission. A free lending library was established at its headquarters, and a large number of volumes which pertained to the numerous fields of endeavor included in the Commission's program were placed there. A photographic library was also begun with slides in natural color made by the Commission. Since that time, a motion picture camera and projector have been added. Pictures of civic improvements, historic spots, public buildings and other places of interest are on file, as well as detail of Memphis' Clean Up Campaigns and their results.

It was a desire for improvement of the riverfront of Memphis which inspired the inception of the City Beautiful Commission in the mind of Mr. Crump. And the Riverside Drive project's construction work began in 1930, with the clearance of rubbish heaps, razing of unsightly shacks and filling in of the

Aerial view of Memphis on the Mississippi.



embankment, which had begun to cave and subside and was endangering the business and industrial section as well as proving an eye sore and health menace. This large-scale endeavor was one of such magnitude that it took a period of five years before completion of the beautiful riverside drive by the City Engineering Department. Not until 1936 was the City Beautiful Commission able to get its beautification plan under way. The completed drive served as appeal to the eye and a benefit to the health of the community, and its economic justification was the conservation of property. But much remained to be done by the Commission before it was to become the beautiful scenic major artery of traffic it is now.

A professional landscape architect was retained by a local garden club, and his duty was to draw up plans for the beautification of the drive. Acceptance of the plans was in June, 1936. A concerted effort to obtain support of the populace for the project proved most successful, and various individuals and clubs in the city contributed to the planting fund. Formal dedication was held May 4, 1937. The tireless effort and perseverance of those responsible for the drive was rewarded by the genuine enthusiasm which Memphis' citizenry showed for the project. They were pleased and impressed with the visual proof of what could be accomplished in turning an unsightly spot into one of the outstanding areas of beauty in the city. The dream, the vision of Mr. Crump, had become a gratifying reality.

Work on the drive's beautification has continued and become an annual affair with the City Beautiful Commission. It was not a project which could be completed and left. It required—and still requires—constant supervision and continuance of planning and planting. Each year at the proper season, replacement plantings are made by the Commission. Now the visitor to the Bluff City may drive along this approach to the business section and see the imposing skyline on one side and the sweeping view of the Mississippi River on the other. Along the river side runs a low white traffic guard which, in summertime, is transformed into a riot of bloom and beauty by stately Paul Scarlet rose bushes, gracefully draping themselves along the guard. The shore side presents a picture of landscaped beauty, with plantings of evergreens and flowering bushes and trees placed artistically on the sloping, grass-covered embankment. Magnolia and black locust trees are planted on top of the shore side.

The Adopt-A-Lot Plan was set in motion early in the new chairman's administration. Many groups and private citizens adopted vacant lots and kept the weeds cut or made play areas or gardens on them.

"... full-blown magnificence
of Crape Myrtle trails . . ."



Desirable maintenance of vacant lots has always been one of the Commission's main objectives and projects. This worthwhile undertaking accomplished a multitude of good, keeping weeds cut for the general improvement and beautification, the prevention of fire hazard and the protection of health through eradication of breeding places for insects, disease and rodents.

Special attention to Better Homes Week, beginning the latter part of April, 1936, was instigated by the Commission. Articles by the chairman appeared in the local press, suggesting maintenance goals for homeowners. Points for scoring the home and its surroundings were drawn up and distributed. Posters on the event were placed by the Commission in stores and shop windows in prominent positions. This work was exhibited at the National Home Show.

The first large-scale beautification of one of the principal entrances to the city by a garden club was dedicated in March, 1936. The project was the planting of flower beds on one of the principal highways at the city limits. Other garden clubs soon followed with beautification of other main arteries into the city.

Work of the Commission was publicized generously through the local press and radio broadcasts, which had become by then a monthly feature of the organization. Already the department was making itself felt outside of Memphis, for requests for detailed information as to how it was formed and its functions were received from municipalities from coast to coast. Several groups patterned similar organizations, taking the City Beautiful Com-

mission of Memphis as their example, and the Commission chairman was issued numerous invitations to visit these new groups and confer with officials and make public addresses.

Local organizations also turned to the Commission for help, and requests for assistance in planning programs, furnishing speakers, making improvements and adjusting complaints were received daily.

A poll was conducted by one of the local newspapers to determine the people's choice for an official shrub and tree of the city, with crape myrtle and dogwood emerging as the outstanding victors. In 1937 the first annual campaign for the widespread planting of crape myrtle was held by the Commission, with the cooperation of this newspaper. This campaign was so popular that the Commission has sponsored one annually, with the exception of the war years. The aim of the campaigns is to line streets with the summer-blooming shrub, decorate parkways, beautify highways leading into Memphis and turn lawns into places of satisfaction to the eye. Working under the slogan: "Plant Crape Myrtle; Make Memphis the City Beautiful," it is of six weeks' duration. Spot announcements on radio stations, newspaper publicity and house to house canvassing by ward chairmen are used as methods of calling the public's attention to the endeavor, as well as such novelty publicity routines as having the slogan printed on restaurant menus and the like.

Further attempts to make the citizens mindful of beauty were the Commission's semi-annual Plant Exchanges. For years they were held each fall and spring at the Commission's headquarters, until the more convenient plan of holding them in the various districts was adopted.

Though attention is paid to maintenance of attractive property all year-round, special emphasis has always been placed on summertime maintenance by the Commission, for it is at that time when best results may be gained. Two contests along this line were held in 1936. One was for improvement in the appearance of public school grounds and property, with a prize offered to the custodian who kept his grounds in the best condition during vacation season. The second was a yard and garden contest for the Negroes. More than 800 entries were received, with prizes awarded at the Colored Fair in September.

As part of the conservation program stressed by the Commission, several birdhouse contests were held during the latter half of the 1930's. This project has now been turned over to the Chickasaw Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Wintertime might seem to some to be a dull and inactive season for such a group as the City Beautiful Commission. But quite the contrary is true. The Commission endeavors, in its

campaign for 365 days-a-year beautification, to maintain as beautiful a community in the cold part of the year as it does in summer.

Annual Outdoor Christmas Lighting became one of the winter projects, with prizes given for the most attractive entries. The plan serves to encourage use of living outdoor trees for decoration and conservation of evergreens and to lend a predominating note of beauty to the holiday and winter scene of Memphis, which is particularly adapted to the growing of trees. The contest has drawn, through the years, a great deal of attention not only from Memphians but from holiday visitors in the city, many of whom have been known to stop over just to view the lighting effects.

Another of its wintertime activities is the joint sponsorship with one of the local newspapers of a window garden contest. Though there is ice and snow outside during the time of these annual contests, the beauty of fresh blooming plants lends a touch of warmth to the city and by virtue of this fact, the affairs have proved one of the most popular events undertaken by the Commission.

In connection with the city-wide garden contests was the establishment of indoor gardens in hospitals and other institutions by volunteer workers. This type of indoor gardening was enthusiastically taken up by the public schools, where the project became more than a hobby and more than mere beautification. It became part of a definite program of conservation included in the curriculum.

Nationally known authorities on Christmas decorations for the home were brought to Memphis at different times to direct free classes in making holiday decorations. They were assisted by local women in planning appropriate displays in connection with their talks.

The planting of wintergrass is also included in the program at this season.

But though many of the Commission's projects which deal primarily only with beauty began during the adolescent period of the organization, they were by no means the sole activities of the time. War was continually waged on insanitary conditions of fifth which could bring about disease as well as eyesores from the standpoint of beauty.

Continuing the practice inaugurated at the Commission's very beginning, the group made two railway tours of the city in the latter '30s'. In June, 1938, the officials of the Commission with a large number of top business executives and city officials composed the inspection party which toured some thirty miles of track on an all day trip. Many industrial sections were in-



Alley parades are effective in Clean Up program.

spected which are daily viewed from train windows but not easily accessible by automobile.

The first alley parade was held in connection with the annual Clean Up Program.

