

### Daniel Jeremy Silver Collection Digitization Project

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Cleveland - 1962, 1962.

CLEVELAND -- 1962

The Second of a Series of Impressions of Our City

The Temple November 25, 1962

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

The reporter assigned to survey Cleveland titled his column Gleveland

The City Where Nothing Ever Happened. With some misgiving, the editor

permitted the report to be published. He expected a deluge of indignant

mail. He received not a letter. Apparently Clevelanders are satisfied that

our city, like one of Johnny Appleseed's famous trees, just grew. Yet if we

look carefully at our past, we quickly discover that Cleveland has a history.

Quite a few very fine things did, indeed, happen in our city.

Way back when, Gleveland was the first community in the Western Reserve to tax for the schooling of the children of the indigent. When some of the fat cows of the day protested that their hard earned profits should not be used for such a purpose, the ministers of Cleveland got up in their pulpits and called a sin a sin and parsimony parsimony. Good and crist schooling has ever been a part of the warp and woof of Cleveland life, and so has a forth-right pulpit. We see the state of t

Later on Cleveland spoke its mind on the issue of alavery. The Western Reserve was a hot-bed of Abolitionist sentiment. We were the northern terminus of the Underground Railway. Our cellars hid the escaped slaves, Our boats and our sailors ferried them across to the free soil of Canada. When A John Brown came to Cleveland.

able to inside his horses for men mental tack. Later, when apprehended, he appealed to a Cleveland lawyer to conduct his defense.

Cleveland from the first insisted that all men were equal, in the menare by right free men. We were the first major northern city to send a colored legislator to our State House. Men of all colors and of all creeds routinely have been elected to local and State-wide authority. From the early days of the Klan, to the Smiths and the Pelleys and the Coughlins of the Thirties, to the extremists of our own day, the hate mongers have never been able to command in the series of impressive support. We can be proud of this page of our history.

And we can be proud of the golden page which records honesty in government and governmental reform. The last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth have been called by historians "the nadir of our national disgrace." These were the decades in which business had its hand in the public till, in which railroads were swallowing up unconstonable amounts of public land, in which the traction companies were literally taking possession of the streets of our communities, in which votes could be bought, councilmen could be bought, privileged legislation could be bought; indeed the State Houses themselves were bought and sold.

In 1904 the crusading editor, Lincoln Steffans, published a realistic and accurate account of city government which he called The Shame of Gur Cities. Cleveland was the shining exception. Steffans spoke of Cleveland as the best governed city in America. "Perhaps," he added, "the only well governed city." We had in the Mayor's office a reformed robber baron, Tom Johnson, whose credo was simplicity itself. "I know that the utility companies," he said, "are a bunch of thieves and robbers -- I was one of them

Johnson set out to protect the public welfare from the greed of the few. He ordered an investigation of the tax duplicate, in which he was able to show unbelievable inequities. He saved our lakefront from the railroads. He saved our streets from the traction companies. He established a municipal light plant which produced light and power in competition with the private monopolies and whose cost figures provided a gauge against which to measure the exorbitant rate demands of the privately owned utilities. Tom Johnson began to do away with the spoils system by imposing civil service. He brought in experts in the various fields of city administration. He set in motion a tradition of reform, of government of the people and for the people which has been by and large the norm ever since. I do not mean that all our politicians have been saints -- some have been caught with their hands in the till -- others, I am sure, got their hands out safely -- but by and large our government has been honest, it has been dedicated to the public welfare, and it has been forthright in its statements to the citizenry. And by and large the citizenry has responded by electing to office men who were dedicated to the public interest. The demagogue has never had an easy go of it here.

Oh, yes, Cleveland has a history. It has a history of free speech; of public rostrums on the Public Square which anyone can mount, of civic forums which deliberately present both sides of volatile unpopular issues. Cleveland has a history; a history of ministers and college professors, of lawyers and civic leaders and of social workers who joined with labor to win for the worker his just place in the economic sun. Cleveland has a history of mayors who ordered employers to remove from them Pinkertons whom they had hired as strike breakers. Cleveland has a history, and we can be proud of that history.

