

MEMPHIS, TENN., MONDAY MORNING, JANUARY 17, 1966

Poised For Progress—

Planning Is Memphis' Prescription For Ills Of Modern Metropolis

By JACK MARTIN

A Memphian caught in blocks-long downtown traffic at 5 p.m. will, as he inches along sometimes uneven pavement, have a chance to gaze occasionally at a decrepit building or vacant lot and join in the new national lament: Cities are going to pot and pothole.

Many cities have. They present a picture which is a composite of decaying downtowns, lost revenues as merchants and families hasten to the suburbs, crime concentration and general frustration.

Although it has problems common to many of the United States' large cities, Memphis is not in that position today and, through metropolitan planning, doesn't intend to be.

The driver caught in the slow procession of Memphis' downtown traffic at rush hour can see signs of municipal health as well as illness: Wide streets abounding, gleaming structures reaching skyward, modern buses moving on or very nearly on schedule.

In summary, Memphis has these things going for it: It's young as a city, there is room to move through annexation, although downtown has suffered some there is resurgence going on and it can avoid problems older cities just grew into.

But it also has a downtown that has reached the saturation point in traffic, crime which is generally concentrated in a belt of poverty that runs across the central city area, and a police force considered undermanned to cope with it.

"Memphis is a new city in relative terms," said Jerrold Moore, director of the Memphis and Shelby County Planning Commission. "We have very little here physically that dates back to the Civil War. It compares more with cities to the west that have developed in the last 70 years."

Memphis' youthfulness contrasts with cities in the East which have found themselves strangled by rings of small, incorporated communities.

"When those people talk of metropolitan problems, they're talking of hundreds, or even thousands, of governmental units," Mr. Moore said. "We have one county, six incorporated municipalities, two school boards and four or five utility districts. So you can see our problem is so much less complicated."

In 1955 Memphis was a city with 120.47 square miles. Now it has 160.64.

In other cities, "bedroom communities" outside the city limits have harbored the people who make their living in the city but escape its taxes and problems.

"That's not true in Memphis," Mayor William Ingram said. "As these suburbs have developed we have annexed them and they are contributing to the general economic development of the city."

Memphis annexed Parkway Village and Oakhaven last year; Raleigh is expected to be taken in this year and Whitehaven's annexation looms inevitably.

Laid out in 1819 with a population of 63 persons, Memphis has grown to a population estimated Jan. 1 at 604,998. It grew more in the five years of the '60s — 107,474 — than in the 10 years between 1950 and 1960, when the rise was 103,499.

One of the most frequently heard descriptions of Memphis is that it is a "clean city."

"It's cleaner than the other cities I've been in," said Paul Brown of 353 North Hollywood. "And it's a lot safer to walk down the street. But we're about 10 years behind on expressways."

Memphis is behind from the standpoint of need, city officials say, but not in the official timetable which calls for completion of the system by 1972.

"And I think it's not going to be too many years before we'll need another expressway system, in an outer ring around this one," Mayor Ingram forecast.

"Ultimately we've got to have a riverfront expressway," said City Traffic Engineer Robert Fosnaugh. "You've got to take care of the fringes of downtown."

Currently, downtown streets appear taxed to capacity.

This is reflected in a comparison of average daily traffic use of the main downtown streets in 1957 and 1964. The streets, from Riverside Drive to Wellington, with counts made at Monroe, had a total load of 84,100 vehicles in 1957. In 1964, it had risen to only 87,900. This indicates, Mr. Fosnaugh said, "They were being used to capacity in 1957 and there has been no significant change."

The figures are for throughout the day, not peak rush hours. But even spreading it



New State Office Building And Shelby County Building Are Going Up In Civic Center

out like that, Second and Third are "now running about 130 per cent of capacity, or 13 cars on the street for every 10 it could handle without congestion," Mr. Fosnaugh explained. More off-street parking facilities and elimination of on-street parking on downtown streets are viewed as possible aids. These would go along with feeding off through traffic from downtown to fringe streets, such as Wellington, which now is being prepared for such duty.

"Our transportation study, due in about two months, will have recommendations for downtown," Mr. Fosnaugh reported.

In contrast to the static downtown traffic count, out East things are booming. Walnut Grove Road at Highland handled 6,400 vehicles in 1957 and 20,100 in 1964.

