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MEMPHIS HERITAGE

KEYSTONE

February - March 2015 | Vol. 18. Issue 1

MHI Annual Membership Meeting - Tuesday, March 31 at Howard Hall

Memphis Heritage's 40th Annual Membership Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 31st, 2015 at Howard Hall 6pm till 8pm. At our meeting, we will be saying goodbye to some of our retiring Board members and welcoming new ones (a list will be published in our next Keystone). There will be a review of our past year, refreshments and networking.

We will be making a major announcement about the future of Memphis Heritage and what it means for our entire community.

We encourage all current members to attend and all lapsed members to renew your membership and attend this exciting event. If you are not a MHI member you can join at the door. If you do not know if your MHI membership is up to date call us at 901-272-2727 or email nprice@memphisheritage.org.

Looking forward to seeing everyone as we celebrate turning 40!

WELL THE MOVIES ARE BACK.... WITH A PRESERVATION SERIES YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS

The 2015 Memphis Heritage Preservation Series will meet on all five Mondays in March. Our theme this year is: "Memphis, Movie Hub of the Mid-South". This is a follow up to Vincent Astor's sold out History of Memphis Movie Theatres (the early years) from two years ago and to honor of the Malco Theatres for their 100 years, we will spend evenings discussing things including... development of movie theaters in the burbs, what are the buildings of Theatre Row anyhow? What happened to those movie houses now that they've grown up? How do you make a movie in Memphis and why are our historic properties so important to the film industry.



PRESERVATION SERIES 2015 MEMPHIS MOVIE HUB OF THE MID-SOUTH

Our 2015's annual series will be held on March 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 at Howard Hall. from 7:00pm till 8:30pm. The series will also feature panel presentations.

Monday, March 2: Memphis at the Movies--1930-1960, "A Theatre Near You".

This is a nostalgic journey to the neighborhood theatres. Presented by Vincent Astor, author of "Memphis Movie Theatres" and charter member of Memphis Heritage.

Monday, March 9: Film Row, what the public doesn't see.

Several alumni from Film Row will discuss the history and importance of this district in the distribution, shipping and mechanics of presenting films.

Monday, March 16: From Films to Stages, Adaptive Reuse. The repurposing and maintenance of two historic movie theatre buildings--the Circuit / Memphian building and the Evergreen/Ritz building.

Playhouse on the Square Executive Producer Jackie Nichols will talk about converting these two 1920s neighborhood theatres into performing spaces.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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MHI Annual Meeting 2015 - 40th Anniversary with major update
975 Peabody Restoration Begins
Streetcars and Memphis own car czar
Read more at:
www.memphisheritage.org

Monday, March 23: Malco Theatres, Inc., A Century of Cinema. Malco Theatres, Inc., is one of the last family-operated theatre circuits in America. Their first theatre was opened in 1915 and Malco has been based in Memphis since 1929. Vincent Astor will present an overview of its history and influence in Memphis and the Mid-South.

Monday, March 30: Movies Made in Memphis, Now Showing (and Being Shown). Linn Sittler - Memphis & Shelby County Film Commissioner and Sharon Fox O'Guin - Deputy Film Commissioner will showcase Memphis' importance as a location for contemporary films. We have invited a very special surprise guest to this presentation.

We hope you will plan to join us to. The series fills up fast so be sure to register early. The registration fee is \$50 for MHI members and \$65 for non-members. Registration is for the complete series; individual class tickets are not available.

Class size is limited, so register today!

To register: mail checks to Memphis Heritage, Inc. at 2282 Madison, Memphis, TN 38104; for credit card registration call (901) 272-2727 or to register and pay on our web site, go to: www.memphisheritage.org

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Restoration to begin of historic Newton Copeland Richards home at 975 Peabody Avenue

Rising Phoenix Development Group, in partnership with Memphis Heritage, Inc., is excited to announce the start of the stabilization phase in the restoration of the Historic Newton Copeland Richards house located at 975 Peabody Avenue in Memphis, Tennessee.

This Stick/Eastlake Queen Anne Victorian, built in 1883 is on the National Registry of Historic Places and is one of the last of this kind of Architectural style in existence in Memphis, TN. The Richards house is at the center of a once vibrant Memphis neighborhood called Estival Park. The restoration of this historical icon is the first step in reclaiming this neighborhood and healing the wounds it has endured at the hands of blight and neglect. It is our hope that the Richards

house restoration will help revitalize this area and give its residents a source of renewed civic pride. The response from the local neighbors has been wonderful!