Unfortunately, I have the feeling that we would like to forget our past -- that many of us would prefer to forget the principles and practices on which our city is founded.

The first glorious page of Cleveland's history reveals a dedication to free public education of high quality. Today in the land there is still good education to be had, thanks to the sacrificial integrity of a noble but EPULATION IS NO LONGER A FOCUS OF CIVIL ENERGY. schools of twenty-five years ago? By and large they have turned their backs on their alma maters, gone out and founded new schools -- less crowded, less ALLTO OFTEN, I AM AFRAID THEY ARE colorful schools. Where do we find these graduates? Financing campaigns TOBE FOUND for the passage of city school levies grumbling about the high cost of NOURISHED THEM AND FROM WHICH owning property in the city which they have fled, and financing Because of this failure to repay campaigns to defeat city school levies. a debt of love and of obligation, we have an anachronistic situation which The economically and culturally deprived live in the Ought IN MANY WARDS ATEMPT mother city. The schools of our center city must not only educate but do-a

The schools of our center city must not only educate but do a schools of our center city must not only educate but do a schools of social reconstruction — and we tie their hands. There are forty-plus children in a city class and only twenty plus a few in the schools of our affluent suburbs. More money in the suburbs than in the city; more need in the city than in the suburbs. The need to be need in the city schools grumble when the obvious is presented to us that some more equitable method of financing our schools must be devised,

AND THAT that social need can be met if the wealth of the whole county is taxed, that

NEITHER CITY LETY NOW CITY BOND ISSUE REPLACES THE COMMON RESTORSIBILITY those who are growing in the city must not be for all of their live crippled are domain that is not equal to the challenges of the day.

MANIES WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLY IF SOME OF THE ABUNDANCE IF THE SUBURES What is the of equal to the challenges of the day.

What is the of education is true of every other facet of our history. Its signed of the county is the for the suburbance of our history. Its signed of the county is the challenges of the county. Its signed of the county is the county. Its signed of the county is signed or the county. Its signed or the county is the county is signed or the county is signed or the county is signed or the county. Its signed or the county is signed or the coun

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ON OUN RECORD OF AND ENLIGHTENED We once prided ourselves of our sympathetic help to the less fortunate, to the new immigrant, to those of other colors and of other skins. I ack you to read of the tragic football which has been made of our welfare program. IN A COMMONITY WHICH ALLETS ENLY 807. OF MINIMUM SUBSISTENCE Can we claim the mantle of charity we who insist that artificially drawn PRIDE OURSELVES ON OUR SOCIAL WELFARE municipal lines must determine who shall pay the burden of welfare. LASES? THE CYNIC WOULD ANSWER WITH SOME MEASURE OF does our present fragmented tax structure insure? That the poor must pay TRUTH BALLY poor relief and that the wealthy escape that burden. And so we have the HOWELSE EXPLAIN HOW WELFARE HAS BEEN A CITY WHEN REELING UNDER SUCCESSIVE tragic anachronism of a program of joint city-county welfare being broken in RECESSION'S TWO Decause the city, realing under four depressions in four years, cannot THE RELIEF PROGRAM - pay its share. Even if some temporary political accomodation is achieved it will not materially change the fundamental cruelty that the richest suburb in ALMOST the nation taxes itself only for its nonexistent welfare needs while the poverty knowing metropolis must shoulders the lion's share of the cos metropolitan accd. We are guilty of tolerating the growth of class MINETERE situation such as never has existed before. Why? Because you and I and all those who are like us, all those who are fortunate as we are fortunate, have for all too many years now turned away from responsibility, built for ourselves conveniently isolated and hermetically sealed suburbs and deluded ourselves that we can somehow live off the city and take advantage of its cultural and economic activities, but bear no responsibility for the slum conditions incident on urban life, for the poverty of the displaced worker or the illiteracy IMALLEATED WITH THE FARMHANDS WE INPORTED FOR DUR FACTORIES , which has been brought to us from the South and the border states.

fault, we and our prejudices and our smugness! We are at fault -- we who have

turned away from responsibility -- we who have turned away from a proud history,

lines which establish that there is not one city but forty -- that Cleveland's

we who have connived to draw pencilled lines through our common possessions --

problems are no longer ours.