"On the eighteenth of April, in 'Thirty-eight . . ." As that was the anniversary of the spectacular ride of Paul Revere, a modern Revere rode at the head of the procession proclaiming the news that members of the City Beautiful Commission were on their way to inspect the alleys and back yards of Memphis homes. A caravan of automobiles in this parade moved down Main Street and then into the alleys in different sections of the city. The parade served two purposes. It called special attention of the public to the Clean Up Week's activities and also was the means of ascertaining needed improvements, which is ever the aim of the Commission. The alley parade was so successful that it was made a part of future campaigns.

A pilgrimage to the front yards of different types of homes began in 1939. Many varied ideas on gardening methods, garden arrangements and landscaping of lawns were observed. Members of the Real Estate Board, business and professional men and property owners supported this tour, which has become an annual pilgrimage.

A course of four weekly lectures in "Landscape Gardening for the Amateur" was the popular outgrowth of the pilgrimage. The talks were held the following fall with an attendance of 451. A text book prepared by the landscape architect who gave the course was distributed free.

Participation in worthwhile civic enterprises has always been part of the City Beautiful's program. In 1937 the Commission lent its first annual support to the Memphis Cotton Carnival Association by selecting a representative from the group to participate in the carnival festivities. Support has been given an-

nually to the Mid-South Fair, with members of the Commission arranging the flower exhibit in the Woman's Building. Cooperation was given the exhibit of the Mid-South Gladiolus Society.

Annually the Commission held, and continues to hold, two fellowship gatherings. The City Beautiful workshop provides an opportunity for the business men and civic-minded women to become more familiar with the workings of the organization at a picnic supper in the summer and an informal gathering during the Christmas holidays. Another opportunity for assembling with other than Commission members is afforded at the annual luncheons preceding the spring Clean Up Week, when members of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce and women of the Commission meet to discuss and better understand their mutual problems.

The closing of the year 1939 and the end of the Commission's period of adolescence was marked by numerous awards, which the grateful Commission conferred upon its outstanding volunteer ward workers. A trophy for the unit organization having the largest attendance during all the year was presented as well as awards for the unit having the largest single attendance, the best scrapbook on the year's activities, the most comprehensive unit program and the best participation in all of the parent organization's projects.





V Maturity of City Beautiful Commission

With the dawn of 1940, the City Beautiful Commission entered into the most glorious chapter of its history. It continued with its advocacy of planting of trees, flowers and shrubs and its promotion of conservation of all natural resources and wildlife, health and sanitation, fire prevention, safety, citizenship, education and other measures for the general betterment of Memphis and its people. It carried on its vacant lot campaigns, beautification of entrances to the city on arterial highways, garden pilgrimages, public planning projects, tours of inspection and other undertakings for the advancement of the city.

The great objectives of the City Beautiful Commission, working with the Memphis Chamber of Commerce, city officials and other civic groups, had become better understood and cooperation more wide-spread until, as the crowning climax to its ten years of service, Memphis won the national award and title for being the "cleanest city" in Tennessee as the result of its entry in the 1940 annual nationwide contest by the National Clean Up and Paint Up Campaign Bureau.

The peak of the hill had been reached by the City Beautiful when the first award came Memphis' way. But the officials and other workers in the group were not satisfied to rest on their laurels and enshrine the one trophy for future generations to view. Hard work had gained it and hard work, they determined, could gain many more like it. Indeed, hard work has gained six more "cleanest city" awards in 1941, '42, '43, '44, '45 and '46.

If the period from 1940 through the present date was the most glorious one in the Commission's history, it was also one of the most tragic. For war strode onto the scene to sadden the hearts of its workers and cause a redoubling of effort. Many new duties were assumed by the organization. Should any one ad-

jective be required to describe the period of wartime activities, the one word "patriotic" would be most suitable. Added to the program of beautification, sanitation and safety were such projects as sale of war bonds, aid in rationing, help in collection of scrap materials for the war effort and all other civic drives engendered by war and its needs. Indeed, the City Beautiful Commission of Memphis went to war, not only through the sons of members sent to the far-flung battlefields, but through work of heart and hand done on the homefront by all of its members.

Duties and functions of the Commission increased until the necessity arose for enlargement of its staff. The first increase was only a temporary one, when a publicity director and contact man was hired to call to the attention of the public the vast amount of work of the City Beautiful Commission during the summer months of 1940.

In June of 1942 the Commission hired two field inspectors, colored women to work in the colored areas of the city, one in



Modern equipment used by Memphis' Garbage Department.



the north half and one in the south half. They reorganized activities of the colored division on a city-wide basis, with leading colored women serving in the division as board members, ward chairmen and precinct chairmen. Members of the board of directors represented the colored groups in the city, and a good cross section of the colored residents was obtained. Joint meetings of the north and south divisions were held monthly in one of the local colored housing projects, and ward and precinct meetings were also held once a month. The City Beautiful Commission chairman and executive secretary attended each of the division meetings and outlined the parent organization's plans for the coming thirty-day period.

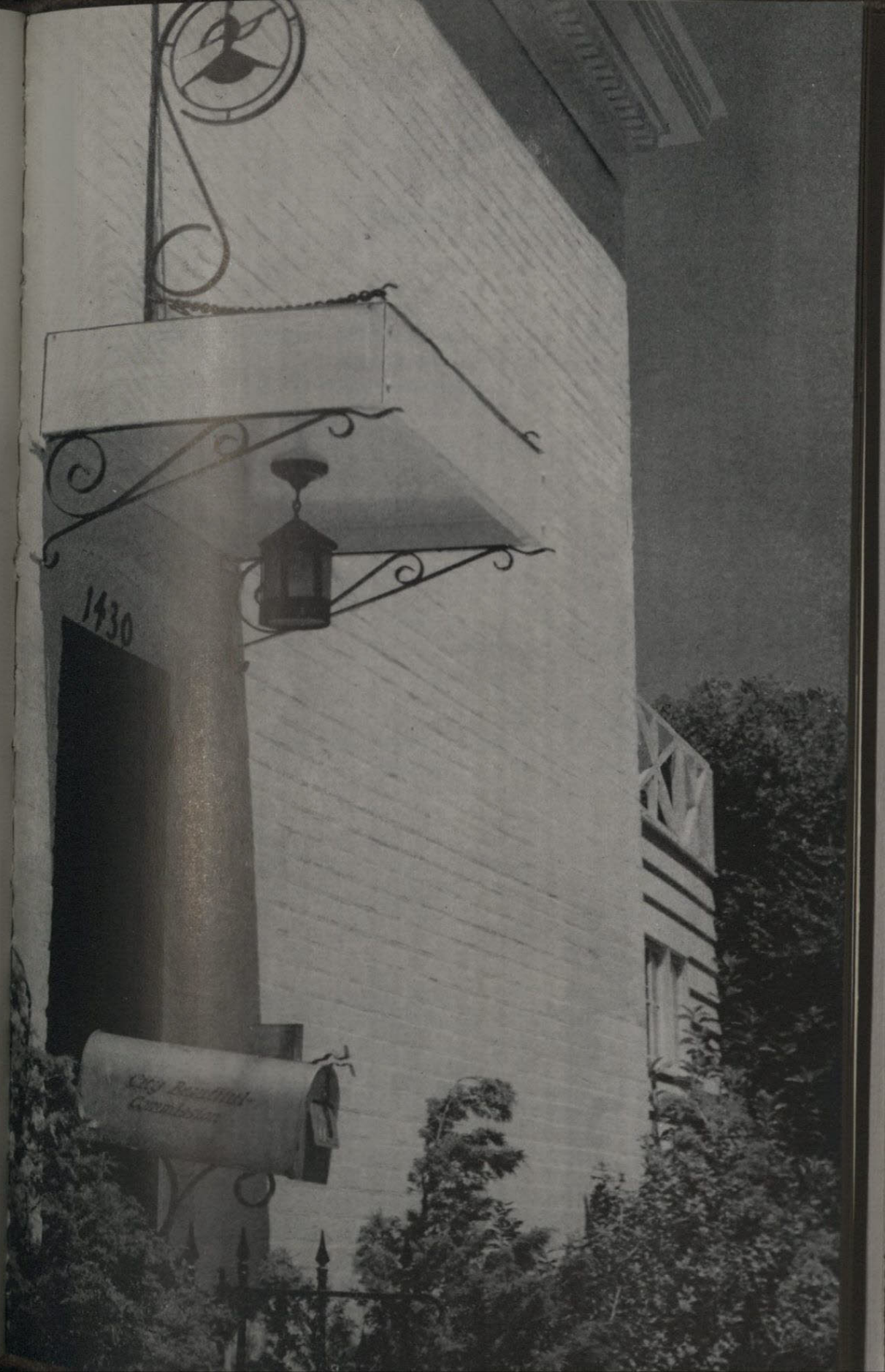
One white field secretary to inspect white residential sections was added to the staff in January, 1944, and another in March, 1945. Increase in the volume of work necessitated employment of a third and fourth white field secretary in April, 1946. A third colored field inspector was added in January, 1944, when work proved great enough to warrant rezoning of the colored sections into three districts.