This phase of the restoration is stabilization. We will move into phase 2 (repairs) and phase 3 (renovation) once phase 1 is complete.

Help us save this beautiful historical home and begin to revitalize this community!

For more information contact:

VARANESE PRYOR - CEO RISING PHOENIX DEVELOPMENT GROUP on 901.214.4848 - or JUNE WEST - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. MEMPHIS HERITAGE, INC. 901.272.2727



MEMPHIS HERITAGE
KEYSTONE

The Keystone is a publication of Memphis Heritage, Inc. Memphis Heritage's mission is to stimulate an appreciation for our heritage and preserve historic places.

Our offices are at 2282 Madison Avenue. You can write to us or call us at 901-272-2727. Or visit our website at www.memphisheritage.org.

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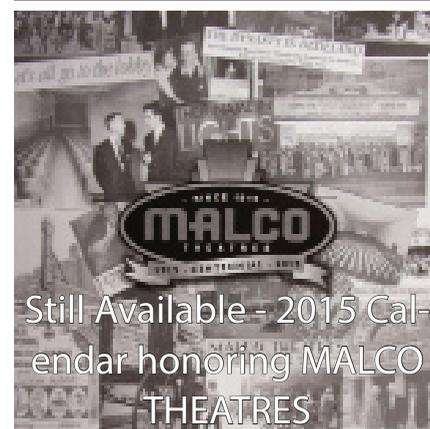
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Charlie Lambert Robert Lanier
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The Zoo We knew (II)

(PART 2) by Charlie Lambert with Donne Walden

One day a Jaguar escaped and perched itself on top of the cat house (Carnivora Building built in 2009 is today a restaurant). Its keeper considered the cat, Mary, as a pet. He climbed up and sat on the roof until Mary meekly joined him and went back to her cage. Another time a Black Panther escaped and roamed the Zoo shortly before the opening for the day. A bunch of us employees were strolling around drinking cokes before we went to work. Our stroll turned in to a dead run. The animal was trapped in a storage room and a cage brought in to re-capture it. Another time the Zoo sold one of its elephants to a Hollywood Studio to make movies. Getting the huge beast out of its pen, across a piece of wood covering a moat was no fun. Red Parkey, the guy who handled the elephants was off that day but eventually had to be called in to help after three unsuccessful attempts to lure the pachyderm out. Red simply told "Modoch" to follow him across the wooden bridge and she did so instantly. On other occasions the ponies at the pony track ran amok through the Zoo, as did the monkeys from Monkey Mound, when an attendant left a boat in the moat around it and the simians used it to float to shore. Behind the scenes at the Zoo was pretty exciting at times.

A very interesting sound system emanated from the "Concession Stand", a large building at the front gate where, in those days, there was a restaurant and souvenir shop. The manager of the building seemed always to be on the loud speaker calling someone to the office to take a phone call. The sound system went all over the Zoo and was intended to make announcements to the



public about events and about closing time, etc. There was just that one phone in the Zoo and most often it was used to summon employees to call home or come to the building to take a call. Halbert Maherry, who managed the kiddie rides, won the prize for getting more calls than anyone during his tenure.

Not one day went by when he got less than two or three requests to walk to the Concession Building to take a call. "Mr. Maherry, telephone, Mr. Maherry, telephone". Oh, for those simple days and informal manners of yesteryear.

Things were pretty idyllic at the Zoo in those times, with dozens of beautiful peacocks roaming the grounds and croaking the days away. Not everything was as wonderful as it seemed, especially if you happened to be black. One day a week, Thursday, was reserved for black patrons. The copious tables and chairs under the metal awning over the veranda at the concession stand was not open on Thursdays. The most insensitive thing of all was forcing the black restaurant employees to fold chairs and stack tables to keep the black patrons from eating at them. That was the routine on Wednesday afternoon.

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Image: 62 years later, Charlie Lambert (71) and Donne Walden (80) back at the Zoo together (taken 12-22-14)

(...continued from page 3)

Limited restrooms were clearly marked "Colored Only" that day. Many other conveniences like snack bars and popcorn and peanut stands were not open on Thursdays. As for us, we made a good income on Thursdays. We made no changers to serve our black clientele except turn up the lights to capture the darker complexions. A big sign was placed outside the front gates on Thursdays. It read "COLORED ONLY". A few years before the Civil Rights Act passed in 1964, a crowd of African-Americans approached the Zoo on a day other than Thursday. A major magazine (Life/ Look Magazine) was there to publicize the event and it was national news for a week or so. Those were not the best days of our city. As nice as things were for many of our citizens, we had a way to go to recognize everyone properly.