Downtown is, literally, the heart of urban concern. No one seems to disagree with the need for a vital city core. The outlook for it is optimistic but there have been, and are, low points.

One is in tax assessments, which means revenue.

"In 1955," says city Assessor Norman Thompson, "the Fourth Ward, which I consider the main downtown section, had an assessment of \$37,279,375. In 1965, it was \$31,455,400."

The decline reflects merchants and office building tenants moving out of the ward, which is bounded by Madison, Beale, the river and Gayosso Bayou, or Fourth, generally.

"There are some buildings downtown that if they were torn down they would produce more revenue as parking lots," said George Beatty, chief deputy Shelby County tax assessor.

Many downtown leases have been rewritten, cutting rates, to hold tenants.

For all of Memphis, assessments have risen sharply, on real estate, ad valorem (merchants' stocks) and personal property. In 1955, they totaled \$616,763,340 and in 1965, were \$1,194,244,225.

Both Mr. Thompson and Mr. Beatty are optimistic about downtown.

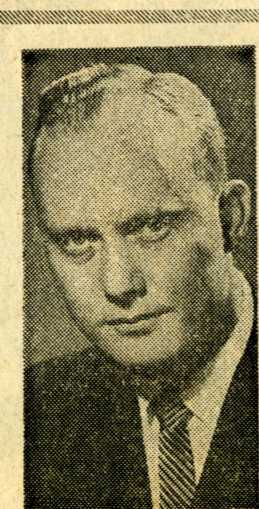
"Here's evidence of it," said Mr. Thompson as he pointed from his office window in the 100 North Main Building to Civic Center construction below.

Renewal of North Main will be duplicated, it is hoped, on South Main, keyed to the proposed Memphis Light, Gas & Water Division building at Main and Beale. That building "should anchor Main Street on the south as the Civic Center has done on the north," said Commissioner Hunter Lane.

Further new development is expected to quickly follow LG&W's move to the area, part of the Beale Street Urban Renewal Project.

As an example of what redevelopment means in taxes, revenue on the 100 North Main Building this year "will be about \$146,000, compared to \$30,000 before," Mr. Beatty reported.

An addition to the Claridge, a new Lowenstein's store topped by apartments and two 20-story apartment towers are under way, or planned, in the North Main area.



Jack Martin —Staff Photo

For the past three weeks, Sunday editions of The Commercial Appeal have contained articles on the problems faced by New York and other large cities.

How does Memphis stand in comparison? Staff writer Jack Martin investigated to find out. He found the city has some of the same problems of the older, larger urban centers, but it also has the advantage of being a younger city, with room to spread out by annexation and with a keen sense of the need for advance planning to accommodate the urban surge.

The situation today and the expectations are described in the accompanying article.

The poorest people in Memphis live in a belt that stretches across the "core" north to south.

It is in the poverty belt that

police must concentrate their coverage. On a chart at Police Headquarters, a squad car districts bunch in this area and thin out toward the outskirts.

The belt is the target of the War on Poverty Committee and its various proposed programs to break the pattern of hunger, despair and illiteracy that breeds criminal activity.

But meanwhile the problem exists and it must be handled by an understrength police force.

"We are in as good a shape as any city our size, but you can't stand still," said Police Chief J. C. Macdonald. "We don't have enough personnel. We've been hollering that for years."

Figured on the standard ratio of 1.8 policemen for each 1,000 residents, Memphis needs 1,080 officers. It has 787.

The money for more manpower is available, Chief Macdonald said, but the applicants are not. One reason, he said, is the security of the job is not as attractive any more in these prosperous times.

"And you change shifts every month, go to court on your days off. Then, too, this cry of police brutality that's so prevalent . . . a young man just doesn't want to go through it."

He is hopeful, however, that more public support for police and a demand for top-grade personnel will enhance the job.

Aside from the Urban Renewal program—which already has spent \$34,758,758 in changing Memphis' face for the better and is committed to spend about 50 million dollars more — a spur to downtown through more residents is seen.

The trend is back to downtown, away from the suburbs, the entire Mid-South—of



Sixty Years Ago, You Could Meander At Main And Madison

is the general impression of city officials. Indications of this are the new apartment projects and, more recently, town house living.

"We are blessed with a downtown area adaptable to residences," said Commissioner Lane. "I'm thinking of people living in apartment buildings along the riverfront."

But downtown's dynamism, Mr. Moore said, will be different from the retailing image it had before. He pointed to downtown's share of 80 million dollars out of total Shelby County retail sales volume of 980 million dollars last year.