With the growth of the organization, space requirements also expanded. Now the entire building at 1430 Eastmoreland is used by the Commission. The workshop is in a vantage spot in the city, for it is centrally located in the residential area. Spacious grounds adjoining the building provide space for model lawn beautification and also furnish an excellent site for the organization's annual exhibits and its picnic. The large assembly hall is used for Commission meetings and is loaned to other organizations of a civic improvement nature for their gatherings.

The City Beautiful in the early part of the 1940's went about the work it had so well established with the enthusiasm and vigor which has been characteristic of all its enterprises. Ever aiming at beautification, cleanliness, health and safety, it lent its full cooperation to several campaigns which were undertaken by various civic organizations for the furtherance of these objectives.

In 1940 the E. H. Crump Audubon Society, named for Mr. Crump, whose interest in protection of birds was responsible for its formation, launched a vibrant movement to call attention to the native wild birds. This movement was accorded full cooperation of the City Beautiful Commission. Bird sanctuaries were established.

Perhaps the most successful of the beautification proposals of this period was the institution of floral trails, sponsored by the City Beautiful and several garden and civic clubs in cooperation with the Park Commission. For many years the system of parkways skirting parts of the city has impressed visitors with the



picturesque, seasonal beauty. In springtime, green leaf buds on trees in the center neutral strips; in summer, full-blown magnificence of foliage, and in fall, the autumnal splashes of crimson, orange, yellow and brown—all these phases of nature have been depicted along the bridle paths of the parkways to attract and please Memphians and their guests. Blooming trees were planted along the eleven miles of parkway to add their contribution to the colorful panorama. Trees of beauty and suitability to Memphis' climate were selected. The Park Commission approved a four-year program to establish the floral trails, and the plan met with such wide-spread acceptance that many owners of the lovely homes along the floral route made similar plantings on their front lawns.

The Commission also undertook a project for the study of Memphis and Shelby County trees.

Cooperation was given to many worthwhile projects undertaken by Memphis civic organizations. The City Beautiful has always stood ready and willing to promote, encourage and inspire work of other organizations, which carry out aims of the Commission. Many "firsts" are credited to the City Beautiful, which have now been taken over by various other groups. The Commission has never sought to vie with other civic groups, but rather to give them its sincere cooperation, believing that the goal is accomplishment, without reference to which organization does the work.

Among the most effective of the Commission's meetings was the one to which it brought a well-known gardening expert and magazine columnist for an address in March, 1941. Requests for tickets were invited, with the result that the lecture was attended by citizens from all of the surrounding states. "How to Keep the Outdoors Beautiful" was the topic of this popular speech.

Always available for use by other organizations were the colored slides showing what could be done along the lines of beautification in gardens with flowers, trees and shrubs. Added



to this display were colored motion pictures of the landscaping of the Commission's headquarters, which were retained as a permanent record showing the use of plantings in relation to snow and also motion pictures taken each year of the group's work during the annual Clean Up Campaigns.

Outstanding results were gained from the 1940 Crape Myrtle Contest in which hundreds of plants were handled. Several new crape myrtle trails were planted and school children donated money for planting the shrubs on their school grounds. A trail was planted around the campus of Southwestern University, one of the city's show places, plantings were also made at Memphis State College, and many memorial trails were planted for individuals and groups of individuals. The main route to the airport was lined with these blossoms.

Annual railroad inspection tours continued, with railroads furnishing equipment without charge. Officials realized that in this day and age cities do not grow simply because new residents happen to drift in from other cities. When one city does better than another, it is because that city is more attractive, and the Commission's goal was to make and keep Memphis one of the most attractive cities in the forty-eight states. Nor was it satisfied with merely inspecting and noting necessary improvements. Within a few weeks' time, checkbacks were made on all tours to make certain that the improvements had been made.

As part of a tour in 1941 the women of the City Beautiful Commission rolled up their sleeves and actually cleaned off vacant lots themselves, in their efforts to impress the citizenry with the importance of maintaining weed-free lots from the standpoint of safety, health and beauty.

Great success greeted the group's campaign to make the junk yards of the city more attractive. Fences were erected and painted enclosing unattractive junk yards and hiding them from public view. Shrubs were then planted in front of the fences to add a touch of natural beauty to the scene.

A large-scale paint job was undertaken as result of efforts of the Commission. One of the railroad bridges spanning the broad Mississippi River was painted in its entirety after the Commission wrote the officials of the road telling them how the paint was peeling and cracking and leaving ugly, gaping rust spots which were eye-sores.

An old cemetery in one of the suburban sections of the city was cleared of weeds and undergrowth and beautified by the organization.

Also, a model lawn was established in a centrally located spot for all to view in connection with a Better Lawns Contest.



Tin can matinee stirs youthful enthusiasm.



Improvements from the standpoint of sanitation, safety and conservation were sought throughout the war. Small-scale plantings for beauty and large-scale plantings for food and utility were unceasing aims of the Commission in war.

At the opening of the year 1942, the nation's first year of conflict, the Commission urged the continuance of civic beautification, stating that it was even more important as a morale factor during wartime than peace. Thrift was emphasized, and conservation became a major part of the Commission's educational program. Development of Victory Gardens and canning of surplus vegetables were stressed. The city was divided into three large zones for the purpose of promotion of Victory Gardens on vacant lots, with wide-spread publicity given the program and chairmen and committees appointed for each zone. Residential, commercial and community vegetable gardens for food produc-



Example of alley improvement in Memphis.

tion were encouraged. Canning institutes were set up for white and colored residents to teach them to process the harvest of their gardens.

Promotion of gardens was the summer activity of the Commission along the lines of producing food and turning the unsightly vacant lot into a neat and useful plot of ground. But unsightliness was bound to creep back to the lot after harvest of the gardens, unless measures were taken to prevent it. And just such measures were taken by the Commission, for campaigns were instituted each fall with the purpose of tidying up. Discarded gardens and vacant lots were cleaned of dead stalks and other such rubbish to prevent fire hazards, hayfever and other health menaces as well as for general beautification. These campaigns were carried out by individual ward chairmen, who undertook to inspect and report on every vacant lot in the city, regardless of whether it had been the site of a garden. All these reports and other requests that debris be hauled away were given in to the City Beautiful office, which in turn sent them to the proper city department for execution. Several lots, in fact, were actually cleaned by the organization's volunteer workers themselves.

Also on the schedule of the Commission during the war years was improvement of alleys, property facing alleys, industrial, commercial and public utility properties. In 1942, Paul Scarlet roses were presented to residents along prize winning alleys, to be planted along the alleys. The contest to select the best-kept and most attractive alleys was part of the work done in that year's Clean Up Campaign.

Scrap drives for rubber, paper and all types of metal were successfully carried out by Memphis with every man, woman and child serving as a scrap collector. Attics, basements and other storage places were rummaged for the good of the nation. The City of Memphis had Scrap Days when all sorts of scrap was piled in yards and collected by city trucks. Proceeds from the city's sale of this scrap went to the USO, American Red Cross and Army and Navy Relief Society. "Out front today—On the battle-front tomorrow" was the slogan of these days. City Beautiful workers played an important part in these drives. Fewer tin cans and paper were seen on the streets and in unsightly spots as the Commission exerted its efforts to serve a two-fold purpose of cleaning up Memphis and working in cooperation with the Salvage Committee of the city.