By the early 1960's the photo booth was closed. Donne went to work as a photographer for the Memphis Police Department. I went off to college. The Director, Raymond Gray, closed the circus and concentrated on straight Zoo features. Prices were rising for everything and the luxury of a free circus and all the time and energy that went into it was not worth the cost. Hal Lewis, the Superintendent of the Park Commission, finally succumbed to pressure and added a small gate fee to enter the Zoo. The fee was nominal. Shortly before he died a few years ago, Lewis was invited to come back to see the "new zoo". He was properly impressed but almost fell out the golf cart he was riding when he noticed the current entry fee (now \$15.00 for adults). "I'd never have initiated a fee had I known it would get this high", he said. And pictures are back at the Zoo these days. They are taken as you enter the grounds and can be purchased an hour later. The cost is about \$8.00 or more. Inflation?

This nostalgic look back is dedi-

cated to the wonderful place I worked for ten years and where I met so many memorable characters -Minnie Gibson, Mable McFarland, Charles Noe, Earl and Georgelle Campbell, Harold McCaskell, Joe Osteen, Durell Laxton, Mrs. Bartee, Mr. Shearin, Mrs. Lillie Cato, Lottie Campbell, Etta and Ollie, Bob McKnight (a blind man who sold tickets to the carousel and who could distinguish

the domination of bills by their feel), the parade of Zoo Keepers from John Tapp to the Carlisle boys, the attractive young boys and girls who worked during the summers while on school break or who came to Memphis to live and found themselves starting out at the Zoo, and those thousands of folks who came in cars, busses, or on foot to see the spectacle of a Zoo for the first

time. No guy could have had such a classic opportunity to learn about assuming responsibility at a young age and about adult interaction with all sorts of people as I did. I'll never forget the Zoo - the one I knew.

Many thanks to Donne Walden for his help writing this piece and for the accompanying pictures of the Zoo he provided.

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HEARD IN THE STREETS

We're proud to have played a small part in saving the historic **Tennessee Brewery** from the wrecking ball. Billy Orgel, the Memphis entrepreneur who purchased the building, has released plans for a \$27.5 million renovation which includes 142 residential units, 8,000 square feet of commercial space and 280 parking spaces. He is pairing the former brewery, which churned out barrels of **Goldcrest 51 Beer** in its heyday, with a new residential building next door and a public parking garage across the street. Another example of how preservation makes dollars and sense.

We're looking forward to the ground-breaking ceremony for the old Sears Crosstown build-



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ing on Feb. 21st. The Crosstown development team recently secured a loan of \$80.5 million from SunTrust Bank, bringing the total amount of investment in the project to more than \$200 million. The groundbreaking will be held 88 years to the day after the initial ceremony held at the building in 1927. The vision of the team is to transform the old brick and mortar into a “vertical urban village which will contain residential and commercial space and welcome anchor tenants the Church Health Center, St. Jude and LeBonheur Children's Hospital, Crosstown Arts and others. Projected to open in 2017, **the project will create 800 jobs** and generate more than \$37 million in wages. Kudos to these visionaries who saw the potential of a grand old building and made it happen.

We've been told that Loeb Properties has plans to renovate the western portion of the old Sears Factory Outlet warehouse at 2542 Broad Avenue into a mixed-use development. Early plans indicate the center of the

warehouse will be hollowed out for vehicles and that retail, entertainment and restaurant space will surround the parking area. The old loading dock of the warehouse is already home to the **Water Tower Pavilion**, which frequently hosts outdoor concerts and other events. With the re-striping of the easternmost part of Broad Avenue with bike lanes for the Hampline, the new Loeb development on the north side of the street will only enhance a once stagnant, but now vibrant part of midtown Memphis. Construction is set to begin in the second quarter of 2015.

