REFORM GOVERNMENT IN DALLAS
1927-1940

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In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Progressive reformers attacked the problem of corruption and lack of efficiency in city government. Reform groups in individual cities banded together in the National Municipal League, and, because they believed that partisan politics were the root of the problem, attempted to devise a system which would remove politics from municipal government. Their work culminated in the introduction of the city manager, or as it is often called council-manager, form of city government. Under this plan, which closely resembles the organization of a business corporation, the elected council would serve as a board of directors and the city manager as the operating head of city government. Reformers hoped that by taking the day-to-day decisions out of the hands of elected officials and placing them in the hands of a professionally trained manager they might remove the stigma of corruption and partisanship from city government and promote efficiency.

Whether this plan as it was originally conceived was or was not successful in Dallas is the subject of this thesis.
Dallas businessmen reformers won their battle for the establishment of city manager government in 1930. Its first ten years in operation form the basis for this study.

A number of books and journal articles are available concerning the theory of city manager government, and they are useful in obtaining a basic knowledge of the subject. However, newspaper stories from the Dallas Times Herald and Dallas Morning News and personal interviews with people involved in Dallas city government during the era were more valuable. Most of the interviewees offered frank evaluations and detailed statements.

The thesis is divided in four chapters in chronological order. The first chapter deals with the problems reformers encountered in establishing city manager government and their eventual success. The second concerns the reformers failure to retain control. The third discusses the activities of the council elected on the anti-reform ticket. The final chapter narrates the reformers reorganization and re-establishment in power.

The first two councils working under the council-manager system performed as the reformers envisioned they would, letting the city manager run the government. Various factors, including the severe depression of the 1930's,
caused voters to choose anti-reform candidates in 1935 and 1936. These councilmen drew more of the operation of city government into their own hands. A scandal helped the reformers to re-establish themselves at city hall in 1939. But by this time, more council involvement in municipal affairs was an established procedure which the new council did not attempt to change.

In the long term, a completely nonpartisan and non-political government was an impossibility in Dallas. Traditionally Dallas municipal government had done favors for certain interest groups. In municipal elections slates of candidates, supported by various groups, continued to contest for offices after the establishment of the council-manager plan. Once in office the candidates had to redeem their pledges or face defeat in the next election. Therefore, politics in the sense of doing favors for powerful groups was a continuing necessity.
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1927-1940

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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Denton, Texas
August, 1971
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By 1927 Dallas' restless, enterprising citizens were fast transforming the city into the banking, insurance and commercial center of the southwest. The city's population, numbering 158,976 in 1920, had been increasing 14,000 to 20,000 a year since the end of World War I, and its boundaries were rapidly pushing outward into the surrounding cotton fields.¹ To businessmen captivated by the expanding economy of the 1920's there was virtually nothing but growth ahead. However, businessmen were becoming aware of one bothersome imperfection, and the idea that this shortcoming might damage Dallas' future turned many civic leaders into civic reformers.

Dallas' twenty-year-old commission form of government was creaking along with unbecoming and increasing inefficiency. The galloping expansion of the city meant new streets, lengthened water and sewer lines, added police and fire

protection and more municipal expense. Reformers viewed the outmoded machinery at city hall with mistrust. They believed city officials were often guilty of favoritism in awarding the increasing number of city contracts, were allowing some property owners to escape their full share of city taxes, and were permitting the city's financial condition to become precarious. Reform-minded businessmen, therefore, entertained a lively skepticism about political pressures at city hall.²

Under the city charter of 1907, Dallas was governed by a mayor and four commissioners, each an elected, full-time, salaried official. The mayor served as chief executive officer and had veto power over the actions of the commissioners, each of whom headed a separate municipal department—fire and police, waterworks, streets, and finance. This situation resulted in a fragmentation of responsibility and a desire on the part of each commissioner to obtain as large a slice of city funds for his department as he could. A commissioner believed his reelection depended on his satisfying voters with his own performance. Thus the individual commissioner's restricted vision toward the city's

²Ibid., 11-14.
overall needs, reformers thought, was a major cause of the
city's unfortunate financial predicament. Haphazard
spending, as evidenced by the almost undecipherable budgets
of the early 1920's, sent the city further into debt, with
officials having virtually no plan for its retirement.

In January, 1927, a small group of civic leaders met
in a downtown hotel to discuss the problem and to find a
remedy. Attending this meeting were the publishers of the
leading newspapers, bankers, and the presidents of major
commercial and insurance companies. After considerable
study they agreed that the council-manager form of government
was the one which would serve the city in the most efficient
and businesslike manner. Two-term mayor Louis Blaylock
helped solidify this opinion in a newspaper interview on
January 22. Announcing that he did not intend to run for
reelection, the mayor added that in his opinion the city
needed a new form of government and endorsed the council-
manager concept.

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3 Harold A. Stone, Don K. Price, and Kathryn H. Stone,
City Manager Government in Nine Cities (Chicago: Public
Administration Service, 1940), pp. 277-278.

4 Jones, "Dallas Wins," p. 11.

5 Daily Times Herald (Dallas), January 22, 1927, sec. 2,
p. 1.
George B. Dealey, the publisher of the Dallas Morning News, who had been a member of the committee since its first meeting, demonstrated his support of the plan by sending one of his reporters, Louis P. Head, to several cities which had adopted the council-manager system. Head wrote a series of articles about the plan's usefulness in other cities which appeared in the News in late January and early February, 1927. Dealey's action was quite successful in establishing a favorable climate of opinion in the city toward the committee's proposals.  

In advocating a change in Dallas governmental structure, the businessmen were following the lead of a group of national and urban Progressive leaders who had formed the National Municipal League in the late nineteenth century. The League enjoyed phenomenal growth during the first decades of the twentieth century, and its membership included the civic reform associations of a number of cities. Local reform movements in this era were usually begun by upper-class

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8 Ibid., 48-51.
businessmen who believed that the failure of city officials to perform their duties efficiently was stifling the growth of their cities. The remedy, civic leaders believed, was to make city government nonpartisan and nonpolitical. To accomplish these ends, city elections should be held in years when there were no national or state elections, elected officials could serve as a civic duty, and these officials should receive only token renumeration for their services. These conditions would impose a severe limitation on the type of person who could run for elected office. He would have to be financially able to regard election as a civic duty and not as a livelihood; but he would, as a result, be aloof from political pressure. However, businessmen could see no conflict between their civic duty and their business interests. If most Progressive reforms were the work of special interest groups whose motives were altruistic, or whose advocates had persuaded themselves that they were more interested in the welfare of society than in their own interests, then the movement toward council-manager government

9 Ibid., 60.
10 Ibid., 54.
was a prime example of a special interest group leading a reform.\textsuperscript{11}

In 1916, the League published its first model city charter, which was a blueprint for council-manager government; this charter was revised in 1927.\textsuperscript{12} The council-manager plan appealed to businessmen because of its resemblance to the corporate form of business organization. Conversely, middle- and lower-class groups frequently opposed the changes because they had been accustomed to dominating the politically controlled pre-reform governments.\textsuperscript{13}

The League's model city charter included in its provisions (1) home rule for cities; (2) a ballot with no party designations; (3) proportional representation, initiative, referendum and recall; (4) a council elected at large which would elect a mayor from among its members; (5) a city manager selected by the council with the council serving as a legislative body and the city manager serving

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11}Arthur S. Link, "What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920's," \textit{American Historical Review}, LXIV (April, 1959) 833-851.
\item \textsuperscript{12}Stewart, \textit{Municipal Reform}, pp. 52-66.
\end{itemize}
as administrator; (6) department heads selected by the city manager and responsible to him; (7) a civil service merit system for city employees; and (8) control by the council of finances, taxes and the granting and supervision of public utilities franchises. This model very clearly shows that those who advocated the adoption of its provisions viewed the city government as a business corporation with the elected council as the board of directors and the city manager as the chief administrator. In this respect, Dallas' committee of reform-minded businessmen was no different from hundreds of others in cities all over the nation.

During the 1927 city election campaign, members of the committee asked each of the five candidates for mayor whether he would appoint a committee to draft changes in the city charter which would establish 'city manager government, and all agreed. After the election, the new mayor, R.E. Burt, did appoint a citizens' council to determine whether Dallas should accept the council-manager plan. He later appointed a charter commission chaired by Head, the Dallas Morning News reporter who had written the series on council-manager

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14 Stewart, Municipal Reform, pp. 53-66.
government, to write a new charter. Another member was Hugh Grady, a young lawyer who had graduated from law school only two years before, and who had written a master's thesis on city manager government. Other members of the charter commission were representatives from the other newspapers, many of the men who had put forth the original proposals, and two prominent clubwomen. The group, using the National Municipal League's model city charter as its blueprint, submitted a new charter in October, 1929. This charter would have given Dallas council-manager government if it had been accepted by the voters.

