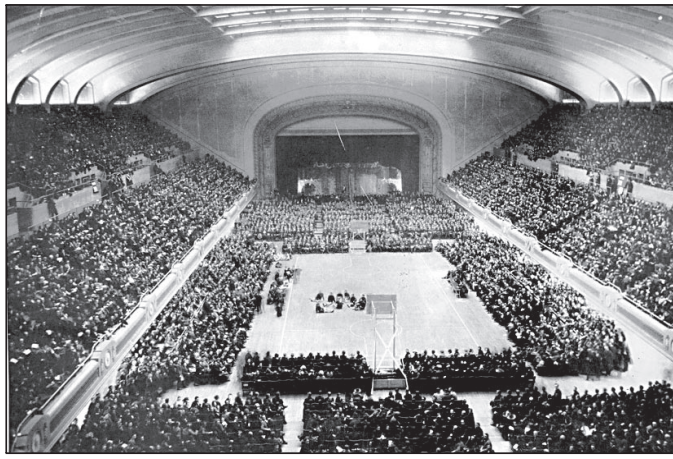


OUR CENTURY

1922

AT A GLANCE



PLAIN DEALER FILE

In the first sporting event at the new Public Hall, the local Rosenblums lost to the world champion Celtics, 28-24.

Growing, growing, gone: Cleveland annexes neighbors

The big city — No. 5 in the nation and still growing — got even bigger when the 3,650 citizens of West Park voted for annexation, bringing 12.5 square miles into Cleveland. The city limits now reached all the way to the Rocky River.

But another annexation vote went against Cleveland, though the significance would not be grasped fully for decades. Lakewood had only half as much land as West Park, but it had more than 40,000 people. Ostensibly, they voted to remain independent because of pride in their established city services. A deeper reason: The proper burghers of Lakewood were shocked by Cleveland's wide-open speakeasies.

West Park was the 45th community annexed to Cleveland in a little more than a century. Until then, it was more or less expected that growing suburbs eventually would join the mother city, but the West Park annexation — and the Lakewood rejection — virtually fixed Cleveland's boundaries for the rest of the century.

In 1930, Cleveland took another fateful step whose significance was not appreciated at the time. It agreed to sell city water to suburbs. After World War II, Columbus — which insisted on annexation in return for water — steadily grew across Franklin County and into surrounding counties. It eventually became Ohio's largest city, although its metropolitan area still remains much smaller than Cleveland's.

The new Italian Renaissance-style Public Hall across from City Hall was the largest convention center in the world. Its 330-foot-long auditorium seated more than 11,500 people in U-shaped galleries. The stage was 104 by 60 feet with a 72-foot proscenium and a 10,010-pipe organ with 150 stops, second-largest in America. Beneath the auditorium was a 28,500-square-foot exhibition hall.

The Republicans scheduled their 1924 national convention for the new hall. The Cleveland Orchestra made the hall its home, and the Metropolitan Opera made it a stop on its national tour. In the first sporting event, the local Rosenblums gave basketball's world champion Celtics a battle before falling 28-24.

In 1929, the 2,800-seat Music Hall would be added. In 1964, the entire Mall area was excavated for additional exhibition and parking space.

WHK became the first licensed radio station in Cleveland and the fourth in the nation on March 5, when it began broadcasting at 1,420 kilocycles from the rear of a Radiovox store at 5005 Euclid Ave. Previously, it had been 8ACS, an amateur station in the home of Warren Cox on Payne Ave., which was used by hobbyists belonging to the Cleveland Radio Association.

Later in the year, it was joined on the air by WJAX, which in 1924 was bought by WTAM.

The Indians team that had won it all in 1920 and finished second in 1918, 1919 and 1921 was aging, despite the addition of two of Joe Sewell's teammates from the University of Alabama — his catcher brother, Luke, and outfielder Riggs Stephenson. George Uhle continued to pitch well, winning 22 games in 1922. But the team wound up fourth, 16 games out of first.

The Ursuline Sisters had been operating an academy for girls since the 1850s and the Notre Dame Sisters since 1877. In 1922, both orders opened colleges for women. Ursuline College was on Euclid Ave., and Notre Dame on Ansel Rd. The former moved to Overlook Rd. in 1927 and to Pepper Pike in 1959, the latter to South Euclid in 1928.

Meanwhile, alumni committees of Western Reserve University and Case School of Applied Science proposed merging the side-by-side institutions at University Circle under the name University of Cleveland. But neither college wanted to give up its independence.

A new morning daily was launched in March: The Cleveland Commercial, which aimed to serve the business community in particular. In 1923, it changed its name to the Times. It slowly built up circulation to 75,000, but was forced to halt publication in 1927. It was the last daily newspaper to start in Cleveland.



PLAIN DEALER FILE

Singers at WHK radio (photo undated).

Colorful Kohler

Checkered past doesn't stop oddball from getting elected

By Fred McGunagle

Good or bad, right or wrong, I alone have been your mayor.

— FRED KOHLER

Fred Kohler was Cleveland's most colorful mayor — and the colors were orange and black. They showed up on park benches, waste baskets, city buildings, hydrants and especially on street signs posted during his term, like the one above.

But even without paint, nobody was as colorful as Kohler. In 1910, Theodore Roosevelt called him "the best police chief in the United States." He was fired in disgrace for "gross immorality" in 1913 and defeated by voters in 1913, 1914, 1915 and 1916.

Then, in 1921, he was elected mayor in what The Plain Dealer called "the most bizarre and dramatic mayoralty fight Cleveland has ever witnessed" — one in which he was opposed by Democrats, Republicans, newspapers, ministers and civic organizations. And one in which he had no organization, no campaign funds and made no speeches and no promises.