Owners of business property cheerfully co-operate.

In the summer of 1942, ward chairmen personally telephoned every home and firm listed in the telephone book in two separate canvasses, the first for rubber salvage and the second for scrap metal.

The Commission also campaigned successfully for an ordinance providing a fine for anyone found throwing glass in the street during this period when conservation of rubber was so vital. This move on its part received wide applause and newspaper commendation editorially.

In short, the Commission participated with every phase of war work.

In Memphis as elsewhere, the manpower shortage became acute due to the entrance of so many of her men into the armed service of their country. By the summer of 1943, skilled and unskilled yard men alike were practically nonexistent. Maintenance of lawns and flower and shrubbery beds would have fallen almost completely on the shoulders of the residents, were it not for an employment agency set up by the Commission, whereby young boys registered for yard work and were referred to citizens who needed someone to keep their grounds well-groomed. This army of boys which was formed by the Commission served well and efficiently during the emergency.

The necessity for cleanliness of buildings, homes and other private properties was, if possible, more acute during the war than before. Manpower for clean up jobs was short, so the individual citizen was urged to lend his full cooperation to the aims of the Commission by proper maintenance of his premises. Health and prevention of diseases which so often come on the heels of war were important factors in the organization's program.

Wide-spread campaigns against rats were constantly made by the Memphis and Shelby County Health Department, each of which received the cooperation and support of the Commission. In 1942, at one of the group's meetings, a clever dramatic skit showing the "subversive activities" of rodents was presented by one of the high schools. This served to stress the importance of "building the rat out of homes and places of business" and also to impress the children's minds with the problem. Another similar play was presented in 1945. Work was done for the elimination of rodents through the Alley Improvement and Rat Control Committee of the Commission continually. An exhibit showing damage caused by rats was arranged for public viewing by the Commission. Campaigns for use of regulation garbage cans with tops as a means of eliminating rats were waged by the workers daily.





Above, Army and Navy Parks near Union Station, Memphis.

Unightly property near railroad station made into public parks.

City Beautiful field workers cooperated with the Health Department in a grass-roots drive against rats in January of 1944. In this undertaking, surveys were made of all districts in the city, with the Health Department workers plugging all outside openings through which rats could enter.

Gasoline rationing and curtailment in transportation facilities of necessity hampered to some extent the inspection tours of the Commission. However, in March of 1943 began the group's most extensive clean up drive and tour to that date. A ward by ward and block by block campaign to clean up and fix up Memphis started under direction of two white field secretaries working out of the office of the Commissioner of Public Service, in cooperation with City Beautiful ward chairmen. Five days a week these two secretaries rode over a different ward with the Commission's chairmen, making personal calls where necessary. Reports on these surveys were transmitted daily by Commission offices to the departments of the city in whose jurisdiction fell the necessary improvements. Owners of private property wanting improvement were written. Similar surveys were made in Negro wards by the Commission's two Negro field inspectors and the Negro ward chairmen. Check-back visits were also made.

Another large-scale inspection tour was in 1945. The Commission surveyed 15,875 Memphis homes checking disposal of garbage. Cards were sent to the few found not disposing of garbage properly, and "valley" cards and "repair and clean up" letters were also sent as result of this survey. Five employees were hired temporarily for this purpose.

In the early part of 1943 the City Beautiful requested the City Commission to purchase a group of small stores and buildings on two corners of Calhoun and Second Streets, across from one of the railway stations. So many people were traveling through the city and stopping en route only long enough to view the neighborhood of the station that the Commission felt the property should be improved. The City Beautiful planned two small, attractive parks in the places where the groups of unkept buildings had been. Plantings were accomplished and benches provided with the cooperation of the Memphis Park Commission. One park was called the Army Park and the other the Navy Park, honoring not only sons of Memphis in the armed forces of their country, but also the multitudes of servicemen who were grateful to enjoy the use of these small parks during their brief stop-overs in the city. In cooperation with this effort, officials of the railroad station had the grime of 31 years cleaned off the building itself.

The Colored Division landscaped and beautified the grounds of the newly acquired property for the Negro YMCA Branch, which was also to be used as a Negro USO. Funds were raised for this work by the Negroes themselves, and they did all of the actual work, under the supervision of one of the Board of Commissioners, who is skilled along these lines.

In October, 1944, the City Beautiful Commission began a new procedure in year-round clean ups. The city limits had been extended the first of the year to include five additional square-miles. In order to obtain more efficient coverage of the enlarged city, the Commission added to its former system of ward units a new system of districting the city, which divided Memphis into 27 districts, based on the public school districts. Special chairmen were appointed to serve in these areas, with an improvement committee in each area composed of organizations active within the community. The various public schools form the focal points of these new districts. As an incentive to the year-round improvement within the area, Mr. Crump has offered annually since the adoption of the new system a trophy to the district showing the most improvement during the 12-month contest.

With the advent of peace upon the world scene, the City Beautiful Commission of Memphis found new vistas opened. New jobs appeared for it to accomplish. With the end of war, plans were mapped for vastly expanded programs. Special attention was paid to filling stations now reopening, to alleys where rats were menaces and to approaches to the city and highway routes through the city, as well as railroad terminals. Special emphasis was placed on residential sections and again beautification for the sole sake of beauty became part of its endeavors. Extended inspection trips were undertaken.

Peace closed the war chapter of the Commission and brought new aims and objectives to its functions. Throughout the entire period of the war, it was the City Beautiful Commission's sincere objective to do its utmost in working to bring about peace, to maintain a healthy city for civilians and campaign for a more beautiful city for Memphis' boys to come home to. Every endeavor of the organization was undertaken with this three-fold goal in view, and it is with a great deal of just pride that the Commission can look back on its work during the dark years and know that its job was indeed well done.



VI Present Functions of City Beautiful Commission

An efficient branch of the city government must be an active and well coordinated one, and just such is the present set-up of the organizational scheme of the City Beautiful Commission of Memphis.

The executive head of the organization is the chairman, who is directly responsible to the Commissioner of Public Service in whose department the Commission is included. She is the contact between the Commission and other city departments and is the presiding officer at the monthly meetings of the group's Board of Commissioners and at the quarterly meetings of the general assembly, composed of ward unit representatives, school district representatives, representatives from civic and garden clubs and other interested citizens, for these meetings are always open to the public. Heading such a large organization requires that a great deal of time be spent in the Commission offices, where there is a private office for the chairman. All official reports and requests must be sent to the City Hall by her, and budget expenditures must be authorized and approved by her. All appointments to permanent and temporary committees are made by the chairman solely, or with the Board of Commissioners serving in an advisory capacity. She is also ex-officio member of each of these committees. Under her are the other 99 volunteer white workers and all the colored volunteers who serve in official capacities in the organization, as well as the seven employed members of the staff. The white volunteer workers include the twenty members of the Board of Commissioners, the fifty-two chairmen of ward units and the twenty-seven chairmen of school districts. The employees are one executive secretary, four white field secretaries and three colored field inspectors.

Monthly budget reports are sent to the Accounting Department, purchase orders to the Purchasing Agent and all other reports, such as reports on conditions where improvements are found to be necessary, are sent into the office of the Commissioner of Public Service, where they are tabulated and dispersed to the proper city department heads, under whose jurisdiction the proposed improvements fall.

The Board of Commissioners forms the governing body of the organization. They are nominated by the Commissioner of Public Service and elected by the City Board of Commissioners for terms of one year, beginning January 1. It is their duty to formulate all policies and projects of the City Beautiful. The board, composed of the chairman and other 19 elected members, is supplemented by the employed executive secretary of the Commission, who also serves as secretary of the board and the general assembly.

Chairmen of the fifty-two ward units are appointed annually by the Commission chairman. They organize the ward units and serve as head of them. These volunteer workers assist the functions of the parent organization greatly by serving on permanent and temporary committees and making surveys and inspections, either alone or accompanied by one of the employed field secretaries. Every ward is entitled to a representative to the Commission, whose duties are to represent the City Beautiful in all its undertakings in the wards. In the colored division, there are not only ward chairmen, but precinct chairmen as well, making the total number well over one hundred.

