

Opposite the downtown riverfront of Memphis, Tennessee, at the confluence of the Wolf and Mississippi Rivers, exists a peninsula of land oriented approximately north and south. Fifty acres of this peninsula, locally known as Mud Island, is city-owned property lying south of the new Hernando-DeSoto Bridge which connects Tennessee and Arkansas. Mud Island is a unique land area with unparalleled views, westward across the Mississippi of the green fields and woods of Arkansas, and eastward across the 250-foot Wolf River channel of the dramatic skyline of downtown Memphis. This island has remained undeveloped since its formation early in this century because it is subject to periodic flooding.

The City of Memphis in 1974 contracted for design work leading to the creation of a public park on Mud Island to be known as Volunteer Bicentennial Park. It is felt that the development of a park on this island will afford a unique opportunity to provide broad recreational and entertainment opportunities to Memphians and visitors in the downtown area.

The park has been conceived as an essentially open space public recreational facility, dedicated to the public's enjoyment and understanding of the Mississippi River and its geology, hydrology, geography, history, folklore and music. In addition to open fields, woods and landscaped areas, which will become a living museum and exhibition of the broad range of plant life and wild life of the lower Mississippi River Valley, there will be a series of walks, paths, river overlooks, terraces and plazas which will afford the public excellent views of the river and its traffic and an opportunity to safely enjoy its shoreline at all stages and seasons. Major facilities within the park will include: a 100-boat public marina and yacht club building; a ship's chandlers and provisions store; two major restaurants and three outdoor snack bars; picnic and playground facilities; a 4,000-seat amphitheater; a

center city

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RIVER ISLAND PARK

ROY P. HARROVER

public "river walk", containing a scale model of the lower Mississippi River Valley from Paducah and Carruthersville to the Gulf of Mexico — with a shallow man-made lake at the Gulf of Mexico for small row boats and paddle boats; a 15,000 square foot rental area for specialty shops; and a 40,000 square foot public museum dedicated to dramatizing the story of the lower Mississippi River Valley.

THE TRANSIT BRIDGE

Access to the park will be by elevated bridge from the Civic Center plaza to a viewing tower which is incorporated into the museum. Since the Civic Center plaza is a portion of the new Mid-America Mall, access to the park by pedestrians from the mall and by passengers on the mini-buses traversing the mall will be simple and direct. The bridge will clear the Wolf River channel at a crossing elevation in excess of fifty feet above project flood level. This elevation is only twelve feet above the Civic Center plaza, since the city is located on a high bluff. The pedestrian level of the bridge, which is 1,700-feet in length, will be glass enclosed, heated and ventilated. Suspended beneath the bridge will be a cable-activated monorail system, consisting of two 200-passenger trains capable of carrying over 4,000 persons per hour each way and operating at two-and-a-half minute intervals. Access to the island from the bridge and transit levels will be by escalator through a glass-enclosed viewing tower incorporated into the museum building.

THE RIVER MUSEUM

The river museum will be the first facility in the world dedicated exclusively to telling the story of a major river and its impact on man. The visitor, upon entering, will experience a 10-minute multi-projector, multi-speaker, motion picture film and sound experience focusing on the magnitude and natural beauty of the lower Mississippi Valley. The central screen will project a film taken from a low-flying aircraft down a selected stretch of the river. Supplemental screens will emphasize river-level details of sandbars, banks, fields, forests and the vegetation and wild life of the nation's longest wilderness area.

Following the film presentation, exhibits will detail the Mississippian culture of Indians who inhabited the Mississippi Valley before the coming of the white man and the first explorers of the lower River Valley, Spanish, French and English, and their struggles to control the great waterway. Early settlements and early life by the River will be revealed in pictures, stories and artifacts with an emphasis on the life of the common man.

A major section of the museum will be devoted to river boats and commerce. The story will begin with full-sized dug-out canoes, continuing through log rafts, flat boats and keel boats and culminate in the experience of a full-sized, walk-through reconstruction of the front third of a Mississippi River steamboat of the mid-1800's — including passenger dining lounge, typical staterooms, passenger deck, hurricane deck, pilot house, and main deck, complete with boilers and fire boxes, cargoes and all fittings and furnishings. This experience will be accompanied by the sounds of the engines and river, and of passengers and crew appropriate to the various rooms and spaces. Although indoors, the river boat will be surrounded by water and the visitor will debark over a gangplank and through a wharf boat.

An area on life styles will follow, with several talking figures, each of which will tell of his life on the River. These may include a southern planter, a river boat captain, a Cajun fisherman, a black roustabout, an Irish flat boatman and a boat build-

er. There will follow a three-minute rear screen projection, concentrating on river-related disasters, including boiler explosions, sinkings, fires, crevasses and floods, and epidemics.