The newly written Dallas charter did deviate from the model in one important aspect. The Park Department was put under the control of the Council instead of the city manager, and Park Department employees were exempted from civil service. Edwin J. Keist, publisher of the Daily Times Herald, had insisted on this modification in return.

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16 Hugh Grady, private interview held in his office, Dallas, Texas, October, 1970. Grady was active in the charter commission which wrote the first city manager charter and subsequent amendments. He was the first president of the Citizens' Charter Association.
for his newspaper's support for the charter. A prominent businessman, Keist had been the long-term chairman of the Park Board, a citizens' advisory group to the Park Department, and in this position had actually controlled the Department's activities. He believed that any new council supported by his fellow civic leaders would be sure to reappoint him, and he was loath to relinquish his position to the city manager. Charter commission members made the mistake of not considering this small change a violation of the spirit of their work, and they needed the support of his newspaper.17

During the interval between Burt's appointment of the charter commission and their submission of the new charter, Dallas had had a city election. A new mayor and city commissioners had been sworn into office in May, 1929. Charter commission members had canvassed all the candidates concerning their willingness to call a charter election, and all had agreed. After the election, however, the new mayor, J. Waddy Tate, refused to do so.18

17 Albert Jackson, private interview held in his office, Dallas, Texas, September, 1969. Jackson was the city hall reporter of the Daily Times Herald in the late 1920's and early 1930's and was a vice-president of the newspaper.

Tate, a former vice-president of Moss-Tate Investments, a real estate firm, had run for mayor in the 1927 election but had received little support and few votes. After this initial defeat he began laying the foundation of a precinct-by-precinct political organization. He saw little chance of successfully invading the wealthier areas where support for the charter commission was strong, so he concentrated his efforts in the blue collar areas where lower-class voters opposed a change in the form of municipal government. Tate emphasized his relationship with the working classes by wearing a blue work shirt. Even after his election, he wore a blue shirt when he was forced to wear morning or evening dress at formal city functions, and he changed the color of the walls of the mayor's office to that same shade of blue. Tate enticed lower- and middle-class voters to his rallies by serving hot dogs and further pleased them by promising to remove the spikes from the ornate metal fence surrounding city hall so that citizens could rest there. Demonstrating his interest in children, Tate attracted family votes by promising free donkey rides in the parks. He declared that, if elected, he would be a blue collar
mayor. His opponents, in contrast, later called him the "hot dog mayor."¹⁹

Charter commission members and civic leaders refused to recognize Tate as a serious candidate and made the mistake of dividing their support between several other candidates. Tate's colorful campaign style and folksy speeches brought blue collar voters to the polls in large numbers in 1929, and after the votes were counted, it was evident that a runoff would be necessary between Tate and lawyer Temple Morrow, the candidate most charter commission members had supported. Since there had been rumors of irregularities, such as stuffing ballot boxes after the polls had closed and electioneering too near polling places by Tate's supporters during the first election, police guarded the ballot boxes after the runoff. Nevertheless, Tate won the runoff by over 3,000 votes, much to the surprise of reform leaders. ²⁰

Although Tate had promised charter commission members during the election campaign to submit the new charter to

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¹⁹ Elgin Crull, private interview held in his office, Dallas, Texas, October, 1969. Crull was a reporter for the Dallas Journal in the late 1920's and early 1930's. He served later as Dallas city manager.

²⁰ Dallas Times Herald, March 10-April 24, 1929.
the voters, he had carefully neglected to specify when he would do so. His first refusal to call a charter election in December, 1929, was based on the firm legal ground that the charter had been amended in 1928 to raise the debt ceiling, and it was, therefore, illegal by state law to amend it again until two years had passed. Tate's subsequent actions seemed to support the idea that he intended to build a political machine to keep himself in power.

Shortly after the new mayor took office, the city attorney, who served at the pleasure of the mayor and city commissioners, ruled that the charter commission had been appointed illegally and did not have the authority to draft a complete new charter. He suggested that, working in an advisory capacity, the charter commission might submit charter amendments to the mayor and city commissioners to act on as they saw fit. This ruling weakened the position of the charter commission and raised the ire of its lawyer members. The group could see support for the council-manager plan disappearing under political pressure. However, they decided that they could do nothing but agree to the conditions at that time and immediately began drafting charter amendments.

21 Head, "Dallas Joins," 807.
which, if adopted, would give Dallas city manager government. When the amendments, thirty-nine in all, were completed, charter commission members sought city commissioners' support for an election to be held April 1, 1930. These efforts seemed successful, and the election ordinance was introduced and passed without the mayor's support. Tate then promptly vetoed it. City commissioners overrode the veto, but before final action could be taken, one commissioner changed his vote and sided with the mayor.\textsuperscript{22} Probably the mayor's political popularity plus his ability to veto measures important to an individual commissioner's reelection efforts contributed to the man's change of heart.

After this unexpected defeat, charter commission members visited the mayor to determine when he might be persuaded to call the election. He greeted them cordially, but instead of giving them his full attention, showed his boredom with their proposals by pulling a yoyo out of his desk drawer and bobbing it up and down. After some conversation, Tate finally suggested that the charter amendments could most properly be voted on at the next city election in April, 1931. This idea was an anathema to the reformers, dedicated as they were to a nonpolitical and nonpartisan

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid.
view of city government; for it would have meant involving the amendments in a political campaign, thereby tarnishing their sacrosanct character. And it probably would have delayed the institution of the new government until 1933, if the amendments passed.\textsuperscript{23}

Discouraged both by their reception and the answer to their question, the charter commission and their civic leader allies decided that they would have to force the issue with an initiative petition. They would have to go to the community and seek wider support. It was at this point that they organized the Citizens' Charter Association to conduct their campaign. They chose Grady as their first president, and lawyer John Erhard as campaign manager. Under their leadership, the Charter Association quickly won support not only from the newspapers but also from the Bar Association and leading women's and church groups.\textsuperscript{24}

The petitions which were in circulation by mid-March 1930 needed only 5,000 names to force the city commissioners to call an election, but by mid-July Charter workers had collected 9,000 signatures. On July 23, leaders filed the

\textsuperscript{23} Crull interview.

\textsuperscript{24} Grady interview.
petitions, and the election was called for October 10. Erhard immediately began to organize the campaign to get the charter amendments adopted. He felt that large rallies would not be as effective in reaching voters as small meetings where Charter Association members could speak and answer questions in a more personal way. He organized a speakers' bureau composed of both men and women who spoke before small groups in homes, to church groups, to men's and women's clubs and to employees in offices, retail stores and manufacturing plants. The day before the election, women supporters telephoned voters to remind them to vote "yes" on the thirty-nine amendments, and newspapers published articles urging citizens to vote in favor of the proposals. The amendments won easily after a campaign which cost only a little more than $10,000. The free newspaper publicity and support probably won the election, for the group could never have raised the money to pay for as many advertisements as they needed.

25Daily Times Herald, March 6-July 25, 1929.

26Constance Stathacos Condos, private interview held in her home, Dallas, Texas, June, 1969. Mrs. Condos has been an active member of the Charter Association for a number of years and knew many of the women who participated in the first campaign.

27Grady interview.
Contemplating their initial victory, Citizens' Charter Association leaders declared that only half the battle had been won. If the new city government to be elected in April, 1931, was to be a success, council members must be men free from political influence, a phrase which meant business-oriented. The executive committee of 100 civic leaders, therefore, agreed to maintain the organization at least until after the first election of a new city council. Grady was selected as chairman, and the campaign was organized and run just as the previous one had been. The nominating committee was determined to find truly outstanding citizens to serve on the first council. Because the committee was composed of men and women of considerable stature in the community, they were able to exert significant pressure on leading citizens to run for office. The slate of candidates the Citizens' Charter Association presented to Dallas voters in the April, 1931, election was truly a blue ribbon group. They included the chairman of the board of the city's largest insurance company, the president of an oil company, owners of large retail stores and top executives of well established commercial, real estate and securities firms.  

28 Grady interview, and Crull interview.
Tate chose not to run against this formidable opposition; four Charter candidates had no opposition; the other five drew adversaries who garnered only, on an average, one vote to the Charter's nine; and all Charter candidates won easily. It is notable that very few voters in middle- and lower-income residential areas bothered to cast ballots.  

The new Council's first task was to elect a mayor from among its members. They chose Thomas L. Bradford, chairman of the board of Southwestern Life Insurance Company and a philanthropist who had donated a pediatric hospital to the city. His work in civic affairs had made him one of the most widely loved and respected men in the community. Next, councilmen needed to find a city manager. Many citizens expected the Council to choose a Dallas man to fill the job, but after a nation-wide search members decided on John N. Edy to be Dallas' first city manager. Edy, who had been city manager of Berkley, California, and Flint, Michigan, was a civil engineer and was one of the ablest professional city administrators. Nevertheless, there was a considerable amount of disappointment and resentment toward his appointment

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29 Stone, Price and Stone, City Manager Government, p. 330, and Crull interview.