Although the direction and planning of the work of the City Beautiful Commission must, of a necessity, fall largely upon the chairman, too much credit cannot be given to the women who have served so faithfully as members of the Commission, from time to time, also the larger group serving as ward chairmen throughout the city. They have given unselfishly of their time, their counsel, and their efforts and they are due the everlasting thanks of our community.

The twenty-seven school district chairmen, as previously stated, carry out the Commission projects through their various school organizations, and they represent leaders of their various communities. The real community spirit in Memphis radiates from its public school districts, therefore the training of school children is of immeasurable aid to the Commission's program not only through the fact that the children are future leaders of the city, but also because they catch the spirit of the program and their parents adopt it from them. The chairmen cooperate in distributing blanks of various types through the school children to their parents during the Clean Up Campaign. They tabulate these before returning them to the Commission headquarters.



Improvement program reaches all property levels.

The silver "E. H. Crump Trophy" is presented annually by Mr. Crump each spring at the kick-off luncheon of the Clean Up Week activities to the school located in the district making the greatest improvement progress for the year. The trophy becomes permanent property of the school and remains in its trophy case. Award is based on points for the following: scrapbook; conditions of the district in regard to appearance of homes, streets and yards; tabulated results obtained by distribution of the various blanks; appearance of alleys; beautification of school grounds, hedges and trees; and lack of paper and trash in the neighborhood.

Position of general supervisor of the office force is held by the executive secretary, who is directly responsible for the personnel to the chairman. All stenographic work is handled by her, and she sends daily reports on activities of the field secretaries to the Commissioner of Public Service. She sends out all communications not handled by the chairman, and does the stenographic work on the book submitted annually in the National Clean Up and Paint Up Bureau's contest by Memphis. She is responsible for maintaining records and files of the organization and takes minutes at all board, assembly and committee meetings.

The four field secretaries and three colored field inspectors make personal contacts, surveys and inspection tours five days a week every week of the year. The field secretaries carry out in detail the objects of the Commission as outlined in its ordinance of authorization. They work directly with volunteer workers in each section of the city in promoting the City Beautiful plan. Personal contacts and visits to the residential sections of the city to seek cooperation of Memphis citizens in creating an environment for their own residences to conform to the code are part of the duties of these employees. Daily requests are made to prop-

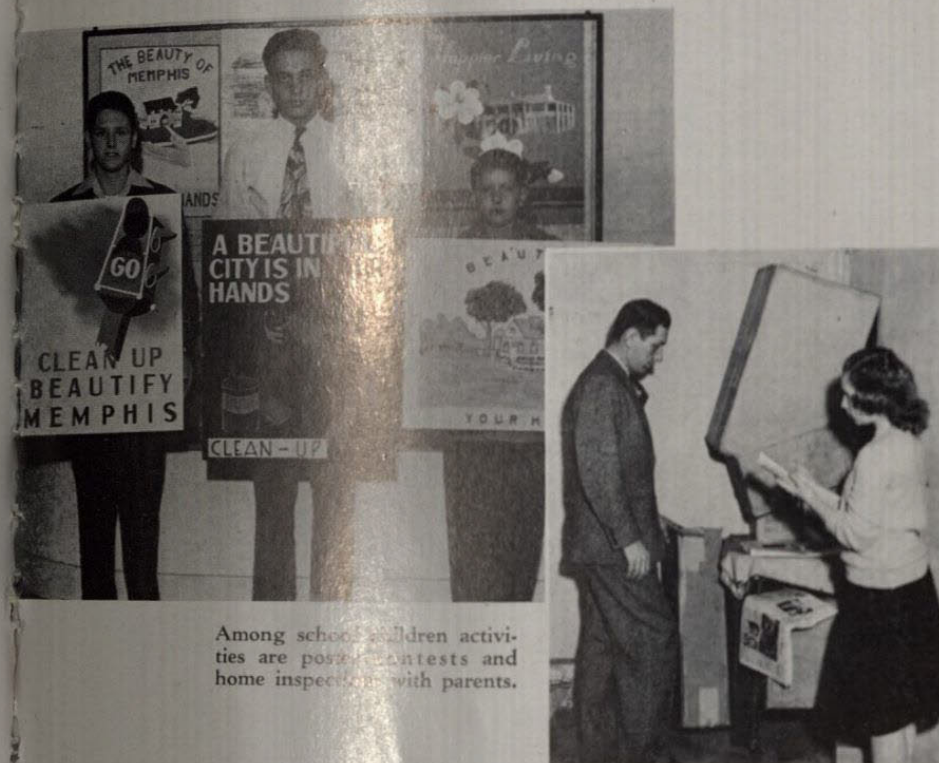
erty owners, realtors and every agency in the city to bring about a general improvement of the city. House-to-house inspections are part of their daily routine, as well as the checking of complaints and premises after recommended improvements have been completed.

One of the unique features of the office of the Commission is a complete file index system which registers every building in the city of Memphis. A composite picture of all premises including residential, commercial and industrial is given by this file, and once each year every piece of property is checked by the field secretaries and completed or necessary improvements noted on the index card. Activities of the secretaries are confined to one of three divisions of the city's residential sections. Majority of the work in the loop or downtown section is carried out by two similar field secretaries working directly under the Commissioner of Public Service.

Also part of the work of the field secretaries is supervision of activities of the three colored field inspectors. This supervision rotates among the four of them weekly, with each secretary spending three weeks of the month on calls and one week as supervisor of the colored workers. This latter entails making at least one daily contact with the three colored inspectors in the wards they are working in order to lend any necessary assistance and maintain closer connections between the white and colored divisions. The secretary serving as supervisor is available at Commission offices at all other times during the day to answer emergency calls and any complaints received in the office. She compiles weekly reports on all activities of the colored inspectors and keeps a record of their automobile mileage and gasoline issuance.

All seven field workers furnish their own cars and receive automobile maintenance allowances from the city and gas and oil at the Municipal Filling Station.

The colored inspectors make canvasses, surveys and inspections of colored residential and business sections. As a large percentage of the city's population is composed of Negroes, this service is necessary for the most efficient achievement of the goal of the Commission, as outlined in its ordinance. There is no permanent division of territories for the colored workers. Assignment of territories to be covered each week by the three Negroes is made by the field secretary in charge, with work being done by wards. Each ward is worked thoroughly in car and on foot until completion, and an average of 200 personal contacts is made by each individual weekly. The Negro inspectors also head the Colored Extension Division, with one presiding at each meeting of the northern and southern divisions and the third serving as secretary at both.



Among school children activities are poster contests and home inspections with parents.

The seven field workers spend five days a week in the territories, remaining in the offices Saturday to do wind-up work, such as composing their reports and sending out any necessary communications. Cards are sent to residents who were not at home during the week when calls were made. These cards recommend necessary improvements found at their homes. Official notices are blank forms stating date of inspection, address, name of resident and signature of field worker. On the card is printed "Pursuant to terms of an Ordinance of the City of Memphis, you are required to correct the condition described as follows . . ." In blank space is written the nature of the complaint. Should the resident be at home at time of inspection, the card is given to him direct.

In reply to complaints made by the citizens to the Commission office, a call is made for inspection, following which a printed form is sent to the Commissioner of Public Service. Listing of types of complaints filed on this form will perhaps give a further insight into the workings of the organization. They are alleys, animals, or fowls running at large, brush pickup, drainage, garbage pickup, no garbage can, no garbage collection, noxious growth, plumbing, sanitation, sewer trouble, sidewalks, stock, unsanitary chicken yard, vacant lots, weeds and complaints of a miscellaneous nature.