We've heard at two public meetings recently that a great many area residents are voicing concerns about the proposed \$176 million TDZ that the city is proposing at the fairgrounds site in Midtown. The huge project would not only include acres of baseball and soccer fields but a multi-purpose sports arena, a retail complex, a hotel, expansion of the Children's Museum, relocation of the Fairview Junior High gymnasium and demoli-

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tion of both the historic **Mid-South Coliseum** and the Pipkin Building. The TDZ, which is short for Tourism Development Zone, would have to be approved in Nashville. If approved, it would be financed by the issuance of municipal bonds which would be paid for by using the increment above the baseline tax rate from the TDZ zone, the theory being that the project will inject new revenue into the economy. There are skeptics who say this is really only robbing Peter to pay Paul, others who argue against turning the area into an amateur youth sports park, and still others who want to rehabilitate the Coliseum instead of building a brand-new, \$30 million dollar arena. A group called the **Coliseum Coalition** is devising strategy to lobby city leaders, garner support from the community, fight the TDZ application in Nashville and **save the Coliseum from becoming a pile of rubble**. Stay tuned.

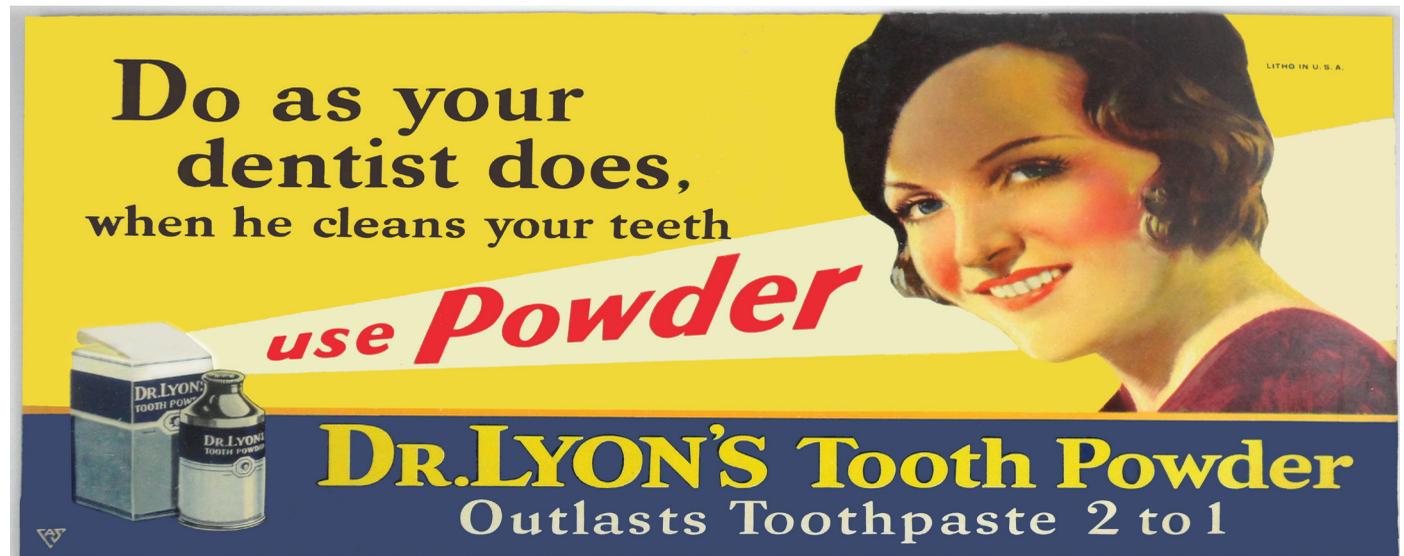
We know the great work MEMFix has done in the past, initially in the Broad St. neighborhood, then Crosstown, **South MEMFix at Mississippi and Walker**, The Edge and now they are coming to the **Pinch**. With the opening of the new **Bass Pro** May 1, there is a feeling that one of the oldest sections of the city is set for a rebirth of sorts. The staff and volunteers of MEMFix, which specializes in short-term community-driven efforts to jump-start ailing neighborhoods around the city, will host a one-day event in the Pinch district downtown on April 11. Pop-up shops, food trucks, live music, crafts booths and shops of all types will give the area a festive makeover and hopefully lure entrepreneurs into making a financial investment in the neighborhood. For information on volunteering or signing up as a vendor or shop operator, go to the MEMFix page on Facebook or contact Livable Memphis.