30 Grady interview.
because he was an outsider. A man who possessed a great amount of tact and personal warmth could have, perhaps, overcome these feelings, but Edy was a coldly efficient engineer. One newspaper columnist wrote:

Citizens and taxpayers who called on the city manager even with the most innocent intentions and good will were uniformly rebuffed. Edy tended to suspect sinister purposes behind the open smile or warm handclasp of a visitor.

Citizens on all levels who had been accustomed to talking to commissioners who depended on their votes to remain in office resented his inaccessibility and invulnerability, and over a period of time a "menacing reservoir of dislike and disdain" grew toward him.

One example of his behavior concerned a visit paid to his office by the publisher of the Dallas Morning News. Dealey had expected the new city manager to call on him, but when this visit did not materialize, Dealey decided to visit Edy. When he was ushered into the city manager's office, Edy's greeting was, "Oh yes, I know who you are, Mr. Dealey, but if you think that your work in the campaign will get you

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32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
any favors, you are sadly mistaken." Dealey left the office never to return while Edy was city manager. 34

The city manager also annoyed the City Plan Commission, a group of businessmen who advised the City Planning Department. He proposed to make the planning office a part of the Public Works Department instead of a separate entity. When Plan Commission members asked Edy to come to one of their meetings to explain his reasons for this change, he was conveniently busy. 35

Even when staff members had succeeded in persuading Edy that he must display a bit more cordiality toward civic leaders there were problems. During one such incident, the city manager walked to a rail separating the council table from the audience section of the council chamber to greet a leading banker very cordially. In doing so Edy made a serious error. He called the banker by the name of his most prominent rival in the banking community. 36

Edy's problems upon assuming office were complicated by a deficit inherited from previous administrations and by the severe national depression. One of his first acts

34 Crull interview.
35 Crull interview.
36 Crull interview.
was the institution of drastic fiscal reforms which "quickly worked a near miracle in balancing the city budget and righting the wobbly long-term finances of the city." During the course of his budget-balancing, Edy cut his own salary. He fired some city employees, and reduced the pay of those who remained. A long-time city employee who was a cashier in the water department when Edy became city manager remembered that his salary was cut from $150 a month to $118.80, but he declared, "I was the happiest $118.80 a month man you ever saw, because jobs were tough." There seems to be no evidence that Edy selected those employees who were to be dismissed, for he left this unpleasant task to department heads, some of whom were his choices while others had worked under the commissioners. Edy's policy of efficiency probably led department heads to fire the least able. Nevertheless, many employees did blame Edy. There was also resentment over the fact that Edy had filled some job vacancies at city hall with men from other parts of the country.

39 Ruth Corning, private interview held in her office, Dallas, Texas, November, 1969. Miss Corning was a secretary at city hall from 1929 until her retirement in 1970. She served mayors Tate, Sergeant and Sprague and was later secretary of the city plan commission.
Edy was faced with other depression-related problems during his first years in office. City relief recipients, displeased with the administration of relief funds, gathered in the council chamber and refused to leave until their grievances were given consideration. The city manager, loath to use force to evict them, stationed police officers at the doors to the chamber and directed them to allow participants to leave but not to re-enter. Because there were no restroom facilities or water fountains in the room it was cleared in a few hours, but this action left Edy open to charges of lack of sympathy for the unfortunate.\(^40\)

An additional point of contention related to the expulsion of the relief beneficiaries concerned Edy's establishment of a relief commissary—the decision being whether to issue purchase orders to those on relief to be cashed at local grocery stores or to distribute the supplies at a city-run commissary. The city manager decided on the commissary, thereby arousing the indignation of grocers who complained that other supplies such as drugs were being given out by purchase orders at the drug stores. P.M. Brinker, president of the State Retail Grocers Association, was probably aware

\(^{40}\) Jackson interview.
that there were two drug store owners on the council when he went to Edy to discuss the situation and to try to get the purchase orders restored. Edy dismissed him as a "politician." 41

Lower-income housewives were resentful over the council's imposition of a sewer tax. This tax, which had been voted on in a 1928 bond election for the construction of sewers, was added to the householder's water bill. The timing of the tax's addition, during the first year of the depression, was probably the thing that was so annoying. 42

Edy's economy measures created other problems for the new city government. The owners of property in the levee district along the Trinity River, among whom was publisher Dealey, had for several years been trying to persuade the city to lay a sewer line into their land so that they could develop it into commercial property. The city sewer at the edge of the district dumped raw sewage onto their land, making development impossible. The council, acting under Edy's advice refused, and cited as their reason the fact that they had cut a number of other items such as street

41 Stone, Price, and Stone, City Manager Government, pp. 315-316.

42 Crull statement.
paving and repair from the city budget to save the city from financial ruin. Edy's budget cutting in the area of street paving and repairing served the dual purpose of saving money for the city and for property owners who would have had to pay an assessment for a portion of the paving; in depression days few people could afford this additional expenditure. Paving contractors, however, were as angry over these cuts as levee owners were. 43

Despite these difficulties the members of the Citizens' Charter Association approached the 1933 election well pleased with the operation of their new city government. Their city manager's budget had brought Dallas national recognition, and they believed that the city government was being run efficiently at last. Council members attended their weekly meetings, decided on the policy matters which concerned them, and left the administration of city affairs to Edy. The city manager, who was conducting city business from the suite of rooms which had once been the mayor's office, was handling municipal affairs proficiently.

Indications that all Dallas citizens were not as pleased with the new city government as were Charter leaders, 43

were apparent in the 1933 election. Very few middle- and lower-income voters had bothered to vote in 1931; in 1933 their percentage was larger, and many of them cast their ballots against Charter candidates. Unlike the 1931 race when only five Charter nominees drew opponents, the 1933 campaign attracted thirty-seven aspirants. Each Charter candidate had at least two adversaries.

The principal competition came from the Home Government League, a faction headed by Jim Dan Sullivan, a former member of the City Plan Commission. His group campaigned on a platform of returning the control of city government to Dallas citizens, that is, against the imported city manager. They won almost half as many votes as Charter candidates.

Nevertheless, the Charter nominees won easily, and reform leaders were satisfied that their efforts had again met with indisputable success. They refused to recognize that there was a growing dissatisfaction in the electorate. 44

CHAPTER II

THE 1935 CAMPAIGN

Business leaders faced a worse threat than an inefficient city government in 1934. The depression was deepening in Dallas. While citizens had experienced considerable economic distress before, the discovery of oil in East Texas in 1930 had stimulated the city's economy and kept Dallas from feeling the worst consequences until later than most of the rest of the country. Now the effects of the oil boom were wearing off, and increasing problems prompted businessmen to actively seek a remedy for the city's deteriorating economic condition.¹

Civic-minded businessmen were aware that state leaders were planning an exposition to celebrate Texas' one-hundredth anniversary of independence from Mexico in 1936. If Dallas could become the host city for the exposition, its economic difficulties would be eased. The centennial exhibition would bring outside money and numerous job opportunities to the chosen city. In Dallas the same men who had successfully worked for municipal reform under the banner of the

¹Jackson interview.
Citizens' Charter Association formed another group to secure the prize. In their arguments before the site selection committee, the businessmen stressed the fact that Dallas had long been the home of the Texas State Fair and owned a suitable acreage; that the city government was in a stable financial condition and would be able to help fund the exhibition; and that Dallas was the state's major railroad center. Again Dallas businessmen were successful; the committee chose Dallas even though there were other cities in Texas which claimed more historical significance.\(^2\)

This triumph made control of the city government particularly attractive in 1935, and was one factor which led to the Citizens' Charter Association's downfall. The city government would have the predominant role in preparing for the Centennial Exposition. Raising money to pay for such an exposition was a major task in itself, and the responsibility for paving roads to the fair grounds and constructing permanent buildings also fell to municipal officials. The Public Works Department was in charge of street paving, and, through contracts approved by the City Council, would have considerable funds to dispense. Winners

\(^{2}\)Ibid.
in a city election thought they would have an even better opportunity to reward loyal followers and campaign workers through the Park Board. Councilmen appointed the head and members of the Park Department. He held his job at their pleasure, and his employees worked without the protection of civil service. Because it was the Park Department's task to supervise the construction of permanent buildings at the Centennial, the director and his superiors on the Park Board would have singular authority.\(^3\)

By the first of January, 1935, it was evident that the attraction of holding office and conducting city government during the Centennial was causing important opposition to develop against the re-election of the Charter Council. Much of this disaprobation was publicly directed toward the person of the city manager, Edy, but there were other factors which led opponents to decide that voters might be disillusioned with the actions of the incumbents. When Edy and the Council balanced the budget by cutting the city payroll and refusing to allocate money for street paving and for building the levee sewer, they generated much antagonism. There was also the relief commissary question, and the imposition of the sewer tax. These questions

\(^3\)Ibid.
concerned voters on all income levels from the wealthy levee property owners to the relief recipients, and adversaries were eager to exploit them. 4

It was against this background that the Citizens' Charter Association held its organizational meeting during the first week in January. Participants selected officers and an executive committee of 150 to plan for the coming election. 5 Mayor Charles P. Turner announced a few days later that he would not be a candidate for re-election because he had been appointed financial director of the Centennial and could not legally hold both jobs. This announcement emphasized a particular problem victorious Council candidates would have during the exposition years. 6 Charter leaders foresaw that the mayor who served during the Centennial would have to spend more time attending to his job than had previous mayors under the council-manager system. Ceremonial duties accompanying the exposition would be costly in time and money, and as one Dallas newspaper commented:

Finding council candidates who have the time and money to serve as mayor during the Texas Centennial Exposition is a problem to both the Charter and its

4 Crull interview.
6 Ibid., January 9, 1935.
opponents. Although the council selects the mayor, the drafters of slates always try to pick one or two men who have the necessary qualifications. The twenty dollars a week paid councilmen will hardly buy the clothes needed by the mayor and his wife for official formal functions the Centennial will create.