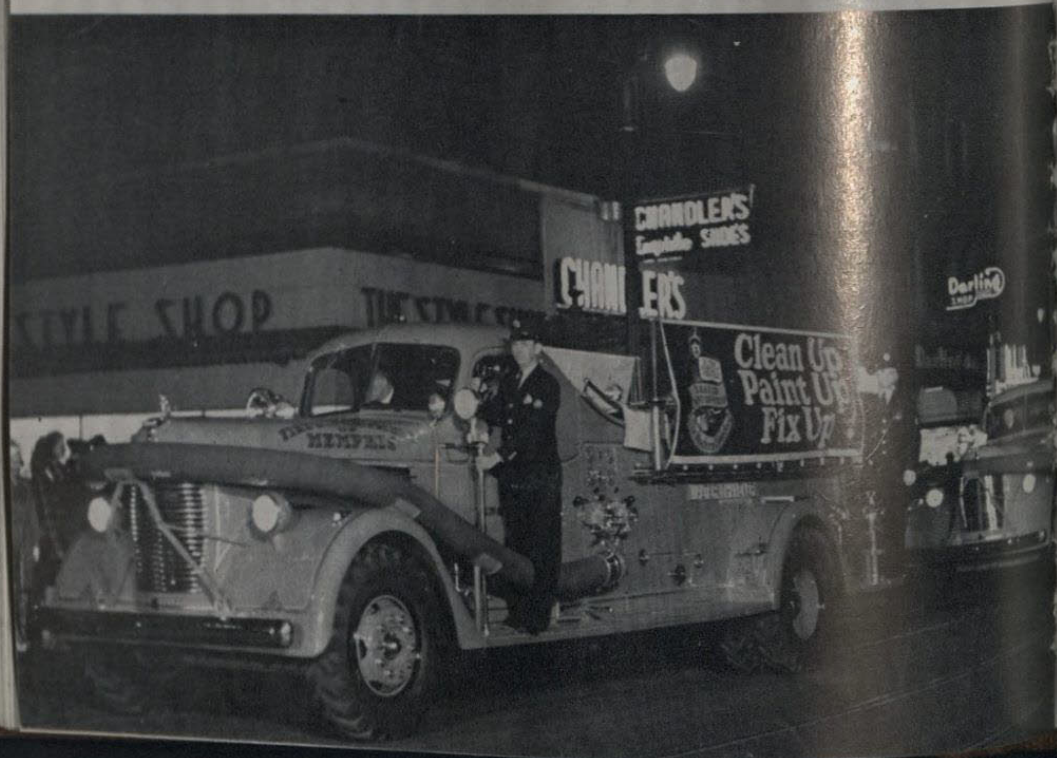
One of the present proposals of the Commission concerns alleys. Emphasis is being placed on cleaning them entirely or closing them, as alleys may easily become breeding places for rats and flies and the source of many diseases from insanitary conditions. Cards are being distributed by field employees and volunteer workers throughout the city in a survey designed to ascertain whether residents want the alleys closed. It is the aim of the group eventually to eliminate alleys in residential sections, with garbage men entering the property from the street on foot to dispose of waste. The newer sections of the city have never had alleys, and the system has worked satisfactorily in them.

City departments with which the work of the Commission is most closely related are the Health Department, Fire Department, Department of Public Works, Department of Public Service and Humane Shelter.

Work in conjunction with the Health Department entails inspection of sanitation and plumbing facilities, as well as full support in all drives made by the department, such as their rodent control drives. All findings of the Commission are reported to health officers.

Close cooperation is given the Fire Department by the City Beautiful in each of its Fire Prevention Campaigns, with the Commission assisting in compilation of the Fire Prevention Bureau's entry in the national campaign. The Commission reports to the department on any burning of trash, grass or garbage or any apparent fire hazards.

● Downtown parade during annual Clean Up Paint Up Campaign.



There are three main functions of the Department of Public Works which receive full cooperation from the City Beautiful: garbage collection, cutting weeds and engineering matters. Details of the work along the lines of garbage collection and garbage sanitation have already been noted. As for weeds, Commission inspectors send requests to the Department of Public Works for cutting of noxious and hazardous weeds on vacant lots, neutral strips, bayous and on other city-owned property, with the exception of parks. Weeds are kept down from early spring until late fall for the protection of Memphis citizens.

Contact with the Engineering Department includes reports on necessary improvements in sidewalks, streets and sewerage systems.

The Building Department, Electrical Department and Welfare Department are sub-departments of the Department of Public Service whose activities are most closely related with the City Beautiful. The Commission field workers report on houses deemed unfit for habitation to the Building Department, with recommendation that they be condemned. The following points are taken into consideration: general impression, windows, roof, chimney and painting.

To the Electrical Department go any reports on insufficient street lighting and conditions of present lighting.

The Welfare Department maintains two clean up trucks, staffed by citizens who would otherwise be on relief because of physical disabilities. These trucks do large-scale clean up jobs of hauling dead trees and stumps and cleaning assorted trash. Requests of such nature are made by the Commission to the department.

Reports concerning such animals, stray animals and diseased animals are made to the Humane Shelter.

All women's organizations receive immeasurable aid and support from the City Beautiful and in return they each give generous cooperation to the Commission. Each cooperates with the other in distribution of material for programs and contests of civic improvement along the lines of beauty, health and safety. These organizations are entitled to representation in the Commission's general assembly and are on the Commission's mailing list. Great benefits are derived from cooperation of these organizations during the annual Clean Up Campaign weeks.

A similar objective—the building of a greater Memphis—ties the Commission and the Memphis Chamber of Commerce together closely. The two send joint certificates of commendation the year round to commercial and industrial places of business which have made outstanding contributions to the general

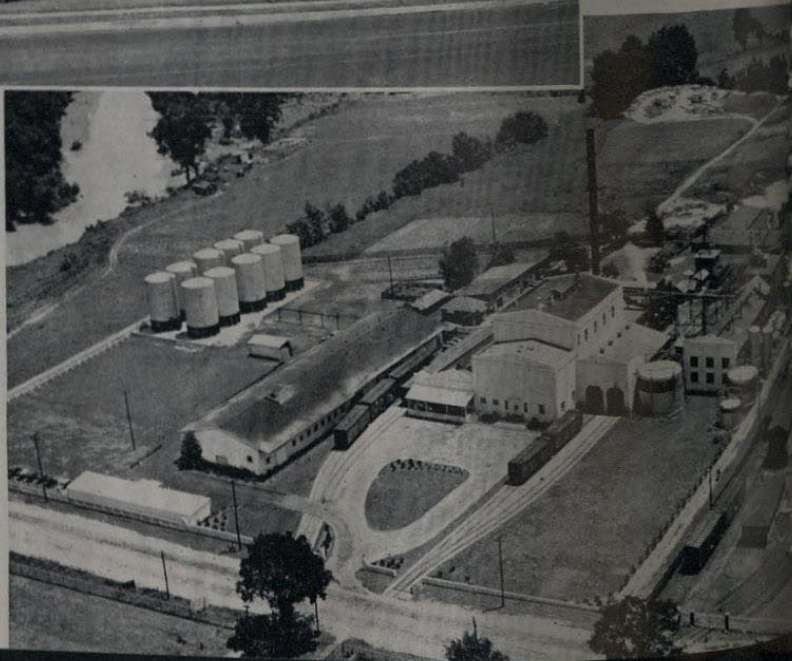
appearance of the city by improvements of premises, after periodic inspection trips made by Commission field secretaries accompanied by Chamber representatives. The Commission also sends its own individual certificates to homeowners and to a select number of business places which have made extraordinary improvements. The Chamber of Commerce gives "M awards" to commercial firms receiving superior ratings.

The harmony and understanding which has helped Memphis achieve national recognition for its Clean Up activities has resulted in a year-round program in many industrial plants. Today, business leaders volunteer improvement plans. Newspapers constantly stimulate interest by articles throughout the year. Editorial recognition to outstanding beautification programs has had a cumulative effect which adds impetus to additional improvements.

In some instances, landscape architects have been retained by business firms to provide professional landscaping, while others are constantly forming attractive backgrounds for otherwise prosaic locations by planting summer-blooming flowers and hardy shrubs.



Industrial sites landscaped as part of city-wide program



VI Memphis Annual Clean Up Campaign, the Climax of the Year's Work

The 365-days-a-year program of cleaning Memphis and keeping it a place of beauty, health and safety sees its climax annually in the city-wide Clean Up Campaign. This campaign, of a week's duration, is held in April, and it serves to promote concerted effort on the part of the city and its populace for cleaning both public and private premises. The week's activities also emphasize the annual routine meetings of the Commission and impress upon the public mind the necessity for such.