"It will still be a large shopping area, but it is rapidly becoming a headquarters—for

the entire Mid-South—of

business and government. It can become an extensive entertainment center."

The planned addition to The Auditorium, capable of handling conventions attracting up to 20,000 persons, will be an important part of the entertainment center concept. So will the Claridge addition and, on Union, the planned 25-story Downtown and the remodeled Sheraton Peabody.

Visitors will be coming to a large degree by air, and Memphis Metropolitan Airport already is feeling a load unexpected for years.

"By 1970, we will need to put an addition on the airport for probably a third more space," said Commissioner James Moore. "Our engineers estimated in 1960 that by 1970 we would be emplaning 750,000 people a year. We emplaned more than that in 1965, which puts us just five years ahead of that educated guess."

Another big problem is the disposal of garbage and sewage.

Land-fill garbage dumps will have to go, simply because as they fill up "we'll have to go farther and farther out," says Commissioner Pete Sisson. A compost plant—where garbage is separated, metal from soft material, and soft material "chewed up, aerated and disinfected"—seems the answer, he said. The treated soft waste can be sold for fertilizer.

Memphis now puts its sewage in the Mississippi River but treatment plants will be needed later.

"According to one report, we won't need treatment facilities before 1980," Mr. Sisson said. "But we'll probably have them sooner. Under present (state) criteria, we're not polluting the river. But no one knows what new Federal criteria may come. Regardless, we know we have a moral if not a public obligation to take care of this, rather than have someone tell us to."

Long-range plans call for three treatment plants, built one at a time. "In going into treatment facilities, we're talking about 75 or 80 million dollars. That's why planning is so important, to work in stages and spread the cost out."

"Planning" is a phrase heard repeatedly in officialdom. And, as other cities have learned, it needs to be.

Search For Gun 'Seen' By Child Proves In Vain

Police Inspector E. W. Barksdale spent a cold, damp two hours Saturday night searching a ditch near his home for a gun a little girl told him she saw late in the afternoon.

Instead he found in the muddy water a rusty roller skate, dead weeds, and an assortment of discarded beer cans and bottles.

The spot searched was about one and a half miles from where two women were shot to death last year. Mrs. Barbara Jean Smith was murdered March 26 in a church parking lot at Poplar and South Perkins. Mrs. Evelyn Brunner Montes was killed Nov. 2 at her home at 311 South Perkins. No murder weapon has been identified in either death.

Inspector Barksdale, who commands the Police Vice and Narcotics Bureau, said he made the search since the ditch was at Perkins and Normandy, near his home at 454 Vescova. He said the little girl, who also lived nearby showed him where she saw the gun.

"I think it was her imagination," Inspector Barksdale said, "she saw something that in a particular light looked like a gun. She did the right thing to tell me about it because you never know when the real thing will turn up."

Stolen Safe Found

Sheriff's deputies yesterday located a safe taken during a burglary at Loeb's Laundry and Cleaners at 4715 Highway 51 South on Jan. 9. The safe, which was found on the shoulder of Scaife Road in south Shelby County near the state line, had been forced open and papers were scattered about the site. The \$463 in cash and \$25 in checks, which had been in the safe at the time of the burglary, were missing, deputies said.

'Terrorists' Are Slain

LISBON, Jan. 16.—(AP)—Several hundred African "terrorists" were killed, wounded or arrested in the northern part of Mozambique between Dec. 1 and Jan. 15, a military communique has reported. Two Portuguese soldiers were killed in action in that period.

Action, Please—

Sheriff Acts To Halt Illegal Shooting

Q.—Several months ago you published a letter in regard to the discharge of firearms along Benjestown Road in the vicinity of the Loosahatchie River Bridge. The situation improved for a while, but it is now very bad again, especially on week ends and holidays. There are several signs that have been shot up and some of the bullet holes were made by high-powered guns.

If you are familiar with the area, you know the road curves and there are several houses nearby in the line of fire. I hope something can be done before someone is injured or killed. The wanton destruction of public property is deplorable, but loss of life is much worse.

A. T. A.—Sheriff William N. Morris Jr. has dispatched patrol cars in that area and in similar areas to watch for this on the county roads. This is something which usually happens during the hunting seasons and has troubled authorities for a long time.