This was a very real problem to men and women whose stated belief in city government service as a civic duty would not allow them to suggest that the mayor might be given an extra entertainment allowance.

Early in February, Erhard was again named manager for the Charter campaign. In his first statement, he announced that the group's candidates would run on the Charter record, and, if elected, would retain Edy as city manager. Erhard referred to the opposition as the "same old political gang," those who had run city government before the institution of the council-manager system. He implied that they wanted to return to the methods of slip-shod financial management and favoritism which had so disturbed reformers only a few years before.8

Meanwhile, a segment of the opposition was holding meetings of a different type. From its policy of secrecy, the group received the name Catfish Club, a derisive reference

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8 Ibid., February 5, 1935.
to the fact that members tried to keep its existence hidden "like catfish in the mud." Their meetings were not open to the public nor the press; only those who were known to be aligned with the group were permitted to attend, gathering places were kept secret, and reporters were definitely not welcome. Reporters, nevertheless, discovered that the group was planning to electioneer using such slogans as: "The people are masters, public officials are the servants," and "In unity and numbers there is strength." While these were strange slogans for a faction meeting so privately, they emphasized both the leaders' dislike for Edy's style of government and their determination to create their own vote getting organization. The Clubs' original membership list has never been unearthed, if indeed one ever existed. Because the members frequently used the meeting rooms of a downtown Elks' Club, the leaders were probably members of that organization. Catfish Club strategists built up support for their group by working among the members of lodges, fraternal and ritualistic orders, and emphasizing members'

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9Stone, Price and Stone, City Manager Government, p. 327.
11Jackson interview.
dislike of "Edyism" and the sewer tax. A further charge leveled against the Catfish Club was that many of its members had been active in the Ku Klux Klan in the mid-twenties. The Klan had won control of the city government in 1923, and had been the cause of much embarrassment to many civic leaders with its downtown parades and raucous meetings.

Needing a base from which to launch their election campaign, Club leaders set up the Citizens' Civic Association. They planned that this organization would operate publicly and draw its membership from the wide spectrum of voters who were dissatisfied with Charter government. Catfish Club leaders would merely see to it that enough of their members were chosen to the executive and nominating committees to insure the selection of council candidates who would appoint members to city hall positions.

Under this arrangement, most citizens participating in the Civic Association would not be aware of the sponsors,

12 Stone, Price and Stone, City Manager Government, p. 327.
13 Grady interview.
15 Crull interview.
and many candidates would think they had been selected by people who were principally interested in making the city government more responsive to citizens' needs. This situation would give the Catfish leaders a wider choice of people from which to select their would-be councilmen, and would allow them to manipulate the city government in secret.16

The Citizens' Civic Association held its first open meeting late in January. Speakers promised that if their candidates were elected Dallas would have a "Dallas manager who will put Dallas men back on the payroll" and "send John N. Edy back to the Pacific coast." The 300 people who attended this meeting were described as "former city employees and contractors whose contracts had been cancelled." Other speakers complained that federal relief money had not been administered properly, and that the city manager had an unlisted telephone number.17 This last objection was a sign of some voters' frustration over the inaccessibility of the city manager.

A few days later the Civic Association selected Hal Moseley, who had been city engineer and a city commissioner

16Stone, Price and Stone, City Manager Government, p. 328.

in pre-reform days, to act as its campaign manager. Moseley, who was not a Catfish, had joined the International City Managers' Association in September, 1930. It would appear that Moseley did not apply for the Dallas city manager's position at that time, for there are no records showing his application. He did subscribe to all the Managers' Association's periodicals and had taken a correspondence course in municipal finance from Syracuse University. Charter leaders, therefore, had reason to suspect that Moseley hoped to become city manager if the slate he supported won.

Rumors suggested that Sullivan, the former leader of the Home Government League and member of the City Plan Commission, was the "power behind the throne" of the opposition. He denied this but did grant that he "might make a few speeches for the Civic Association." Sullivan's principal interest in city politics stemmed from his desire to become an important and well-known man. He was a Catfish, but unlike many of his cohorts was not searching for financial

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18 Crull interview.
19 Stone, Price and Stone, City Manager Government, p. 333.
20 Crull interview.
21 Stone, Price and Stone, City Manager Government, p. 333.
rewards for himself. He has been described as a genial, red-haired Irishman whom it was almost impossible to dislike. His father had been a friend of Dealey's, and had worked with the publisher toward the promotion of several of their mutual plans for the city. The younger Sullivan was also the publisher's friend.

In choosing its candidates, the Civic Association's nominating committee, controlled by Catfish Club members, carefully selected men who represented a variety of local factions. Several had been leaders in religious organizations, one was a former American Legion commander, one was a former state judge, and another was a representative of small business interests. All of them could be classified as substantial if not wealthy citizens who "by no stretch of the imagination could be called 'political' or proletarian."

Because of their policy of secrecy, Club members did not reveal their identity or intentions to the majority of the candidates who were in some cases unaware of the Club's

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23 Allen Merriam, private interview held in his office, Dallas, Texas, July, 1969. Merriam was the managing editor of the Daily Times Herald in the 1920's and early 1930's and is now editor emeritus of the newspaper.

24 Jackson interview.

25 Stone, Price and Stone, City Manager Government, p. 328.
existence. This precluded any understanding between them concerning the distribution of patronage and city contracts should they win the election.  

On presenting his slate to the City Secretary, grocer Earl Collum, chairman of the executive committee of the Civic Association, said, "We didn't seek out the wealthiest people in Dallas, but tried to get men who would stand up and fight for the right thing." This remark was an obvious slap at the prominence and affluence of past Charter candidates.

The Charter Association nominated five incumbents and four new candidates, all of them prominent businessmen. The nominating committee following past practices made no effort to find men who would represent anyone other than the business community.

After all the candidates' names had been presented to the City Secretary, the campaign managers drew for positions on the ballot. The Civic Association drew five first places and the Charter Association four. The position on the ballot is of particular importance in a nonpartisan

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26 Ibid., p. 328.
27 Dallas Morning News, March 1, 1935.
28 Daily Times Herald, March 12, 1935.
election in which affiliations are not listed. Subsequent surveys by political scientists have shown that in this type of election the uncertain voter will usually vote for the candidate whose name appears first. Therefore the Civic candidates began the campaign with a slight advantage.

Meanwhile, the Council's actions between the middle of January and the election in April gave the opposition an excellent opportunity to exploit discontent. It became quite clear that the incumbents were not men who thought in a political manner, for Councilmen succeeded in alienating a number of influential business executives whose support had been a factor in past Charter victories. "When the business leaders of the city began to quarrel over specific issues, the cause of the Charter Association was no longer so attractive to the organizations that had been against politics and sin and in favor of good government." Disagreement between the three privately owned but Council franchised utilities--gas, electric and telephone--and the Council and city manager had developed. The necessity for raising money to pay for the Centennial led Councilmen

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30 Stone, Price and Stone, *City Manager Government*, p. 326.
to support a move to place a four per cent gross receipts tax on the companies' incomes, an action which utilities representatives vigorously opposed.\textsuperscript{31} During a Council discussion concerning other possible sources of income, one Councilman suggested that a tax might be levied on the Chamber of Commerce, a proposal which drew heated comment from the manager of the Chamber.\textsuperscript{32} Late in February, the owners of the levee district property, who had failed to persuade the Council that it should authorize the construction of the sewer they wanted, filed suit against the city for $400,000.\textsuperscript{33} While these disgruntled businessmen did not actively campaign against Charter candidates, they did not support them as they had in the past. Included in this group was the publisher of the \textit{Dallas Morning News}. His friendship with Sullivan and his ownership of levee property led him to withhold active editorial support from the Charter, and this assistance had been extremely important to their past victories.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Daily Times Herald}, February 10, 1935.
\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Ibid.}, February 4, 1935.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}, February 20, 1935.
\textsuperscript{34} Grady interview.
The actions of the police department in response to labor union organizing efforts probably had an effect on the campaign. The International Ladies Garment Workers Union had begun a drive to establish itself as the bargaining agent for workers in Dallas clothing manufacturing firms. Employers fired two workers who had joined the union. Strikes resulted. Manufacturers called the police to protect non-strikers; several women were injured by police clubs, and others were jailed. While there is no absolute proof that this police action had an effect on the campaign, it seems reasonable to assume that lower-income voters might believe that the Council's approval of police behavior was further proof of the city government's lack of interest in their welfare. The Council could have asked the city manager to restrain the police.

