

IN THE SPOTLIGHT OF OUR NATION



1864

THE national spotlight which focused on Nashville during this crucial period of the War Between the States revealed poorly organized chaos.

People of 1864 and historians since have viewed events surrounding the Battle of Nashville as a pivotal point of great interest.

Against the backdrop of chaotic conditions, local government did, in fact, exist. Mayor John Hugh Smith and a working city council worried through complex problems of government only to formulate laws and regulations and—as often as not—find them countermanded by the military commander.

Problems of the day were similar to those existing today: On August 12, 1864, minutes of a council meeting at which 13 members were present resolved that the city's streets were in "terrible condition".

Councilman Dix allowed as how "the Federal Government should bear the cost of repair since they were the ones wearing them out."

The era is memorable from any standpoint. A proud city stood bowed by the temper of the times completely incapable of coping with the great struggle which engulfed and subdued any attempt at progress.



Political, social, and economic progress were being trampled under the boots of men far removed from negotiation, planning, political compromise, social improvement, or economic growth.

Men of vision were lost in the maelstrom of emotion. The voices of men of reason had long since been lost in the din of cannon, musket, and the clash of bayonets.

Right or wrong the decision reached was to remain throughout history a trumpeting testimony to the futility of the bayonet as a bargaining agent.

When the final shot was fired and there was time for reconstruction and reflection, our community and our nation emerged as one nation—a nation which had grown wiser in its ordeal.



1964

THE echoes of the Battle of Nashville—distilled through a century of reinstated national brotherhood—remain only as an audible monument to cataclysmic behavior.

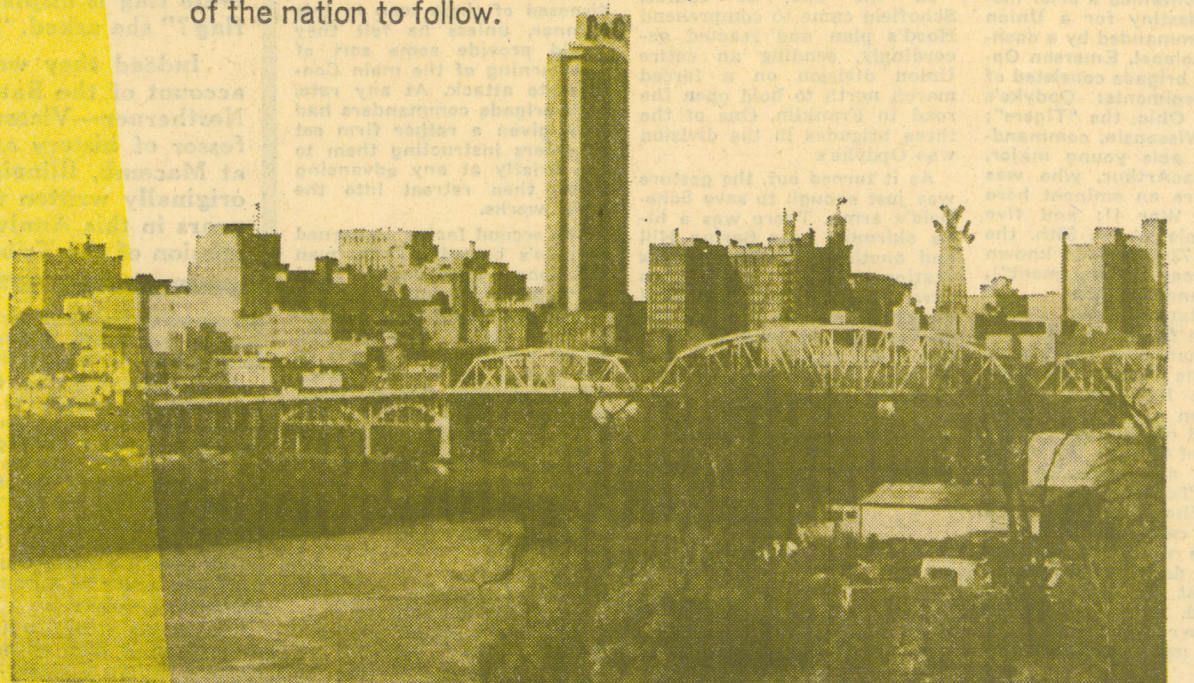
The spotlight of the nation plays over our community once again. The scene revealed today is as commendable as its antecedent of a century ago was abhorrent.

Metropolitan areas of this nation are faced with problems of importance fully equal to the problems which precipitated events of 100 years ago.

Municipal leaders of the nation are watching us closely, not because of an impending military battle, but because of a battle which is already 20 months old.

In this bloodless revolt against stifling tradition in local government, the people served by the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County had the courage to study and plan, negotiate and compromise.

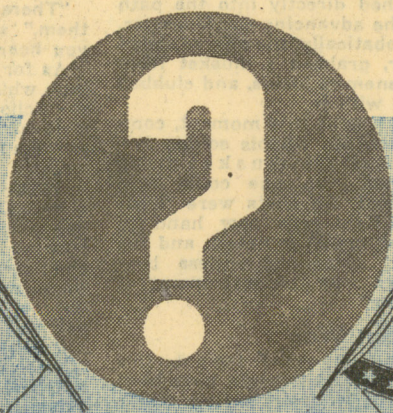
On April 1, 1963, this community launched a pioneer effort in local government which is showing the way for countless other communities of the nation to follow.



The magnificent contrast between the present and the Nashville of 1864 is seen in the approach to the problem. We have no leaders blind to reason. We are not hurtling pell-mell toward some uncertain victory.

Solutions to the problems of 1964 are resulting from an approach that is sound, feasible, and beneficial to the people who are to be served.

The maps for this battle are our planning charts; our armaments are our great energy and resolve to find a way; our armor is our absolute assurance of the course we have chosen; and our victory will be a better life for the people of this community . . . and a pattern for others to follow.



Leadership (1864)

Who held the answers for the Nashville of 1864?
Who was concerned with the solution to his civic problems?

- Mayor John Hugh Smith?
- Brig. Gen. John F. Miller?
- City Council?
- What forum for grievances?
- Who served people's need?



Leadership (1964)

The Metropolitan Charter, adopted April 1, 1963, vested executive and administrative power in the Mayor, charging him with responsibility for the conduct of executive and administrative work of all departments, boards, commissions, offices and agencies of government.

Backed by a community which now finds itself in the limelight of national attention, Metropolitan Mayor Beverly Briley is the guiding hand directing the efforts of eight major departments and 17 major boards, commissions and other agencies of local government.

His goal is at once a model for other communities with similar problems and a working government structure responsive to the true needs of the people who gave it birth.