As in the past, offenders will be prosecuted if caught shooting on or off the bridge, officers said. Person found shooting signs may be fined a maximum of \$1,000 and sentenced to a maximum of a year at the Penal Farm.

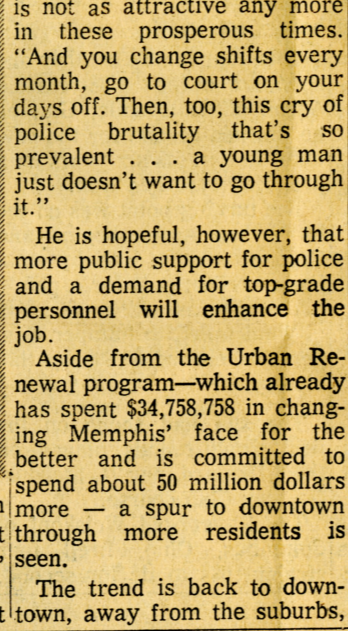
County Engineer Richard Halsted has also promised the

damaged signs will be replaced.

Q.—Why can't something be done about the parking on Central and Goodlett near the Second Presbyterian Church on Sundays? At that time there are cars parked bumper to bumper on the south side of Central with left wheels extending into the outside driving lane. Often these cars block the right lane. The right turn lane on Central at Goodlett is also blocked from about 100 yards from the intersection. This condition exists on Goodlett where there is also no lane for parking. Can the police give us some relief?

A.—The police will have the intersection watched to make sure there are no parking restrictions being violated. The officers have been instructed to keep all driving lanes clear from obstruction. Very often the police are more lenient in parking restrictions around Memphis churches on Sundays, but agree it is most important to keep traffic moving smoothly and safely.

Action, Please invites questions and comments about public services and facilities. They should be addressed to The Commercial Appeal at 495 Union. In emergencies, readers may telephone 526-6151.



Benjestown Road At Loosahatchie Bridge Benjestowners Continue Blasts At Traffic Signs

Insurers Urge Driver Safety

Fewer Accidents And Less Damage Aims Of Group

A reduction in deaths, injuries and property damage through fewer accidents is the aim of a 1966 driver safety program being urged by Insurers of Memphis, Inc., an association of independent insurance agents here.

Joe M. Pipkin, association president, said state and local officials throughout Tennessee will be asked to support three projects designed to improve driver training and education.

He listed these as:

Compulsory driving courses for all high school students in public schools.

Stronger state laws regulating the issuance and suspension of driver's licenses.

Intensified publicity campaigns on the death toll and financial losses caused by traffic accidents.

Mr. Pipkin said he will ask the board of the Insurers of Tennessee today to endorse the program, and expects the board's immediate approval.

He said insurance organizations in the state have been unsuccessful in the past in getting the state Department of Insurance and Banking "to adjust (premium) rates to a level dictated by (traffic) losses."

As a result, he said the IMI is urging driver education programs to help reduce accidents, and thus reduce deaths, injuries and property losses.

Plans for the 1966 safety campaign will be discussed at a meeting of IMI Thursday at the Sheraton Motor Inn at 889 Union, and a meeting of Memphis insurance organizations Jan. 25 at the Downtown Holiday Inn.

Bible Reveals God's Concern For 'Tiny' Man

By BILLY GRAHAM

The universe is so big, in fact scientists are finding it is limitless. How can we be sure that God is concerned for us little insignificant creatures on a small dot in space called the Earth?—H. J.

When Henry Norris Russell, Princeton astronomer, had concluded a lecture on the Milky Way, a woman asked him a question similar to yours. "If our world is so little, and the universe so great, how can we believe that God pays any attention to us?"

The astronomer replied, "That depends on how big a God you believe in."

We are always inclined to think of God in terms of our own limitations. But the Bible says: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways." The Creator is certainly greater than His creation, and therefore is capable of managing it, and being concerned for it.

But pure logic sometimes leaves us bewildered when we stand before the greatness of God. To bridge this gap Christians rely upon God's own word. They believe certain things because God says it is thus. The words, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believeth upon Him should not perish but have everlasting life," reveal irrefutably that God is concerned for the "little" people on this planet.

HAMBONE'S MEDITATIONS

By J. P. ALLEY

I DON' OWE SO MANY FOLKS BUT LOOK LAK MOS' UV 'EM COMES ERLONG JES' WEN I SE GWINE IN A MOVIE!!