The Charter Association began its formal campaign with a radio broadcast by its president, W.D. Jones. He declared that his organization would stand on its record at city hall and attempted to discredit the opposition by stating:

Our opponents do not openly advocate monopolies in the awarding of city contracts, nor a return to the good old days of what a former city official charged was the "paving ring." They probably will

not admit that any of their group is or will be interested in any municipal contract. Yet they offer no sound reason for desiring to oust a capable efficient city government.

The group's candidates in their speeches concentrated their attention on the past two graft free administrations and told their audiences that "opposition candidates, whether they know it or not, are supported by folks who don't want honest law enforcement, by discharged city employees, and by contractors who want fat contracts." Speaking before the Charter women's group, lawyer Albert Sidney Johnson warned workers to beware of overconfidence. This was a prophetic warning for leaders did not properly assess the strength of the opposition. That they could lose the election did not seem possible.

For their part, the Civic Association began its campaign with a radio address by attorney Harold Young who told listeners:

Your own experience, the condition of our streets, the sewer tax, your pocketbook, the treatment you get when you go to city hall, the salaries paid to

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37 Daily Times Herald, March 31, 1935.
38 Ibid., March 22, 1935.
39 Grady interview.
out-of-town experts, the fact that you cannot assess your property now because they do not want you to know before the election the tremendous increase you will be confronted with next year—all these things answer the administration claims more convincingly than words.

Pocketbook issues and citizen resentment over their treatment at city hall were the major issues in the Civic Association campaign. Speakers emphasized voter fears that taxes might be raised to pay for the Centennial, although they also voiced their support for the exposition.\textsuperscript{41} The tax question had a measure of validity, for assessments on homes were in the process of being re-evaluated. The new assessments would not be published until after the election, and there were some which would go up as well as those which would go down.\textsuperscript{42}

During the campaign, rumors began circulating that men who were suspected to be members of the Catfish Club were meeting with gamblers and bootleggers who were in the city with hopes of "opening" Dallas during the Centennial. Texas had state-wide prohibition in 1935, but there were a number of drug stores in the Oak Cliff area which were known to

\textsuperscript{40} Dallas Morning News, March 10, 1935.

\textsuperscript{41} Grady interview.

\textsuperscript{42} Daily Times Herald, March 12, 1935.
sell liquor. Before the election the police raided several of these stores and closed them. This action evidently provoked threats against the life of the city manager, and a police guard was stationed at his home. Whether out-of-town "hoodlums" were responsible for the threats has never been conclusively proved, but some Charter Association members believed that they were. 43

Two letters also played a prominent part in the campaign. The first one attacked the Charter Association and city officials and was sent to all registered voters. Although it was anonymous, being merely signed "A Voter," it is probable that the Catfish Club was responsible. 44 The second letter made its appearance the day before the election and purported to be a copy of one sent to Civic Association precinct leaders calling a meeting for the day after the election to select a new city manager, and Park Board chairman and to fill other offices. Moseley declared that his group knew nothing about the letter and accused Erhard of writing it. 45

43 Crull interview.
44 Crull interview.
45 Daily Times Herald, April 1, 1935.
The women of both groups assisted in the campaign by having coffees and teas in their homes and conducting telephone interviews. Personal contact between their candidates and the voters at small home meetings was the basis of the Charter campaign as it had been in the past, but the Charter also used the radio more extensively than did its opponents. Civic candidates depended on street rallies to reach voters, a tactic which the Charter never used and did not use in 1935. Perhaps Civic Association leaders believed that they could reach more voters in large meetings, and it is possible that they hoped to emphasize the exclusiveness of the other group.

Both organizations made their final appeals the night before the election, the Charter Association in the city hall auditorium, and the Civic Association at a street rally. The final speeches were predictable with the group in power stating that its record was good and that those who would oppose it must have some ulterior motive; the opposition pointing out the defects in the present government.

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46 Grady interview.

47 Daily Times Herald, April 1, 1935.
Early election returns indicated that Dallas would have a split Council. North and East Dallas votes favored the Charter while South Dallas and Oak Cliff preferred Civic candidates. Higher income areas of the city were in the North and East Dallas precincts. When the final returns had been counted the Civic Association had won all nine places. The Charter defeat was caused by a loss of strength in the areas where it depended on a heavy, favorable voter turnout, the city's wealthier areas. If these areas had voted for the Charter Association in the same numbers as they had in 1931 and 1933, the incumbents would have won despite the votes against them in the lower income areas. "The classes of people who were dominant in establishing city manager government turned against their own candidates four years later." 

The election of 1935 was a repudiation of the values of the reformers who had established council-manager government. Why this happened and why the voters of Dallas turned against the Charter Association have a number of explanations. One was the Charter leaders simply did not believe that they

48 Ibid., April 2, 1935.
49 Ibid., April 3, 1935.
50 Stone, Price and Stone, City Manager Government, p. 331.
could lose and, therefore, did not work as diligently as they should have. These men and women were mostly well-to-do citizens, who did not understand the effects of the depression on the average voter. Charter leaders used the same appeals they had used in 1931 and 1933 against "patronage-hungry politicians" and failed to recognize that many upper-strata businessmen had been alienated by Council policy.

Those who had only five years earlier fought for reform found themselves allied with those who had traditionally fought against reform. The very businessmen who wanted a businesslike government had found their city government all too efficient. The newspaper publisher had no more entree into the city manager's office than did the modest homeowner; everyone found himself as lacking in influence at city hall as a dismissed municipal employee. The complaints against the reform city government encompassed every socio-economic strata of the population. Perhaps the grievances would not have seemed so important if they had not been emphasized by the specter of the depression; however, the fact remains that Dallas' nonpartisan and nonpolitical government fell

51 Crull interview.
prey to an unlikely set of opponents--those who for years were suspicious of and opposed to reform and those who vigorously advocated reform until they got it.
CHAPTER III

THE "CATFISH COUNCIL"

The planning and construction of the Texas Centennial Exhibition created unique problems for the City Council elected in 1935. Circumstances which had made the control of the city government unusually attractive produced situations which no other Dallas municipal government had faced. Councilmen and the mayor they selected would be compelled to spend more time conducting city business than past Councils under the city manager system. Their actions and the appointments they made would in a large measure determine the exhibition's success or failure, and their responsibility was heightened by the fact that Dallas citizens were depending on the fair's success to reverse the downward trend in the city's economy.¹

The competence of the men holding the positions of city manager and Park Board chairman was of particular importance at this juncture because, under the Council's direction, they would have primary responsibility for the

¹Jackson interview.
Centennial. Both would exercise considerable control over city spending which would increase rapidly as construction began. Furthermore, the distribution of the greatest number of appointed city jobs lay within their authority.²

When the newly elected Council held its first unofficial meeting on the day after the election, its first order of business was the selection of a city manager and Park Board chairman. As the campaign letter had predicted, Councilmen appointed Moseley city manager replacing Edy. They appointed Sullivan to replace Keist as Park Board chairman. The Council-elect discussed who might be chosen to fill other city department heads' jobs, but, mindful of the fact that the city charter left these selections to the city manager, took no action.³

Moseley announced upon accepting the city managership that he would not make any decisions concerning changes in city jobs until May 1, a date coinciding with official installation of the new Council. This decision caused consternation among Catfish Club members, who had expected to be rewarded immediately for their work in the campaign.⁴

²Crull interview.
³Daily Times Herald, April 4, 1935.
⁴Ibid.
It also left them with the uneasy feeling that Moseley intended to take city charter provisions seriously and run the city government himself. As Catfish leaders' suspicions grew that Moseley might not be the puppet they had expected him to be, Club leaders called a hasty meeting to discuss ways to reassert their influence.⁵

That they believed they had found a solution to their dilemma became apparent during the second meeting of the Council on April 6. His fellow Council members elected George B. Sergeant, a former state judge and the man who had received the most votes in the election, mayor. Sergeant announced that the new Council had no intention of violating the city charter, but that they expected Moseley to confer with them concerning the appointment of municipal department heads.⁶ Club leaders, believing they had influenced this decision, had increased confidence that they would be able to control municipal affairs. Their expectation was of brief duration, for Sergeant was not a Catfish. His announcement showed only that he and his fellow Council members intended to take an active role in city government.