An area on bridges and levees follows, emphasizing in photographs, reconstructions and models, the efforts of man to cross the great river and to control it. From there a small section of the Natchez Trace will proceed through a narrow hall-like space, with trees and banks and a few stories of the people who used this dangerous road back up river from New Orleans prior to the coming of the steamboat.

The next experience will be a full scale reconstruction of the front half of a Union ironclad on the Mississippi River at Vicksburg during a Civil War battle. All armament, fittings and artifacts will be included. The visitor will be able to hear the sounds of the battle and the voices of the officers and crew. He will look from the gun ports and the pilot house across water to the emplacements on the bank above. He will leave the boat and climb a ramp which tells the story of the great Mississippi River naval battles of the Civil War. On leaving the ramp, he will find himself behind the gun emplacements on the bank, looking down upon the ironclad which he has just left. He will now hear the sounds of battle and the voices of the Confederate officers and men manning the fortifications.

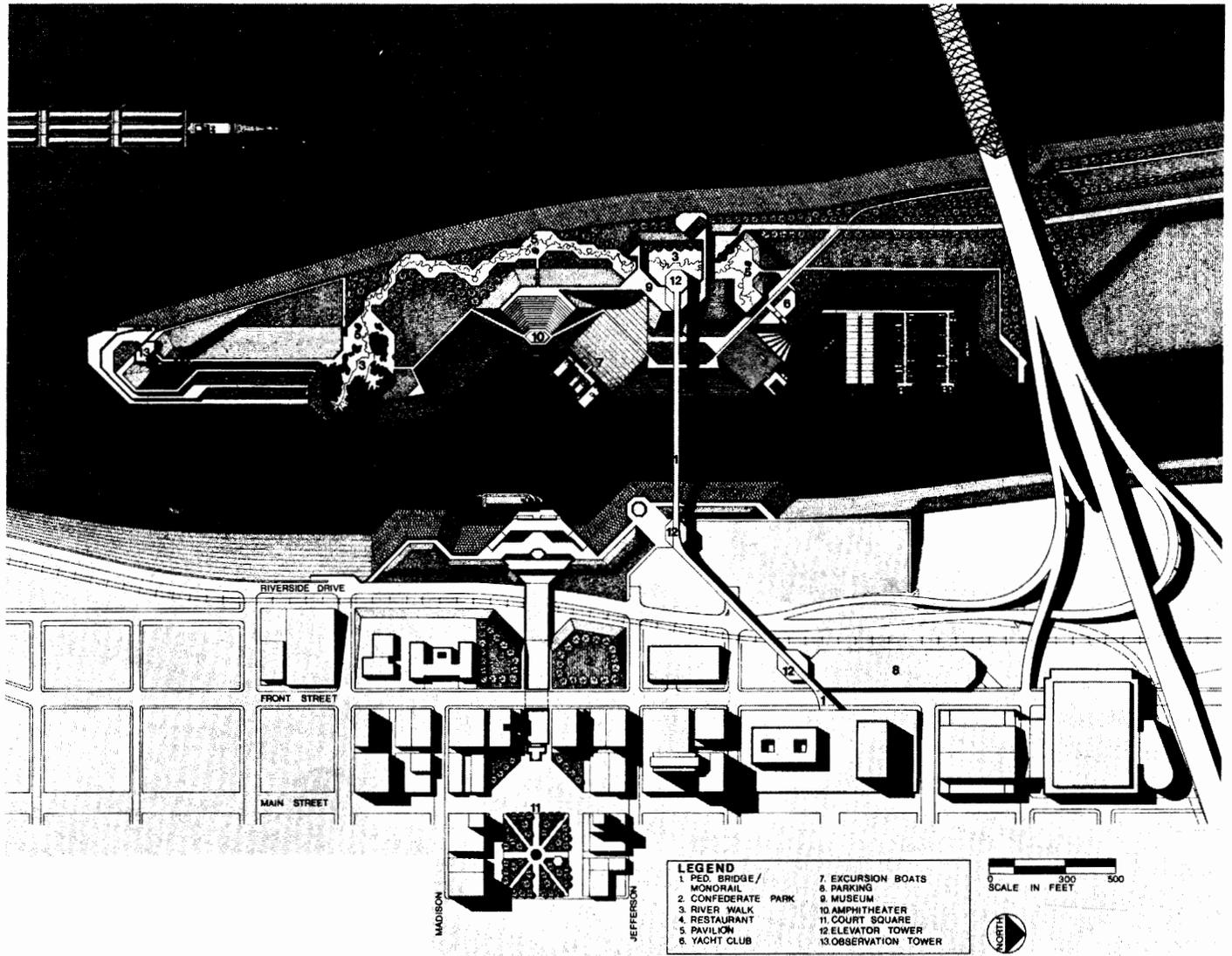
The visitor will then enter a section dedicated to telling the story of the development of blues and jazz music. The early portion of this music story will be told and heard in a space resembling a honky-tonk saloon. The later section will be seen and heard in a simulated control room of a recording studio.

