

OUR CENTURY

1930

AT A GLANCE

Hopes for 1 million population fall short

Cleveland's population fell short of the million that civic boosters were hoping for, but it did reach 900,000 — barely. The Census Bureau put the 1930 population at 900,449. That was up 114,000 from 1920, about the same 16 percent growth rate as the nation. But no longer could Cleveland call itself the "Fifth City." Los Angeles had spurred ahead, dropping Cleveland to sixth.

The city was still No. 1 in Ohio though, doubling Cincinnati's population of 449,152. The Cuyahoga County total was 1,201,455. Lakewood had 70,509, Cleveland Heights 50,945, East Cleveland 39,667, Shaker Heights 17,783 and Garfield Heights 15,589.

Actually, Cleveland's population was undoubtedly higher than the official figure. Demographers believe that the undercount earlier in the century was much greater than in recent decades. But since federal dollars were not at stake then, only civic pride, there were no calls for recounts.

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Sixteen-year-old Janet Blood left her home on W. 108th St. the cold night of Jan. 3 to visit a friend. At W. 106th St. and Clifton Blvd., a man grabbed her from behind. "Give me your money," he demanded, and as he saw her face, "Gee, you're a pretty little kid, aren't you?" She had no money, so he pulled her coat off. Seeing her looking at him, he said, "That's right, take a good look at me. Then you'll know me again." With that, he pulled a gun and shot her under the heart.

While Janet Blood battled for her life in the hospital, women around the city reported attacks apparently by the same man. Newspapers dubbed him "The Fiend." The Police Department canceled all days off and put its men on 12-hour shifts.

Janet Blood slipped in and out of delirium, sometimes calling for her dead mother: "Mother, Mother, I can't come to you. I can't leave Daddy." On Jan. 19, she called to her father the last time: "Kiss me, Daddy, I'm going to heaven. I'm going to Mother." She died two days later without regaining consciousness.

"The Fiend" was never caught.

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The year 1930 would go down in baseball history as the year of the lively ball. Hack Wilson of the Chicago Cubs hit 56 home runs and batted in 190 runs, the latter a record that still stands. The Indians joined the bashing with a team batting average of .304 and a team record 72 home runs.

Second baseman Johnny Hodapp hit .354, Twithey Dick Porter .350 and Earl Averill .339. First baseman Ed Morgan hit an Indians record 26 homers. But other than Wes Ferrell, who won 25 games, Indian pitchers couldn't stop the other teams' hitters. After a fast start, the team finished fourth, 21 games behind the Philadelphia Athletics.

Clevelanders could now see a stadium rising on the lakefront. Bulldozers pushed land 200 feet further into Lake Erie, and more than 2,500 piles were sunk as deep as 65 feet to provide a solid foundation. By year's end, the stands were taking shape, just as new stands would be taking shape on the same site 68 years later.

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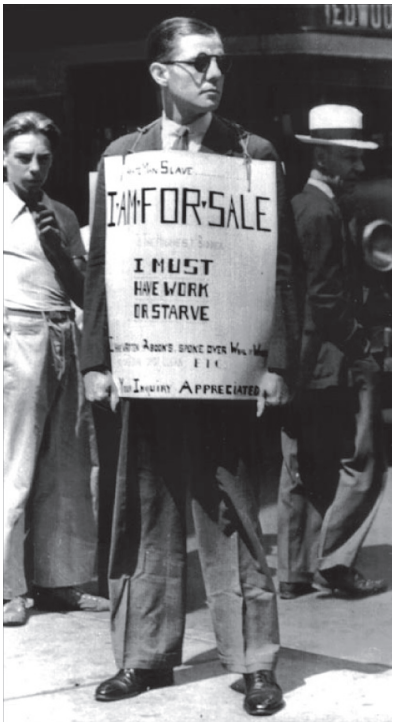
A crowd estimated at 200,000 watched from Cleveland Municipal Airport and surrounding areas as six giant balloons rose and slowly drifted northeastward over the lake. French, Germans and Belgians were among the entries in the 19th annual Gordon Bennett International Balloon Race, but the local favorites were the city of Cleveland, piloted by R.J. Blair and F.J. Trotter, and the Goodyear VIII, piloted by Ward Van Orman.

The winner was the Akron balloon. Van Orman brought it down the following night in Canton, Mass., 570 miles from Cleveland.

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WGAR, "Cleveland's Friendly Station," went on the air with 500 watts on Dec. 15 from a penthouse studio in the Hotel Statler. Its first show, after an address by owner George A. Richards, was "Amos and Andy" from the NBC Blue Network.

Boom and bust in Cleveland



PLAIN DEALER FILE

At left, an entrance to the new Union Station from Prospect Ave. in 1930. At right, an Associated Press photo of Robley D. Stevens, a victim of the Depression, wearing a sign while standing on a Baltimore sidewalk in late 1930.

Great American city gets glorious train station; thousands lose jobs

By Fred McGunagle

Never had Cleveland known such magnificence. Never had Cleveland known such misery.

The grand opening of the Van Sweringens' Union Terminal on June 28, 1930, had been planned the year before as a celebration not only of the greatest urban construction program to date, but of Cleveland's arrival as a great American city.

The terminal lived up to its billing, winning the admiration of the nation. But even as they celebrated, Clevelanders had a sickening feeling. Barely six months into the Great Depression, layoffs, wage cuts and bankruptcies were growing steadily worse. The city sensed that something far deeper than the depression of 1920-21 was happening.