⁵Crull interview.
⁶Daily Times Herald, April 7 and 12.
Their agreement on this point was no indication of future unanimity, for harmony and cooperation were not to be the hallmarks of this council. During the two years of their administration, members continually disagreed over appointments and policy, and heated discussions were a prominent feature of Council meetings. At first these disagreements seemed to show who were Catfish and who were merely dissidents from previous Charter Association policies, but Council votes throughout their term showed no consistent pattern of alliances.  

The question of the selection of a new police chief to succeed C.W. Trammell was one outstanding example of the differences between the Catfish Club and the Council, and one which seemed to show who were Catfish and who were not. As Sullivan asserted early in April, "Half our crowd voted for the new Council to remove John Edy and the other half voted to oust Trammell." Club leaders confidently expected the Council to appoint Jim Railton, a sheet metal manufacturer, to the job. He was one of the Catfish who had been reported to be meeting with gamblers eager to establish themselves

7 Crull interview.
8 Daily Times Herald, April 8, 1935.
in the city during the Centennial. Many Catfish and other citizens believed that easy access to gambling and liquor was important in attracting visitors to the city.\textsuperscript{9} Moseley's refusal to appoint Railton won him the support of the mayor-elect and an angry denunciation from a Catfish spokesman, "If he won't appoint Railton, we will see that he is ousted."\textsuperscript{10} On a motion to discharge Moseley, Sergeant's faction won five to four over the opposition led by lawyer Emil Corenbleth. True to his earlier announcement, Moseley did not name a new police chief until after May 1.\textsuperscript{11}

The man finally chosen was Robert Jones, a former federal agent and city detective. Moseley declared, "Jones will be given a free hand to run his department and will be expected to enforce the laws--even the prohibition laws--as long as they remain on the statute books," but added, "We won't make Dallas a blue law town. It never has been and never could be converted into one."\textsuperscript{12} Although this appointment cheered Centennial promoters who saw in it the promise of a slight easing of Dallas' stringent anti-gambling

\textsuperscript{9}Crull interview.
\textsuperscript{10}Daily Times Herald, April 17, 1935.
\textsuperscript{11}Corning interview.
\textsuperscript{12}Daily Times Herald, May 7, 1935.
and anti-liquor laws, it created great dissatisfaction and consternation among Catfish leaders. One Councilman, who was popularly believed to be a Catfish, threatened to resign in protest.

The vote on the police chief did not set the pattern for a permanent Council split with Sergeant as the leader of one faction and Corenbleth the leader of the other. Moseley continued to make his own selections. Usually the mayor approved these appointments and was able to persuade a majority of the Council to vote with him. But, whether the Councilmen approved or disapproved of Moseley's choices, it was impossible to discern from their votes which were Catfish and which were not. The majority constantly shifted, with individual Council members voting as they saw fit in any given instance.

While these votes must have discouraged Catfish leaders, they still hoped to be able to reward their followers with jobs in the Park Department. The provision of the city charter which put the Park Board under the control of the Council instead of the city manager and exempted park employees

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13 Crull interview.
15 Corning interview.
from civil service gave the chairman extraordinary power. Sullivan was a Catfish, and he would have an increased number of jobs to dispense and vast sums of money to spend in the Centennial year.

Sullivan's overwhelming desire to become an important and respected civic leader led him to reject many Catfish-supported job applications. Despite his loyalty to his fellow Club members, he selected those men he thought most able for park positions. Some of them had been Charter supporters. Moreover, he disappointed a number of building contractors who had been expecting rewards because of their Civic Association work.¹⁶ He handled bond money entrusted to him carefully and insisted that building contractors hold to turnkey contracts, a move which left the Park Department with a $500,000 surplus when construction was completed.¹⁷

Frustrated Catfish leaders, who had confidently expected to exercise leadership in Dallas city government, saw control slipping away from them. Many of the men they had worked to elect and whose appointments they had approved were

¹⁶Crull interview.

¹⁷*Dallas Morning News*, November 9, 1935, and October 20, 1936.
acting independently and no longer asking for their advice. In an effort to regain their power, the Catfish centered their opposition on the person of the city manager, Moseley. Just as opposition to the Charter Council had converged on Edy, Catfish disenchantment with the Civic Association Council focused on Moseley.

Club leaders demanded that the Council replace the city manager with a man more to their liking, but these demands went unheeded. At a meeting in August, members discussed the possibility of instituting a recall movement against four of the Councilmen—Sergeant, Corenbleth, Cleve Reach, and Max Hahn. The members attending refused to support the recall suggestions because, while many were dissatisfied with the Council, a majority agreed that the present Council was more to their liking than the previous one had been. A new election might bring even less amenable men into office.  

The men chosen as subjects for the recall petition represented both factions on the Council. Corenbleth and Reach were popularly believed to be Catfish members; Sergeant had led much of the opposition to the Club's leadership; and

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18 Ibid., August 4, 1935.
Hahn's allegiance switched between the factions. However, Corenbleth and Reach had both voted with the mayor and city manager on a number of occasions and had refused to attempt to remove Moseley. These acts of disloyalty probably had made them fit candidates for removal in Catfish eyes.\(^{19}\)

The idea of removing the Council from office appeared again in October when the Catfish began an open move to recall all nine Councilmen. Railton, who headed the maneuver, announced that he had 1,500 names signed to petitions and that the object was to fire Moseley.\(^{20}\) He believed he might succeed because voter discontent with the new Council had risen as the Council and manager struggled with the problem of city finances. Citizens who had looked forward to the Centennial as an answer to their financial woes did not recognize the fact that they would have to pay for it through higher taxes.\(^{21}\) Although Centennial bonds totaling $3,500,000 had been voted in 1934, the strain of retiring and paying interest on them involved the 1935 Council. Suggestions for widening the city's tax base by

\(^{19}\) Corning interview.

\(^{20}\) Dallas Morning News, October 6, 1935.

\(^{21}\) Crull interview.
adding an occupation tax and inspection fees had drawn protests from affected citizens who blamed Moseley for proposing them. Home owners were furthered angered by a fifteen per cent increase in ad valorem taxes in the September city budget. And, when the abolition of the sewer tax was accompanied by a rise in water rates, they were outraged. Nevertheless, the recall movement was a failure because even in the face of this discontent the agitators were unable to secure the 7,000 needed signatures. In spite of the fact, they asked the Charter president to become their ally.  

That some of the Councilmen also were dissatisfied with Moseley's conduct of his office and, perhaps, with his cooperation with the mayor became evident shortly thereafter. The Council asked for the city manager's resignation. Moseley refused and asked for a public hearing on the Council's charges against him. This was a privilege which the city charter granted him. Sergeant came to Moseley's defense, publicly declaring that some Council members were unhappy with the city manager because they could not dictate to him. The mayor then asked for another vote. Faced with a public hearing, the Council voted to retain the city manager.  

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22 Dallas Morning News, July 2, 3, and 11, 1935; September 12 and 27, 1935; and October 1 and 12, 1935.
23 Ibid., November 2, 23, and 28, 1935.
Sergeant's support for Moseley in this instance was an indication of his relationship with the city manager, and his conception of his role as mayor. One of the complaints Councilmen had had about the city manager was that he had not been sufficiently assertive and had allowed the mayor to take over too many of his duties. They disliked the fact that the mayor had established an office at city hall and was spending several hours each day conferring with department heads. This was an unwarranted expansion of his duties, Councilmen believed. When the Council asked him to discontinue this practice, the mayor replied that he had deliberately been spending time and taking over duties because the Centennial had created an additional work load for the city manager but that he would attempt to comply with their wishes. Sergeant did stop spending as much time as he had at city hall and did allow Moseley to take over active operation of the city government, but, when Moseley did, Councilmen were equally critical of his decisions. They suspected that Moseley was still allowing the mayor to influence his decisions unduly and were jealous of the prerogatives since the mayor under the council-manager system was ideally only one of nine Councilmen. They could not
dismiss the mayor, so they decided to remove the city manager and hire one they could influence.²⁴

Another cause for disagreement between the Council and the mayor was the holding of closed Council meetings, or as they were called, executive sessions. The mayor felt that city business should be conducted in open sessions, but his suggestions that closed meetings be ended received little support and only temporary compliance.²⁵ Councilmen quickly resumed holding closed meetings, a factor which annoyed voters and caused considerable unhappiness among newspaper reporters assigned to cover city hall.²⁶

However, Councilmen had not taken the reporters' ingenuity into account, for they soon found a way to hear what was being discussed in the Council chamber without Councilmen knowing they were being overheard. A reporter discovered that an air vent situated over a toilet in the men's room connected directly with an air vent in the council chamber. If he stood on the toilet and put his ear to the vent, he could hear exactly what Councilmen were saying. After that, during closed Council sessions one reporter

²⁴ Corning interview.