The final exhibit will be the "river room" of the museum, which is dedicated to revealing the sciences of the river in a participatory fashion. In this room the visitor will be invited to compare the great rivers of the world with the Mississippi in an electronic question and answer game. He will attempt to row against the current of the river, to create whirlpools, bars and eddies in a case housing water, silt and sand, and view the "river critters" in an aquarium. Finally, he will watch a film animation of the lower Valley as it changes its snake-like course through thousands of years.

The visitor will exit from the museum to the outdoor scale model river walk at the City of Memphis, with the option of strolling down to New Orleans or up to Cairo and of seeing the River in miniature with its cities and their histories shown in a beautifully landscaped outdoor setting, which affords occasional views of the Mississippi itself, as a constant reminder of its commerce and of its power and beauty.

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VOLUNTEER BICENTENNIAL PARK

ROY P. HARROVER AND ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS ARCHITECT
 CHARLES N. SANDIFER & ASSOCIATES LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
 WINSETT - SIMMONDS - CONSTERDINE & JACOBS CONSULTING ENGINEER

SUPERMAYOR

PART TWO

DAVID BOWMAN

The advocates of city-county consolidation were not discouraged by its defeat at the polls in 1971; they simply changed their tactics. Early in 1973, a committee of county officials led by Jack Lancaster began drafting a bill for restructuring Shelby County's government, in which the County Commission would be replaced by a County Mayor and three administrative departments.

Shortly afterwards, the County Court began drafting its own version, and on April 17, 1973, Bill Bruce appeared before the Shelby County legislative delegation, which would have to get the bill passed in Nashville. The key difference between the Court's version and the Commission's version seemed to be whether the final budget-making authority should be passed from the Commission to the County Court. The delegation showed a decided preference for the Commission-prepared bill, so that was that.

Still, the bill went through many drafts. In October, 1973, the bill was 48 double-spaced pages; by January 9, 1974, when it was sent to the County Court, it had been reduced to 25. The February 7 draft added the interim-arrangement of having the three Commissioners serve as the Executive Committee from the referendum date until January 1, 1976. On March 21, 1974, the bill was signed into law by Governor Dunn, but the public didn't get its first real look at what the bill would do until it was printed in the *Commercial Appeal* on June 23.

The few people who actually took the trouble to read through the newspaper's two pages of fine print realized that here was the enabling legislation to let consolidation proceed quietly and without further difficulties at the polls!

What the bill set up, above all, was an exceedingly strong mayor, with nearly unlimited authority and immense discretionary powers, and a much-weakened County Court.

In the 1971 consolidation charter, the Mayor could "nominate for election by a majority of the County Council, and suspend, or remove, with concurrence of 7 members of the County Council,

with or without cause, any or all Commissioners of the Consolidated Government" (6.03.1). In the 1974 bill the Mayor could "appoint or suspend or remove, with or without cause, any or all subordinate officers and employees, except as otherwise set forth within" (3.06.1). The exceptions referred to were the three administrative division directors, who had to be approved by a simple majority of the Court (4.01) — not the 7 votes stipulated in 1971.

Similarly, in 1971 the Mayor's office was to prepare all budgets except that of the Board of Education, while in 1974 the Mayor would be preparing all budgets (3.06.3). Also, the Mayor was given sole power and authority to enter into contracts and purchases on behalf of Shelby County "up to \$50,000 by the County Purchasing Agent as approved by the County Mayor," beyond which sum he would need approval of the County Court (4.03.18).

The most significant of the Mayor's powers were two all-purpose clauses to allow consolidation with all deliberate speed. Here they are in their entirety:

Consolidate and reorganize the various county administrative departments and offices, including those established pursuant to this Chapter, upon concurrence by the County Court (3.06.8).

Have power to contract with the various municipalities and agencies in the County for the consolidation of duplicating and overlapping services and functions, upon concurrence by the County Court. To this end he may contract with any city, town, or agency to have such overlapping and duplicating services performed by the county or by any such city, town or agency, or by some office to be administered jointly by the contracting units.