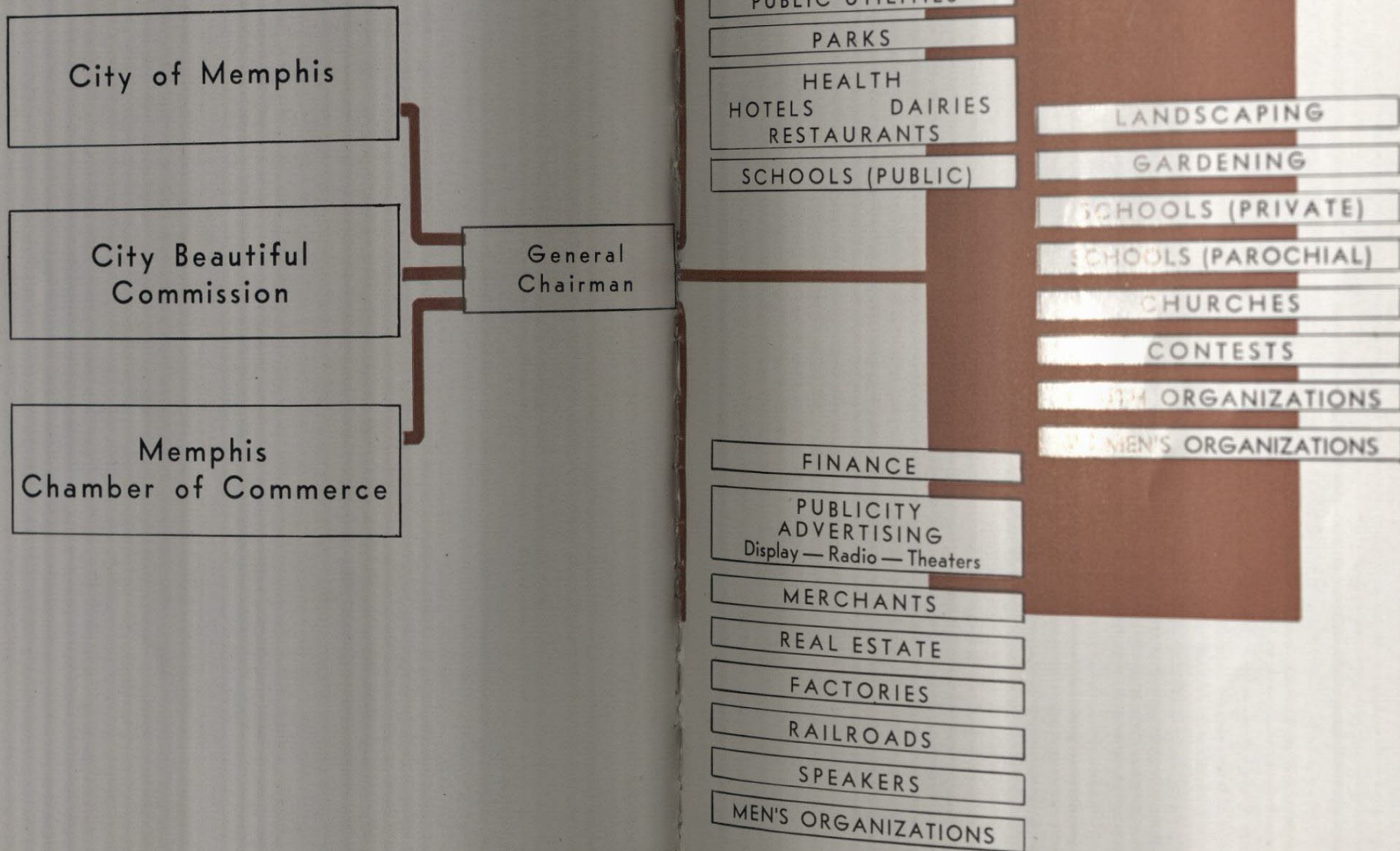
Joint sponsors are the City Beautiful Commission, the City of Memphis and the Memphis Chamber of Commerce.

The City Beautiful, operating under its city ordinance, has as its chief objectives: *clean up Memphis, beautify for happier living, eliminate health hazards for longer life and safety first for more wholesome living.*

For twenty years the Memphis Chamber of Commerce has been actively interested in Clean Up campaigns. From a practical standpoint, this community-wide effort pays dividends in the improved appearance of the city. The removal of trash and rubbish and the cleaning of unsightly areas, increases morale and reduces fire hazards.

Clifford Penland, executive vice president of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce, says that the greatest asset comes not so much in the improved appearance of the community as in the development of a sense of pride and responsibility on the part of thousands of school children who actively participate. It is generally agreed that these campaigns provide an excellent outlet for youthful energies and in a constructive way, increase their interest in civic affairs.

CLEAN UP MEMPHIS CAMPAIGN



During recent years, the Chamber of Commerce has devoted its efforts to commercial and industrial firms. The Chamber of Commerce has solicited their active participation in these programs by cleaning up, painting up and maintaining their buildings and premises in an attractive condition. They are requested to appoint some person in their organization to take charge of this work and see that it is carried through.

Inspections are made of these plants by the Chamber of Commerce's committee. Those found to be maintained in excellent condition and those which have made the improvement are presented with awards.

It is gratifying to note the improvement in this type of property and the interest that has developed in landscaping and planting flowers and shrubs on the grounds and adjoining property. This is an indication that industry realizes good house-keeping and beautification are worthwhile and pay dividends.

Each year additional funds are needed for the promotion of Clean Up Week activities. A committee composed of members of the Chamber of Commerce comprise a finance committee and funds are solicited from paint, hardware and allied dealers to conduct the campaign.

In setting up the Clean Up Week, campaign committees are named with the personnel selected from women's organizations, welfare bodies, service clubs and civic groups. Their reports and project material are handled by the Chamber of Commerce and City Beautiful secretaries.

The Commissioner of Public Service, under whose direction the City Beautiful Commission functions, the mayor of Memphis and president of the Chamber of Commerce are ex-officio members of the campaign committee.

Choice of general chairman of the campaign is made officially by the City Beautiful Commission at its January meeting, following a conference with ex-officio members of the committee and the chairman of the Commission. A civic-minded man, willing to give a fair portion of his time, is preferred. The City Beautiful chairman serves as co-chairman. The director of civic affairs of the Chamber of Commerce and the City Beautiful Commission's executive secretary serve in secretarial capacities for the campaign, thus creating a challenge and arousing interest between the men and women of Memphis.

It is the function of the City Beautiful Commission's general chairman to secure cooperation of women's organizations, while the Chamber of Commerce secures cooperation of commercial and industrial committees and men's organizations. The Commissioner of Public Service secures cooperation of government officials and departments.



People gather to see a house being renovated during a spectacle promoting Clean Up Week.

First meeting of the executive committee is held one afternoon following selection of campaign general chairman. Members of the group are the mayor, president of the Chamber, Commissioner of Public Service, Chairman of the City Beautiful, a selected treasurer, a selected publicity director and secretaries of the Chamber and City Beautiful. Business of this meeting pertains to selection of the campaign date, slogan, type and divisional committees.