²⁶ Crull interview.
listened while his fellows watched at the door and in the hall to warn him if anyone was coming. When he tired of his uncomfortable perch, another took over and listened. Newspaper readers received a complete description while Council members wondered among themselves who was giving the newspapers such detailed information about their meetings.27

All the dissension from within and opposition from without could have caused Councilmen to bungle their most important task, that of preparing for the Centennial. In this one area Councilmen worked together with a minimum of friction and were able to cooperate with the Catfish-led Park Board. Enthusiasm for the benefits the exposition would afford the city's economy was a cohesive element; almost all Dallas citizens looked forward to the signing of the first building contracts. The only ones whose viewpoint toward the exposition was slightly jaundiced were those whose property had to be condemned for the expansion of the fair grounds. However, when Sullivan proclaimed his eagerness to sign the first Centennial contracts by saying, "From that time on, the old fair grounds will change so rapidly

27Crull interview.
that it will be almost impossible to keep track of the improvements," he was expressing the hopes of the majority of Dallas citizens. 28

Councilmen and Park Board members gathered in the council chamber on July 19 to witness the signing of the first building contract with a spirit of happy anticipation. As Moseley signed for the city and Sullivan for the Park Board, the mayor announced, "Gentlemen, the Texas Centennial Exposition will now go forward." 29

Although the city had issued $3,500,000 in bonds to pay for the exhibition, this sum was only a part of the expected local expenditure. The municipal budget contained an appropriation of $280,000 for the improvement and construction of streets leading to the fair grounds. Added to this was $2,860,000 the Central Exposition Corporation, a private group of merchants and interested citizens, had raised to be used for buildings and the fair's promotion throughout the country. 30

As locally financed projects proceeded at a lively pace, the city's leaders turned their attention to finding

28 Dallas Morning News, July 5 and September 18, 1935.
29 Ibid., July 20, 1935.
30 Ibid., July 18 and 20, 1935.
other likely sources of money. They decided that the federal government might be willing to consign WPA funds for city improvements and beautification which would make Dallas more attractive to visitors. Consequently, they asked Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes for a $2,000,000 grant to be used not only for the fair grounds but also for city hospital additions, storm and sanitary sewers, and street repairs. Ickes listened to their argument and promised to consider their proposals. When the WPA funds were finally allocated, city leaders were delighted to learn that they had received more than they had asked for, a $3,545,000 grant for street repairs, storm and sanitary sewers, schools and levee repairs. This money to be spent over a period of several years would bring with it more job opportunities to add to those already anticipated from Centennial construction.

Another grant came from the United States Centennial Commission. This group, under the chairmanship of Vice-President John N. Garner, a Texan, had been set up to aid the state during the centennial year and had a $3,000,000

\[31\] Ibid., July 21 and 25, and November 2, 1935.
fund to distribute throughout the state. Of this money Dallas received $1,200,000 as its share. 32

Centennial construction began in October when Governor James B. Allred set off a ceremonial dynamite blast at the fair grounds. The crowd of civic leaders and city officials who witnessed this first exhibition ceremony heard speakers outline the financial boon Dallas would receive even before the first tourist arrived. Earlier predictions had been that the total construction costs at the site would be $6,000,000. When spokesmen broke down this figure into weekly and daily approximation, the audience realized more fully the scope of the undertaking. Nearly $300,000 would be spent each week and $42,000 each day. Moreover, the construction and landscaping projects would supply 8,331 jobs. These expenditures would give the city's depression-ridden economy a healthy boost. 33

Many Dallas citizens also saw another favorable sign in the passage of a state constitutional amendment lifting statewide prohibition. Vote returns showed the city's voters leading the state in the percentage favoring repeal. Even before the amendment passed, hopeful saloon owners

32 Ibid., August 10 and 18, 1935.
33 Ibid., October 13, 1935.
were applying for liquor permits. When it became clear that state law provided that liquor could be sold only after a local option election, 1,000 voters signed election petitions the first day they were in circulation. 34

With Centennial construction under way and city department heads appointed, meetings became a bit less hectic than they had been in the first months after the new Council assumed office. Arguments, nevertheless, were still a prominent feature of their meetings, and Councilmen were by no means united. The mayor's purported domination of the city manager and the issue of closed meetings still were points of contention. 35

However, they had broken with the Catfish Club. "City manager Hal Moseley led the way by refusing to accept dictation, and Councilmen gradually came over to the same side." 36 The Catfish Club's policy of secrecy had prevented its members from revealing their purposes to many of the men they had expected to represent them after the election. This policy led to their eventual loss of power and dissolution into separate factions. A majority of the candidates they

34 Ibid., August 2 and 25 and November 18, 1935.
35 Crull interview.
36 Dallas Morning News, May 1, 1936.
had supported originally had no knowledge of the Club and were, therefore, under no obligation to follow its dictation in either appointments, policy, or patronage.\textsuperscript{37}

As the anniversary of their administration approached, Councilmen assessed the accomplishments of their first year in office and found that they had fulfilled two of the promises they had made voters. They had built the sanitary sewer to the levee district and had cancelled the sewer tax, even though the latter act had been accompanied by a raise in water rates which brought in more revenue than the tax had.\textsuperscript{38}

Under the Civic Association Council, council-manager government in Dallas had undergone a marked change from what its founders had envisioned. This occurred not only because the Centennial had subjected it to stresses which its originators had not foreseen but also because the 1935 Council had a different opinion about the role of city government than had the 1931 and 1933 Councils. When the mayor established an office at city hall, he began the process of change, and the Councilmen followed his lead. They began

\textsuperscript{37}Crull interview.

\textsuperscript{38}Dallas Morning News, May 1, 1936.
to spend time at city hall every day and willingly became known to constituents. Citizens talked to the Council members about their problems with municipal departments and received help. This type of help had been impossible under the two previous administrations. To Charter advocates it smacked of the politics of former city governments.  

But the 1935 Council was a success with voters in a way that the Charter councils had not been. Their term of office was a turning point in a return to more political and more personal government. They continued to support the city manager system, but they insisted that the Council have a larger role in city government than the two earlier Councils had wanted.

Sergeant argued several years later that the mayor should be directly elected by the people. He believed this would give the mayor more prestige and attract a higher type of leader. He declared that there was plenty of room for both a manager and a mayor because the positions required different types of men. The mayor should be a political leader, he said, and the manager an administrator.  

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39 Corning interview.  
40 Stone, Price and Stone, City Manager Government, p. 343.
Sergeant's opinion may have been colored by the era of his administration. Charter leaders had been aware that the Centennial mayor would have to spend more time at city hall than had his predecessors and had worried about this. Few doubted that Sergeant was a successful mayor, for he had a warm personality which charmed exposition visitors and city hall personnel alike. "He was probably the best salesman the Centennial had. He liked to travel, and everywhere he went he invited people he met to come to Dallas' fair. Many of them accepted his invitation, and some even were his house guests."  

The men who instituted council-manager government in Dallas would have agreed with Sergeant about the role of the city manager, but they would have been horrified at the idea of the mayor being a political leader. They would have disagreed with the thought of the mayor being elected directly, for this was a negation of their belief that every man on the Council should be of sufficiently high caliber to serve as mayor.

Despite their disagreements, the Civic Association councilmen served the city well during the Centennial.

41 Corning interview.
They modified the original plan of city manager government in a way that was to become permanent in Dallas. The Council no longer served as a board of directors with the city manager as the operating head. The mayor and Councilmen took an active role in the government with the city manager as their instrument of control.
The Texas Centennial Exposition was the financial success its backers had hoped it would be. On the fair's last day, November 29, promoters declared that it had "led the city into a period of growth and business expansion unprecedented in its history." A final accounting of the money expended on the exposition, including construction costs and the money spent by concessionaires and exhibitors, amounted to $25,000,000. The Chamber of Commerce estimated that the 6,000,000 visitors had meant an additional $3,000,000 in income to hotels and $2,000,000 to citizens who had rented rooms in their homes. Furthermore, Dallas department stores had led the entire nation in the percentage increase of sales during the months of the fair. As the Centennial year ended, Dallas was experiencing a mild boom, and satisfied officials had begun plans to reopen the fair as the Pan-American Exposition the next summer.¹

¹Dallas Morning News, October 30, November 18 and 29, 1936, and February 11, 1937.
However, the exposition's rewards were not without their cost, for, as some citizens had predicted, the hordes of visitors with money to spend had attracted gamblers and other undesirables to the city. Moseley's remark, when he appointed the new police chief, that Dallas could never be converted into a blue law town, proved all too true. The city manager, Council and police officials recognized the problem. They were loath to challenge the vice operations until the fair ended because of the popular belief that a certain amount of impropriety attracted visitors. Sergeant and Moseley expressed the city government's attitude when they promised early in November to "renew efforts to close down vice after the fair ends."^3

While this lack of strict law enforcement did not displease many Dallas businessmen, it gave reformers a situation to exploit during the coming municipal campaign. This issue, plus the incumbent Council's constant squabbling, persuaded not only Charter officials but also several other factions that they might have an excellent chance to capture control of the city government in 1937. 4