Streetcars and Memphis Own Car Czar

by Charlie Lambert

The topic of streetcars in the 21st century may seem irrelevant but I recently found man who in two short hours made me a fan of the history of not only streetcars, but more importantly the advertising that enhanced the upper interior walls. All this is even more impressive when you consider that the innovator of much of the streetcar advertising cards was born in relative obscurity in Memphis.

Woody Savage, the preserver of vintage streetcar advertising information, was born in Bolivar, Tennessee and has worked all over the country using his degree in Engineering Physics as a marketing communications specialist, in E-commerce, and customer service for Westinghouse and Thomas and Betts among others. He is a collector with in many things, only one of which is streetcar/elevated



train advertising cards from the period of late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. That period was the heyday of horse-drawn, motorized, cable-driven public transportation in America. Mr. Savage shared some of his cards with me and I was immediately struck by their variety, vivid colors, and the condition some of the older cards (1920's) are in. He explained that when he buys a card (usually on Ebay) he restores it back to an almost pristine newness with the help of a lady in Connecticut.

For most of us who do not know anything about streetcar advertising it is interesting to learn that during their prime cities had hundreds of streetcars covering all areas of town. Indeed, in 1905 Memphis had 150 streetcars taking people to places that would otherwise be impossible to reach without a car. Most people did not have cars in those days. Today's suburbs grew because of the availability of streetcars to transport residents to and fro,

to work or pleasure in town. Every other small or large city had streetcars as well.

Here is the most surprising element. Streetcars almost all had advertising cards in them hawking food products, medicines, automobiles, clothing, novelties, tobacco and almost anything else the public needed or desired. The clever advertising company had local, regional, national companies so ads could be as specific or as generic as the streetcar companies wished. The exception was alcohol, which was not advertised even after prohibition ended in the 1930's. Each advertising card was exactly the same size (11x21 inches). There was never an empty slot on the wall because if there was not an ad available a public service message, a public safety warning, or a thank you to the riders of the streetcars was inserted in any empty slot. They did not miss a trick and it paid off!

Uniformity of this kind does not

(Ad: early Streetcar advertising card) happen accidentally. In the case of streetcar advertising it was orchestrated from the famous Flatiron Building in lower Manhattan in New York City. The maestro of the orchestration was one Barron Collier, the Memphian, born in 1873 on Linden Street near the present FedEx Forum, who left here as a young man and forged a fortune by the time he was in his twenties out of a nationwide network of streetcar advertis-

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ing. Before leaving Memphis he worked for IC Railroad soliciting passengers to ride the trains; he also had rights to Vapor lighting Co. servicing customers with gas for lighting beyond the city's service area. By the time he was 26 he was in NYC and had made a fortune. He later came back to Memphis to marry a girl named Carnes.

Savage showed me a brochure with a map of the United States from 1905 that was annotated with all the cities that were part of Collier's network and how many streetcars each city had.

The cumulative total of cars was in the multiple thousands. Each car got a new set of cards each thirty days directly from Collier.

Each streetcar company paid him directly for the service.

If you think you've never heard of Barron Collier, think, again. He moved to the west coast of Florida in the middle of the depression at a time when streetcars were beginning to decline in favor of automobiles and busses. He used part of his fortune