Fred Kohler dropped out of school in the sixth grade to work in his father's business. In 1889, at the age of 25, he achieved his boyhood dream of becoming a police officer. He rose quickly through the ranks and in 1903 was named chief by Democratic Mayor Tom L. Johnson, even though Kohler was a Republican.

He built a national reputation as a spit-and-polish chief who wielded an ax on vice raids while adopting a "golden rule"

policy in which first-time minor offenders were released with a warning. He put houses of prostitution out of business by stationing an officer at the door to take the names and addresses of their customers.

In 1910, Mayor Herman Baehr tried to fire Kohler on 25 charges of drunkenness, immorality and conduct unbecoming a police officer, but the Civil Service Commission exonerated him. He was not as fortunate in 1913, after a citizen returned home to find the police chief in bed with his wife. There was a messy divorce, and ministers demanded Kohler's dismissal.

This time, the Civil Service Commission fired him. "All right, boys," Kohler told reporters. "I'll be leading the Police Department down Euclid Ave. again someday."

He promptly ran for councilman in his ward. To everyone's surprise, he finished first in first-place votes but lost when second- and third-place votes were counted.

Undaunted, he ran for sheriff the next year and lost. Then he ran for clerk of Municipal Court and lost. Then he ran for county commissioner and won the Republican nomination but lost the general election. In 1918, however, he was elected county commissioner — the only Republican to win that year — and in 1920, led all vote-getters in winning a second term.

That made Kohler a contender for mayor. Still, nobody gave him a chance in the seven-candidate field, especially since he shunned all public appearances. Instead, he trod the streets for months, ringing door-



PLAIN DEALER FILE

Herman Baehr, left, tried to fire Police Chief Fred Kohler on charges of drunkenness, immorality and conduct unbecoming an officer. Baehr is shown with former Mayor Tom L. Johnson.



CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Considered at best an oddball by the city establishment, Fred Kohler still went on to become police chief, county commissioner, mayor and sheriff.

bells and telling citizens, "Hello, I'm Kohler. I'm running for mayor. If you vote for me, I'll appreciate it. If you don't, I'll never know and we can still be good friends just the same."

Kohler amazed the experts by finishing first, 2,500 votes ahead of Mayor William Fitzgerald. He amazed them again by naming a highly qualified Cabinet without even asking his appointees whether they had voted for him. His first order to them: Prepare a list of unnecessary city workers.

Before the month was out, he had fired 400 employees, cut the pay of the rest by 10 percent, forced them to punch time clocks and notified city unions that existing labor agreements would not be renewed. When the unions threatened a general strike, Kohler said the city would close down if it had to. Critics tried to recall him, but failed to collect the 15,000 signatures to put the issue on the ballot.

Anticipating Dennis Kucinich by 65 years, he called a council investigation "a bunch of pinheads seeking cheap publicity." At the dedication of Public Hall, he denounced "uplifters" (the do-gooders of that era) who got in the way of "practical rough-necks" like himself. Three of his directors resigned after run-ins.

He rejected plans to buy new guns for police, telling them instead to keep the old ones clean. He put signs in city elevators: "Please keep your hats on so that you may have better service."

But he also stepped up paving, cut streetcar fares, put up street signs, made police shine their shoes, bought an elephant for the zoo, ordered cleanups of city property and told employees they would not be forced to contribute to the Community Fund. And he kept citizens informed of his accomplishments with orange-and-black signs such as, "Tax and Rent Payers have received a dollar's worth of value for every dollar spent — FRED KOHLER, MAYOR."

At the end of his term, Kohler declared he had saved taxpayers \$1.8 million. Nobody knows whether he would have been re-elected — the city manager plan took effect at the beginning of 1924 — but he won two terms as county sheriff after leaving City Hall. The second ended in turmoil when he was reprimanded for skimping on prisoners' food and using the money thus saved for other purposes instead of returning it to the county.

Years later, he reflected on his career: "Yes, sir, I wouldn't mind going all over it again, because I know I was right. And if I did, I'd tell all the old crowd to go to hell — newspapers, council, uplifters, tipoff guys, political hangers-on, bookbugs, ingrates — the whole crowd. I'd paint everything orange again.

"I know I've been accused of being high-handed, but I was elected mayor, not anybody else. It was my picnic or my funeral."

McGunagle is a Cleveland free-lance writer.

LOOKING AT A YEAR

Feb. 5: DeWitt Wallace begins publishing a little magazine containing condensed magazine articles, calling his new venture the Reader's Digest.

March 5: Annie Oakley sets a women's trap-shooting record, shattering 98 of 100 clay targets during competition in North

Carolina.

April 12: A jury takes one minute to acquit comedian Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle of killing a starlet during a drinking party at a San Francisco hotel.

Oct. 30: In a bloodless revolution, Mussolini's Fascist Party takes control of the Italian gov-

ernment.

Nov. 26: Two British archaeologists discover King Tut's tomb in Egypt's Valley of the Kings.

Born: Yitzhak Rabin, George McGovern, Christiaan Barnard, Judy Garland, Ava Gardner, Charles Schulz, Pierre Cardin, Jason Robards, Kurt Vonnegut.

Died: Alexander Graham Bell, journalist Nellie Bly, British press baron Lord Northcliffe (Alfred Harmsworth), German Gen. Erich von Falkenhayn, French author Marcel Proust, actress and singer Lillian Russell, American merchandiser John Wanamaker.



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