He may also contract with one or more neighboring states or counties, or both, for jointly conducting an institution or other service which may be rendered more efficiently and economically, or both, through a centralized institution, enlarged personnel, improved facilities, etc., serving more than the one contracting unit (3.06.9).

By this last statement some say we have arrived at the age of SUPERMAYOR, able to leap traditional curbs and gutters at a single bound. These clauses must have thrilled those who read the bill carefully — especially John Ford Canale, who knew it when it came through the County Court; Roy Nixon, who watched its progress from the Sheriff's office; Jim White, who introduced the bill in the

Continued on page six.

Letter to Our Readers

For two years Center City has been distributed free of charge. We were able to do this because we had financial support from First Presbyterian Church and the Memphis Presbytery, a group made up of Presbyterian churches in West Tennessee, eastern Arkansas, and southwest Missouri.

Partial, but not total, funding will be available to the paper this year. This means we have to ask for funds from other sources to continue publishing. We hope our readers can help. If you are able to contribute, fill out the coupon below and send it, along with a \$5 subscription fee, for a year's subscription to the paper.

YOU WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE CENTER CITY WHETHER OR NOT YOU SEND \$5. But it is your financial support that will enable us to publish the paper. There is no publication in Memphis quite like Center City. A typical issue may bring you a new outlook on a contemporary topic, a glimpse into Memphis' past, a book review, a visit with a Downtowner, or numerous other features.

Help us make 1976 our best year yet. Send in your subscription fee today.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
GERALD D. MURLEY, JR.
Editor

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State Senate; and Dedrick Withers, who voted on it in the General Assembly. All four decided to run for County Mayor: the prospect of becoming the architect of the new and improved government of Shelby County couldn't be anything but pleasing.

What is curious about the restructure bill is that it refers repeatedly to "the Government of Shelby County," as if it were one and indivisible; the bill never excludes any part of Shelby County (such as Memphis or Millington). Is this wishing for Metro Government?

Or maybe the city is coming to be the county. We should remember that all of the County Court (except Charles Baker) live inside Memphis. This leads to the conclusion best expressed by Squire Joe Cooper: "In my opinion it's a waste of money to have two mayors and two legislative bodies for the same group of taxpayers; 87% of the taxpayers live within the city limits." So consolidation will be here as soon as all doubled agencies are merged. But there will be no savings of money, unless one of the halves self-destructs.

On August 1, 1974, local voters approved the restructuring bill 43,999 to 25,661. One of the ironies of this whole affair, as revealed week before last, is that the chief architect of county restructuring, Jack Lancaster, will not be included in the new mayor's staff. The same announcement stated that the new mayor will be selecting a new Purchasing Agent. Judging from the lengthy description of this job and purchasing procedures, occupying about one-fifth of the restructure bill, the job should be quite demanding.

Another ironic development is the election of Roy Nixon to be County Mayor. When telling the newspapers his views of the restructure bill on May 1, 1973, he said he strongly objected to the subservience of the Sheriff's Office there: "I don't need the mayor to tell me how to run my office, whoever he may be."

This is our last issue in 1975; we will return
the first Wednesday in 1976.

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book-ins

the Smaller the Better

DON DONATI

How often have we heard or used the expression "the bigger the better." For centuries humankind has been obsessed with growth and bigness: bigger cities, bigger weapons, bigger profits and so forth. In his book, *Small is Beautiful*, Ernest Schumacher examines the cost of our infatuation with bigness.

Societal emphasis on bigness and its resultant manifestations of overcentralization, large-scale technology and rabid consumption have created three crises, according to Schumacher: the scarcity of natural resources, the threat of environmental catastrophe and the meaninglessness of contemporary society. This critique is by no means unique, but its importance is found in its source — Ernest Schumacher and his supportive analysis.

Schumacher is no doomsday drummer. He is an economist, former economics editor of the *Times* of London, and, for twenty years, was adviser to the centralized British coal industry. He understands the dynamics of bigness and he dares to depict its consequences with clarity. Indeed, a major attribute of his book is the intentional avoidance of the use of technical jargon which so often turns off laypersons and cloaks economists in near-mystical reverence.

In the economics of bigness all human activity is measured by a simple standard: maximization of profits and increase in the gross product. If an activity doesn't make a profit and increase consumption, then it is regarded as uneconomic and useless despite its value beyond the standard of making money. Centralist economists see the sole and exclusive end of economics as material consumption. An increase in consumption is seen as

appiness. Schumacher believes that economics should be based on the way it affects people and not the G.N.P. The catchy subtitle of his book, *Economics As If People Mattered*, aptly expresses his concern for the maximization of human satisfaction rather than consumption.