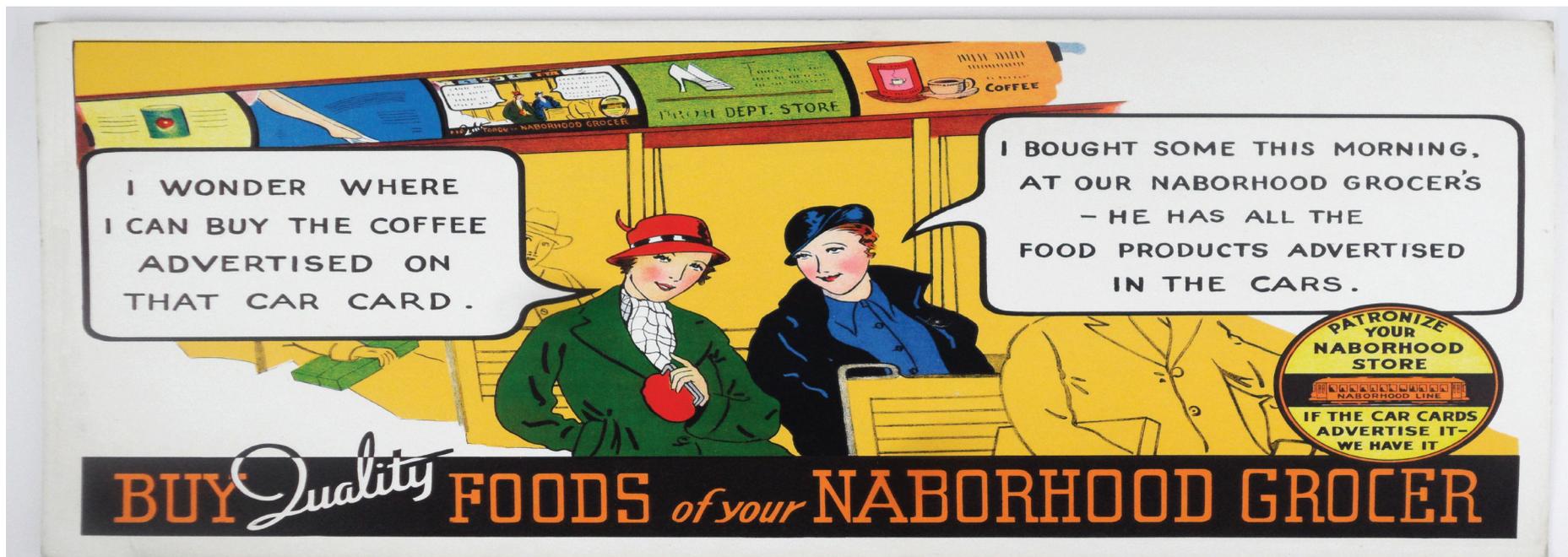


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(\$17 million) building a highway from Tampa to Miami -the 300-mile long Tamiami Trail. Collier County, Florida is named for him and there is a Collier Museum in Naples, Florida. He once owned Luna Park on Coney Island, an amusement park. He was director of the Boy Scouts and associated with the Campfire Girls. He lived next door to John D. Rockefeller

and hobnobbed with Presidents and Kings. At his height he had 70 offices and served 1,000 cities with his advertising. That huge number grew from his first venue, Memphis, where he personally put the cards into the cars at night after the cars returned to the barn. Collier died in 1939 in Florida, endowing that area of the state with many benefits.

Had he stayed in Memphis what might we be today?

Many thanks to Woody Savage for sharing his time and treasures with me. His book, Streetcar Advertising History (2014 (streetcaradvertisinghistory.com)), is on line for anyone to enjoy. It has not only history, statistics, beautiful pictures of car cards, but

(Ad: early Streetcar advertising card)

much more. He has done a great service by writing this book and sharing it with us without cost to the public...

I also want to acknowledge the use of Paul Coppock's Memphis Sketches for some of the historical data on Barron Collier.



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THE KEYSTONE TRADING BLOCK

HISTORIC PROPERTIES MARKET

Name	Address	Listing Price	Approx ft ²	Year Built	Style	Realtor Contact
Dermon Building	46 N. Third St	\$1,900,000	95,000+	1925	Renaissance Revival	Jerry Couloubaritis (901) 761-4444
Tennessee Brewery	495 Tennessee St	\$1,200,000	60,000	1890	Romanesque Revival	SOLD and being re-developed
Old Memphis Humane Shelter	463 N. Front St	\$ 950,000	6,771	1936	Art Deco	Garland Co. (901)527-7779
Ashlar Hall	1397 Central	owned by Urban Renaissance Initiative run by Kenny Medlin. Trial period currently running to determine whether this new owner will have the capacity to restore the property so that it can be repurposed				
Clayborne Temple	294 Hernando St	\$ 600,000	20,000	1891	Romanesque Revival	Sam Mitchell, KW Commercial (901)569-2307
Bradford-Maywell House	648 Poplar Ave	\$ 159,000	3,785	1859	Federal with Italianate details	James Rasberry, Rasberry CRE (901)722-8234
Elam Homestead	1428 Fox St.	\$ 31,000,	3,600	1840	Log house	(foreclosure) MOVOTO R.E. (888) 766-8686

The Memphis Heritage Advocacy Committee is looking forward to working with property owners, agents and buyers. Our goal is to act as liaison with all interested parties in order to prevent inappropriate demolitions and work toward proposals that will be favorable to historic properties. If you would like to promote your historic property for sale via The Keystone, or are interested in a property from our listings, please contact our office at 901.272.2727.