Cleveland's history today is a tale of two cities. In the center city ninety-nine percent of those who income is in the lowest tenth percentile of our economy live. In the center city fifty percent of the dwellings are over forty years of age. In the center city live over ninety percent of those on relief. In the suburbs there is wealth. In the suburbs there is opportunity. In the suburbs there is abundance. In the suburbs there is a blindness, a contagious blindness to responsibility.

I have in my possession a document written forty years ago last month by the Chamber of Commerce. It is called <u>Political Consolidation</u>, <u>Cleveland's Most Pressing Need</u>. It was written on the occasion of a proposal to annex Lakewood and West Park to the city proper. I would like to read to you two of the paragraphs, of the city proper.

As the commercial development of Cleveland grows, more and more of its citizens are compelled to seek homes in its suburbs with a resulting effect on the standard of the citizenship of the city. A constantly increasing number of those whose daily work and business is in the larger city and whose welfare and prosperity is materially affected by the city conditions, find themselves denied a voice in determining its politics or selecting its government.

Everyone who lives, works, or who has his business within the metropolitan district should be concerned by its social welfare and commercial prosperity. To legally deny himself the right of a voice in the government of the larger unit is a shirking of his responsibility. The political unity of the entire metropolitan community is essential to the development of its commerce, its industry, and its social activity.

We are of the opinion that the artificial boundaries existing between Lakewood, West Park and Cleveland now serve no good purpose and that, where there were doubtless at one time many good reasons why these three communities should be separate administrative units, the rapid growth of the entire metropolitan area in the last decade has removed these reasons and now the communities should become one politically as they are now one in fact.

We, therefore, recommend to the voters of West Park, Lakewood and Cleveland that they vote "Yes" on the annexation proposals which will appear on the ballot at the next general election, November 7th.

The voters voted "No." as they have voted "No" on every annexation, every metropolitan government proposal of the Past forty years, and I ask myself Is it that we do not know the facts, the anachronism of volunteer fire departments and of one-man police forces in a metropolitan area; the anachronism of a billion dollar cultural center which must be inundated every time there is a minor flood because the outlying suburbs cannot agree on my joint sewer development; the anachronism of chaotic zoning restrictions which destroy every beautification program? Is it that we lack knowledge of the facts? Seven years ago the Metropolitan Commission spent half a million dollars developing these facts, publishing the facts, making known the obvious, and their proposals were voted down. Are we afraid that a metropolitan form of government and a new tax structure is more costly? It would be worth it even so, but the simple truth is that it costs far more to begin from scratch a recreational program, a service program, a sewage program, an educational program than it does to enlarge an already well defined system. It has cost us far more to set up local governments than it would have to extend the city government. What then is the reason? The reason touches our psychology. It lies with our fears. It is illustrated by our attempts, pathetic though they be, to immunize and isolate ourselves from the roiling tensions of the city. Our reason is cowardice, a desire to flee, to be excused from, to build walls against. Against what? Suffering humanity! Atainst Need! We have escaped. We have turned our backs, and no amount of moneys given beter to charity excuses us of this original and elemental fault in our civic character. For forty years the obvious has been known. For forty years we. Clevelanders, have refused to accept elemental right and elemental need.

Cleveland -- 1962 is a beggar city. Cleveland -- 1962 is a pauper.

Ninety-five percent of the monies spent on our highway construction have

come from Federal and State funds. Fifty-three percent of the monies spent

on welfare have perforce come from other purses than our own. Sixty percent

of the monies spent for slum clearance and housing redevelopment have come

from outside the city.

Cleveland -- 1962 is a city moving into the future with baby steps, and the future is passing us by. Only in Cleveland do we have an Innerbelt which goes halfway around the city. Only in Cleveland do we have a West Side Rapid which goes halfway to the airport. Only in Cleveland have we razed land for new low-cost housing and been unable to raise housing on even half of the available land. Only in Cleveland do we have a major downtown renewal which after five years is still on the drawing board. It is not the fault of the city. It is not the fault of a dishonest administration. It is not the Fault of they have been willing. It is the fault of a city which has fractionally divided as to its interests. It is the fault of a city where the press, where business, where the men of public life are not of one mind and of one heart. It is the Fault of a city where the press,

measures, the fundamentals of the future, while we argue where the future is to be located.