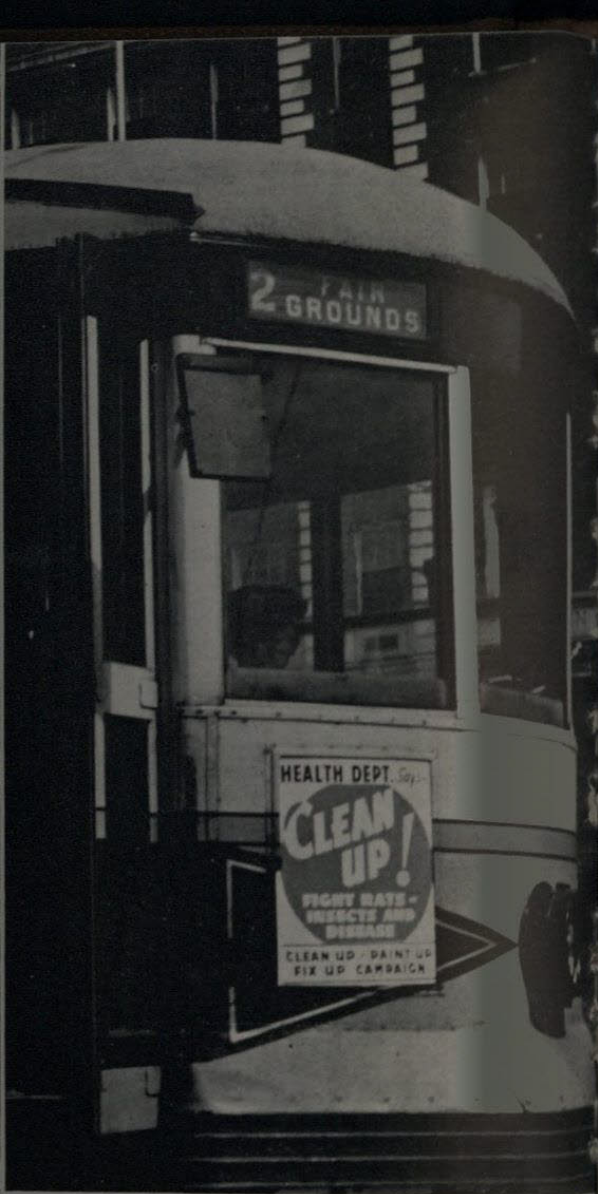
Other events on the calendar of the campaign may be outlined as follows:

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

Two weeks prior to campaign: Kick-off luncheon for workers.

Week prior to campaign: Garden Mart held by City Beautiful Commission.

Week prior to campaign: Dealers' dinner.



WEEK'S SCHEDULE

- Saturday: Mayor's proclamation and night parade.
 Sunday: Church Day, with three minute announcements by members of board of each church.
 Monday: Commercial and Industrial Day, with inspection of industrial plants.
 Tuesday: School Day, with blanks distributed to school children for home inspection.
 Wednesday: City Beautiful Day, with emphasis placed on clean up of home premises and also a garden pilgrimage.
 Thursday: City Government Day, with emphasis placed on sustained program of Health Department.
 Friday: City Government Day, with concerted rubbish and trash pick up.
 Saturday: City Beautiful Commission Matinee, given for school children, with admission by tin cans.

The various committees working on specific undertakings during the campaign may be listed as follows:

Alley Improvement—Alleys with improved appearance are designated and awards made, with final decision made by a secret committee under supervision of the Health Department.

Arterial Highways—Improvement and beautification of all arterial highways leading through the city is promoted.

Cartoon Contest—Contest for selection of cartoon featuring the campaign's slogan is held, with prize awarded by City Beautiful.

City Beautiful Commission Matinee—Clean up and salvage are two-fold aim, for admission to matinee for children is by tin cans.

City Entrances—Beautification of all highway entrances into city is promoted.

City Government—Cooperation is given by all governmental agencies and offices.

Commercial and Industrial—Cooperation of business and industrial concerns is obtained in cleaning up and painting up, with special emphasis placed on buildings, railroad stations, down-town filling stations, chain stores, apartment buildings and vacant structures. Tabulations of amount of work accomplished or contemplated is made by each firm.

Filling stations—Beautification and general improvement of neighborhood filling stations is encouraged.

Finance—Sufficient funds are raised to carry out campaign, and records of expenditures and disbursements kept.

Fire Prevention—Inspections of homes and businesses are made for elimination of fire hazards by the Fire Department.

Garden Mart—Barter of plants and display of flower arrangements is held on City Beautiful lawn, with commercial firms exhibiting modern devices of all phases of beautification.

Health—Concerted drive is made by Health Department, with City Beautiful cooperation, to educate public in manner of eliminating rats and other health hazards. Publicity is used showing means of rat-proofing.

Historical—Pilgrimages are made to historical spots in the city.

Home Builders—Landscaping as an immediate feature of all subdivision developments is encouraged.

Kick-off Luncheon—Official inauguration of campaign is luncheon attended by representatives from all cooperating agencies, and Chamber of Commerce and City Beautiful Commission vie for attendance records of men's and women's divisions.

Material Dealers' Meeting—Dinner meeting is held for paint, hardware, lumber and nurserymen, banks and all types of material dealers and their salesmen to acquaint them with various activities.

Neighborhood Businesses—Inspection blanks are given these businesses, with results of their clean ups tabulated.

Paint Up Promotion—Emphasis is placed on painting private property for its protection.

Parade—All participating agencies form a mile-long parade held at night.

Photographs and Motion Picture—Every phase of present campaign's activities is recorded in photographs and motion pictures for the purpose of maintaining a permanent record and also for use in future years as means of publicizing campaigns before group meetings.

Poster Contest—Poster contest is conducted in schools, with prizes.

Proclamation—Official proclamation is given in spectacular manner in a down-town park.

Publicity, Advertising and Display—Banners, window displays, all newspaper publicity and paid advertisements, as well as radio programs, are used to publicize event.

Realtors—Improvement and beautification of rental property is sought.

Repairs and Loans—Efforts of Clean Up Campaign are coordinated with Federal Housing Administration in program to rehabilitate old homes into apartments and reclaim homes needing repair. Also, the fact is publicized that money is available for remodeling and repairing.

Residential—Supplementary inspection blanks are given in residential sections.

Safety—Special emphasis is placed on all means of safeguarding the citizen's safety.

Schools—Public, private and parochial schools participate in campaign. Fire drills are held and home inspection blanks given the children.

Speakers—City-wide campaign furnishing messages on Clean Up Week is carried out in speeches made by members of Men's and Women's Divisions.

Special Features—Special "stunts" are used as publicity features, usually tied in with the seasonable idea of clean up or with some current newsworthy event. A few typical examples of these features are:

"Dr. Cupufu (Clean Up, Fix Up, Paint Up) Medicine Show," which presented imitation of old-fashioned medicine show nightly from truck in various neighborhoods, with spring tonic for cleaning up city prescribed by "the doctor".

"Atomic Bomb Rally," which was series of rallies at community houses.

"Before and After Paint Job," during which only half a house was painted, in order to show comparison and advantage of painting.



Another highest award for Memphis. Officials view the 1946 trophy. Mrs. William B. Fowler of City Beautiful Commission is pictured with City Commissioner R. S. Fredericks and A. P. Mills, representing Memphis Chamber of Commerce.

"Night Paint Job," when a two-story house was painted at night in the record time of three minutes.

Paper and Trash—Educational program encouraging Memphians to keep streets clean is carried out.

Trees and Shrubs—Appropriate trees and shrubs are planted.

Vacant Lots—Special effort is made to have vacant lots cleaned and promote development of these into gardens for maintenance as improved property.

These above committees are supplemented by other temporary committees, which vary as the needs and activities of the years change. On the whole, however, they are the permanent committees used each year in order to carry out an effective and worthwhile campaign—such a campaign as the city has held for the past seven years, by which it has won title of "cleanest city in Tennessee" for the same period of time.



VIII Conclusion

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"The stages of infancy, adolescence and maturity during a brief period of peace and prolonged years of war"—so reads the history of the City Beautiful Commission and its functions.

But the story does not stop there. The work of the organization goes ever onward toward the perpetual goal of Memphis as a "city beautiful". This aim has been achieved. Memphis is a "city beautiful," having been nationally recognized as such for the past seven years. But making it a city of beauty, health and safety is only part of the objective of the Commission. Now that it is, hard work and daily work must be exerted to maintain it as such.

The City Beautiful Commission is determined that, as this capital city of the Mid-South and important crossroad of the United States grows, so shall the activities of the Commission grow. Each square foot taken into the city limits in the future shall be made as attractive as the remainder of the city and kept so.

As long as the City Beautiful continues and receives the excellent support from organizations and individuals in the future that it has received in the past, Memphis shall remain truly a "city beautiful". To this end the City Beautiful Commission of Memphis dedicates itself with renewed vigor.