According to Schumacher, bigness has brought society to the brink not only of an economic-energy-environmental breakdown, but to the point of a neurotic breakdown. He asserts that this trend in technology and centralization runs counter to human needs and human nature. Bigness imposes artificial and extreme specialization. The technology of bigness has only been able to eliminate productive, skillful manual work. It has deprived man of the kind of work he enjoys – creative work done with hands and mind in harmony – and, in return, has given him a fragmentary type of work which he does not enjoy. This fragmentation leads to individual frustration, social discontent and a sense of uselessness.

Schumacher is not pessimistic. He believes that conscious orientation can forestall the tragic end and can turn crises into a new regenerative cycle. We must give thought to reforming our society in the direction of smallness, simplicity and decentralization. Smallness means adapting societal units to human scale so that humans can deal with them; simplicity means fulfilling fundamental, simple interests of humans; and, decentralization means a kind of social organization in which authority is delegated away from concentrated power into many centers of decision-making which are close to individuals.

Centralists will probably scoff at Schumacher as a naive idealist. They will claim that the implementation of his advocated reforms would plunge the world into the parochial “dark ages” in which the all-important *standard of living* is drastically reduced.

The cry of provincialism has long been shouted whenever decentralized communities are proposed. Such a society will be post-central, but not provincial. Our world with rapid communications has become homogenized through the media. Provincialism is dead or dying and will not return with decentralization. This is illustrated by examination

of a present day example of a decentralized community, the Israeli kibbutz, which is undoubtedly cosmopolitan.

Schumacher contends that the scientific know-how presently exists which can make things small again without a loss in comfort. Scientist need to provide methods and equipment which are cheap enough so that they are accessible to virtually everyone, suitable for small-scale application and compatible with our psychic need for creativity. Such a technology of smallness would allow the creation of cheap workshops and mini-factories in neighborhoods that use local resources and easily acquired skills.

Schumacher and his colleagues of the Intermediate Technology Development Group in London have shown that such a technology is not naive nor uneconomic. In the past ten years the Development has created several hundred items of equipment which are operative and profitable and small.

The Group has built a hand-powered, multipurpose metal bending machine for \$16 – the cheapest on the commercial market costs \$1,750 and requires electric power. A 20-horsepower machine which serves as a plow, car, and backhoe has been another development.

An excellent example of how this technology can be employed is the Group’s egg tray maker. On the market the smallest machine for packing eggs costs \$400,000. The raw material for production is waste paper which is plentiful in every neighborhood. The Group created a small machine for the price of \$19,500 which can make other sorts of packages besides egg cartons. Now, every neighborhood can have such a package maker thus eliminating a large business organization and heavy energy consumption.

These examples are by no means unique. With the systematic design and development of the technology of smallness, neighborhoods and cities can use this technology to approach a degree of self-sufficiency.

Small is Beautiful is not a blueprint for survival nor a manual for saving neighborhoods. But its author speaks about our problems with a common sense that can help reverse the trend toward bigness and that can help adjust society to a human scale.

earthly delights

DOWNTOWN EXHIBITS

First National Bank Building (Lobby)

December 15-January 15—Paintings & drawings by Calvin Foster*

National Bank of Commerce Building (Lobby)

December—Photography by Jones Lamb*

FILM

Lyceum Film Theatre

December 23—"Jules and Jim"—First National Bank Auditorium—7:30 p.m.

December 30—"Top Hat"—First National Bank Auditorium—7:30 p.m.

Brooks Gallery

December 28—"World of Hans Christian Andersen"—2:30 p.m.*

Filmtrak

January 6—"Mean Streets"—Jewish Community Center Auditorium—8:00 p.m.

Center Film Society

January 9—"Three Musketeers"—UT Student Activity Center Auditorium—7:30 p.m.

MUSIC

Calvary Church Christmas Concerts

December 22—David Ramsey, organist & choirmaster of Holy Communion—12:05—12:20 p.m.*

National Bank of Commerce Building (Lobby)

December 22—24—Debra Card, organist—12:00 p.m.—1:00 p.m.*

DOWNTOWN ACTIVITIES

"World's Largest Fruitcake Giveaway"

December 20—2300 pound Dees' free-for-all & organ concert*

THEATRE

Playhouse on the Square

December 17 thru January 18—"A Shot in the Dark"—Wed., Thurs., Fri., & Sun. at 8:00 p.m. — Saturday at 6:30 p.m. & 10:00 p.m.

*FREE

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19

Seafood Pattie, Macaroni-Cheese, Turnip Greens, Corn Bread

DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 4, 1976

Closed, Happy Holidays

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