Cleveland, my friends, cannot remain a great city unless it soon takes

cannot have greatness if there are forever to be two Clevelands. Cleveland cannot have greatness if there are forever to be two Clevelands. Cleveland cannot be a great city if it is to be a split-level of the some with their heads high in the air, some with their feet deep in the gutter. Either we are one — and we admit the serious problems which must be faced and we face them — or we are nothing, because those of us who seek to escape will find that there is no escape. Delinquency cannot be kept in the central wards. Lack of economic progress will affect us in our pocketbooks. Economically, socially, morally every indicated points up one certain truth, that we must admit our common problems and solve them in common.

The tragedy of all of this is that it's very hard to set angry with our fellow Clevelanders. Cleveland is a good city of good people. The average Clevelander has involved himself deeply in voluntary welfare programs. The has worked hard. He has some accomplishment to point to. He can be proud of this great University Circle complex which spreads out about us. There is nothing like it in our country. But I ask myself is this of the suburb or of the city, and I remind myself always that less than one half of one percent of the graduates of our city schools will be enrolled next year in our cultural center universities. I remind myself that so much of what takes place here meets the cultural needs of the Heights, not of the depths. It has been designed for the "haves" rather than for the "have-nots."

Charlet of the success of the first step, the second of the success of the success of the suburb or the second of the suburb or the suburb or the second of the suburb or th

Cleveland stands at the threshhold of a new era. We have no assurance that the future is ours. Cleveland can take a toboggan slide into nothingness, or Cleveland can meve, as it has in the past, from strength to strength. Make no mistake about it, Cleveland will progress only as we recapture the vitality

of our history, a sense of moral viture, of civic passion, of human sympathy

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confident can again enliver and give promise.

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Friday \_\_\_\_\_NOV. 23,1962

Sunday NOV. 25,1962

Those who passed away this week

Harry H. KABAT SAM KYMAN

# Yahrzeits

MAURICE MASCHKE
ROLINDA HAYS JOSEPH
HELEN LEVINE
JOSEPH FRIEDMAN
SALLIE GREENFIELD
SOPHIE MITNICK MIRMAN
HARRY M. MYERS
EMIL REISZ
ANNETTE C. KOBLITZ
MARK S. BERK
JAY MILTON THURMAN
FRANCES A. HARTZ
DOROTHY GIMP JACOBSON

MORRIS ELSNER ARTHUR FELBER ROSE A. HARTZ FANNY GOLDHAMER ADELE BERGER

POLITICAL CONSOLIDATION
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NEED -

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#### Reassessment of Dogma

Obsolescence, however, can't be removed from the systems of people unless it is first removed from the minds of people. And so we must rethink our inherited beliefs, first, by charging ourselves with comprehensive knowledge of today's conditions; second, by objectively resolving that personal dogma which obstructs solutions to human suffering needs modification; and finally, by asking ourselves:

Do we really believe that government planning in the welfare field is too socialistic to be tolerated?

Do we really believe that all welfare problems are the sole responsibility of the municipality in which they occur?

Do we really believe that public services should be second-class services?

Do we really believe that local governments as presently organized are capable of handling all the problems that relate to health and welfare?

Do we believe that trained professional leaders who live in the suburbs have no responsibility for central city political, educational, health and welfare problems?

Do we believe that real estate taxes will forever be able to bear all of the costs of local government now assigned to them, and that the amount of local welfare activity should be restricted to what we can finance through property taxes?

Do we believe that individuals are completely responsible for their own welfare?

Do we believe that the unemployed are entirely to blame for their predicament?

Do we believe that the Negro is responsible for his present condition?

Do we believe that adequate educational opportunity is currently provided to qualify urban students for the responsibility the times demand of them? Do we believe that serfdom incident to race, lack of skill, family origin, ill health, physical handicap, age, illegitimacy, orphancy, or widowhood is tolerable merely because it occurs under the aura of democracy in a central metropolitan city?

Well, if we do, then Emerson was right: "The end of the human race will be that it will eventually die of civilization."