For the moment, though, Clevelanders could glory in the grandeur of the largest railroad station in the world. Fittingly, its developers, brothers O.P. and M.J. Van Sweringen, were now the biggest railroad operators in the country.

They were also the biggest urban redevelopers in the country. Yet the 52-story Terminal Tower and six other major structures occupying 35 acres above the terminal were just the \$31 million icing on the \$148 million cake beneath.

The terminal's main entrance from Public Square had five 36-foot-high arches leading into a monumental 152-by-34-foot portico with a Tennessee marble floor, seven murals above the Botticino marble lower walls and a 47-foot-high vaulted ornamental ceiling decorated in rose, gold and blue over an ivory base.

Visitors continued down ramps into a 154-by-76 foot "vestibule" and a 138-by-92-foot ticket lobby. Flanking long rows of ticket windows were restaurants, banks and the world largest

drugstore. There were stores selling books, toys, candy, men's and women's apparel, food and baked goods, plus a gigantic barber shop and four news and cigar stands. It was a "city within a city," where almost 1,000 people worked night and day.

The main concourse, with Botticino marble walls and fluted marble columns, was 238 by 120 feet with a skylight in the ornamental ceiling 42 feet above. Next to the concourse was a 162-by-156-foot waiting room with, naturally, marble walls and columns.

Also adjoining was the inadequately named "lunch room," which had patterned Belgian and Tokeen marble floors and walls of oak, ebony and holly inlay and could serve 7,000 people for lunch. It was among 175,000 square feet of shops operated by Fred Harvey Inc., as were the Tea Room and the elegant 4,200-square-foot English Oak Room.

The public address announcer called out track numbers and cities throughout the country as 150 trains a day arrived and departed. There were 24 tracks and 12 platforms up to 1,630 feet long, capable of serving up to 20-car trains, along with another 11 platforms and 10 tracks for the Rapid Transit lines to the Vans' Shaker Heights development.

Passengers saw only half the site's 35 acres. Under the new buildings on Prospect Ave. and Huron Rd., and stretching toward Canal Rd. were offices, railroad yards and repair shops and sleeping quarters for railroad crews. The 22 electric locomotives, each 80 feet long and 204 tons, picked up trains at Collinwood and Linndale and carried them over electrified track and a high-level railroad bridge into and out of the station.

More than 40,000 people came to the grand opening, even though the terminal had been in use since the previous December while stores were being finished. Patrick Crowley,



PLAIN DEALER FILE

A corner of the interior of the steam concourse of the new Union Station in December 1929. Botticino marble stairways lead to the tracks below.

president of the New York Central Lines, said the terminal was a symbol of America's economic strength.

"I believe, and the belief is shared by my fellow railroad executives, that we have turned the corner," he said.

Outside the glitzy terminal, the corner was not in sight. Falling sales forced layoffs that further cut sales and forced further layoffs. The worst drought in 50 years was costing Ohio farmers millions of dollars. The stock market, which had rallied early in the year, fell through its 1929 low.

Two days after the terminal opening, Congress passed the Smoot-Hawley Act, raising tariffs to protect workers from foreign competition. The result was to spread the Depression worldwide as foreign governments retaliated and international trade shriveled.

In September, U.S. Steel Corp. announced a 10 percent pay cut; other big companies quickly followed, as did state and local governments. Nobody cut the installment payments workers owed for new cars and other purchases made in the boom years. But with millions out of work and with no unemployment compensation, those still working were in no position to put up a fight.

In September, the International

Apple Shippers Association offered to sell crates of apples on credit to the unemployed, who could make \$1.85 profit if they sold them at 5 cents each. Thousands jumped at the chance until they discovered that apple sellers outnumbered customers.

In November, 256 banks failed, wiping out depositors' savings. The United States Bank in New York City stranded 4 million depositors, most of them immigrants.

By December, unemployment had reached 4 million. It would reach 8 million in 1921 and 12 million in 1932. Unemployed men hopped freight trains and camped in hobo jungles such as in Cleveland's weedy Kingsbury Run.

The Vans themselves faced ruin. Their empire had been propped up by the prices of the stock they issued. Now the stock was worth little and their creditors called in hundreds of millions in loans.

Still, out-of-town passengers gawked at the magnificence of the new terminal. Then they walked out on the sidewalks where the unemployed waited for them, hoping they could spare a dime.

McGunagle is a Cleveland freelance writer.

LOOKING AT A YEAR

Feb. 5: Norwegian Sonja Henie wins her fourth straight world ice-skating championship.

March 12: Mahatma Gandhi begins his march to the sea in protest of British rule in India.

Aug. 14: The film "Moby Dick," starring John Barrymore, opens in New York.

Aug. 14: Babe Ruth signs a two-year, \$160,000 contract, marking the first time a baseball player will make more than the president.

Sept. 14: The Nazi Party wins 107 seats in the Reichstag, making it Germany's second most popular political party.

Oct. 23: With unemployment skyrocketing and the Depression deepening, President Herbert Hoover names a committee to devise a plan to revive the economy.

Nov. 17: Bobby Jones retires after winning the grand slam of golf.

Dec. 12: Sinclair Lewis wins the Nobel Prize for literature.

Born: James Baker, Helmut Kohl, Neil Armstrong, Clint Eastwood, Sean Connery, Andy Warhol, Sandra Day O'Connor.

Died: Former President William Howard Taft, Sherlock Holmes creator Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, British novelist D.H. Lawrence.



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