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^2Daily Times Herald, May 7, 1935.
^3Dallas Morning News, November 8, 1936.
^4Crull interview.
The campaign, which has been characterized as one of the most bitter Dallas had ever seen, began earlier than usual. In the past, most groups had begun holding organizational meetings in January and February of the election year, but this time these meetings began in the fall of 1936. However, these early meetings did not serve to make the campaign more orderly or restrained. Confusion over how many parties would enter slates and who their candidates would be continued until the filing deadline had passed at midnight on March 6. By that time there were five slates entered with forty-four candidates. Sergeant was the only man nominated by two groups. The parties included the Citizens' Charter Association, Forward Dallas Association, Utility Rate Reduction League, All-Dallas Association and Dallas Democratic Association. Several of the factions, including the Charter Association, had had difficulty finding people who were willing to run; and, for a time, it seemed that fighting over candidates would replace all other issues. While most of the organizations had roots in former Dallas city parties, none of them corresponded exactly to past groups. Several prospective candidates changed party

Daily Times Herald, May 1, 1937.
affiliation during the campaign; one former Charter council-
man ran on the Utility League slate, two incumbent Civic
council members appeared on the Charter ticket, and three
early Charter choices preferred Forward Dallas support. All these changes in party affiliation created an acrimonious
atmosphere, and the campaign's early beginning simply gave
the factions more time to issue charges and counter charges
concerning their opponents' nominees, platforms and reasons
for being in the race.

The parties with the most members and widest bases of
support were the Charter Association and Forward Dallas.
The relationship between them was complicated by the fact
that both drew membership from the defunct Civic Association,
and many former Charterites had changed to Forward Dallas.
The changes in party alignments created a situation in
which neither party could claim complete continuity in
membership from past organizations which had been active
in city elections. The situation was further complicated
by the presence of a new secret organization, the Legion of
Honor, headed by Railton. This group, which was the first
one to hold meetings, was composed mainly of disaffected

6Dallas Morning News, October 4, November 14 and December 11
and 15, 1936; and February 12 and March 2 and 7, 1937.
Catfish who were disappointed because they were unable to get city jobs after the 1935 election. They objected, however, to being identified with the Catfish and claimed that they wanted their own identity. Their only objective in the city election was to get rid of Moseley, probably because he had rejected Railton's bid to become police chief. While they did not plan to enter candidates of their own, they hoped to become a force in either the Charter or Forward Dallas organizations. Their support changed back and forth between the two until after the filing deadline closed when the Legion joined Forward Dallas. Some Forward Dallas nominees were incumbent councilmen who had opposed the city manager in the past.  

Forward Dallas, because its membership came from both the Civic and Charter Associations, could not be considered a replacement for the 1935 Catfish-led Civic faction. But its members held a similar view toward city government. The Charter Association, they said, was composed of men who believed in government for the special interest of the few while they believed that it should serve all the people. Their platform was an endorsement of the Civic Council's

7Ibid., October 4, 1936; and January 18, February 17, and March 1 and 7, and April 5, 1937.
work and contained promises to lower utility rates, make a determined effort to reduce taxes, restore pay cuts to city employees, continue the city manager government, and improve city streets.\(^8\)

Charter Association leaders, remembering their past successes as reformers, stressed the issue of increased vice in the community and promised that their candidates would provide the city with strict law enforcement. They believed that this promise plus a determined effort to widen their base of voter support would give them victory. They announced that they would abolish the executive committee of 100 which had exercised almost all of the authority in the past and substitute a committee of twenty-four which would serve only as an advisory body. All members would be allowed to vote on the platform and nominations. Speakers at these early Charter meetings reminded voters that they had not been fully aware of the machinations of the Catfish Club during the 1935 campaign, and emphasized the Charter's openness in the past by saying that they did not intend to "commit our candidates to anything nor will we try to control them after they get into office."

\(^8\)Ibid., February 17 and March 10, 1937.
Signifying their recognition of the fact that they needed a wider base of voter support, or perhaps their lack of success in attracting candidates, leaders advocated overlapping terms for councilmen. They intended to include four of the incumbent councilmen on their ticket, Sergeant, Brinker, Corenbleth, and J. Willis Gunn. Corenbleth and Gunn refused, with Gunn replying for both that they could not "renounce five of their former colleagues." Sergeant and Brinker accepted the Charter nomination. Sergeant remarked that they considered "matters of principle higher than personalities."^9

As the campaign progressed, Sergeant became the principal speaker for the Charter. He called Forward Dallas' support for vigorous law enforcement "laughable to a man who had fought some candidates of this group on these issues for a year and a half." Because the Charter's campaign was based principally on the issue of vice in the community, Sergeant's offer of the diary he had kept during his years as mayor proved to be an invaluable help, for it told of instances in which Council members refused to allow the city manager to call for a strict suppression of wrongdoing of this type. 10

\[^9\] Ibid., November 14 and December 11, 1936; and January 22 and February 4 and 15, 1937.

\[^10\] Ibid., March 12 and April 4, 1937. 
Among the groups which endorsed the Charter Association were the Dallas Pastors Association, headed by Dr. Graham Frank, and the Clean Dallas League, led by George Phillips Jones. The League, which worked through church organizations, sent out leaflets and promised to sponsor a parade of Sunday school children on the Sunday before election day to support the Charter's better law enforcement plank.\footnote{Ibid., April 1 and 4, 1937.}

The Utilities Rate Reduction League's name indicated its members' reason for entering the city campaign. League candidates contended that the utility companies had been exerting undue influence on the city government, and proposed that a four percent gross receipts tax be levied to force them to pay their fair share of the cost of government. During rallies, League candidates distributed small metal lapel pins shaped like hatchets to serve as a reminder of their purpose.\footnote{Ibid., March 12 and April 2 and 5, 1937.}

Another faction advocated the abolition of the city manager system and a return to the commission form of city government. This group had selected the name, Dallas Democratic Association, at the beginning of the race but was later forced
to change its designation to the All-Dallas Association. The long-established Dallas Democratic Association filed suit to prevent the use of its name by the newly formed organization. Rather than become involved in a lengthy court fight, the new group selected another name. The older Democratic group, which was affiliated with the national Democratic party, later entered a slate in the municipal election. This was the first time since the institution of city manager government that national politics had been injected into local affairs. ¹³

"Not since the days when J. Waddy Tate ran for mayor on a hotdog and blue shirt platform has the municipal campaign developed such a fight as has been seen here in recent weeks," was the way one Dallas newspaper described the 1937 city election. ¹⁴ However, both Dallas' leading newspapers gave the Charter vigorous editorial support, as they had in 1931 and 1933. ¹⁵

Vote tabulation was faster and more accurate than it had been in the past because the city was using voting machines for the first time. Nevertheless, when all the

¹³Ibid., December 11, 1936; and February 7, 1937.
¹⁴Ibid., April 5, 1937.
¹⁵Grady interview.
votes had been counted Dallas did not have a new city Council; in all nine places, candidates had to face a runoff, for no candidate received a majority of the votes cast. The Charter Association led in five races and Forward Dallas in four. An indication of continuing voter interest in pocketbook issues was the number of votes Utilities League candidates won while running a strong third.\textsuperscript{16}

The runoff campaign proceeded along the lines of the first race, with Forward Dallas candidates attacking their opponents as a "silk stocking" group, and Charter candidates attacking the vice issue.\textsuperscript{17} Again both newspapers endorsed the Charter Association.\textsuperscript{18} Forward Dallas, however, held five seats on the Council to the Charter's four after the election on April 20. Among the Charter candidates chosen were Sergeant and Brinker.\textsuperscript{19}

The issues the candidates of the two leading parties discussed during the 1937 city election campaign were not as important as the personalities of the candidates themselves. The Charter Association had not been able to attract

\textsuperscript{16}Dallas Morning News, April 5 and 7, 1937.
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., April 17 and 19, 1937.
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., April 6, 1937; and Daily Times Herald, April 7, 1937.
\textsuperscript{19}Dallas Morning News, April 21, 1937.
men of the caliber of its 1931 and 1933 candidates and had largely negated the effect of the vice issue by offering places on its slate to four Civic councilmen. Forward Dallas with its contingent of former Charter members could not make as strong an appeal to lower- and middle-class voters as the Civic Association had in 1935. While the Charter did attract a larger percentage of higher income voters and Forward Dallas was stronger in lower income areas, both groups tried to achieve a middle-of-the-road stance. The results of the election show that they succeeded in this attempt because voters, seeing no particular difference in the parties, split their votes and chose the candidates they preferred; Sprague received the largest number and Sergeant was second.

The new Council, following the tradition that the man who received the most votes should become mayor, elected George Sprague. He and Sergeant had been good friends for a number of years; while Sergeant would have enjoyed being mayor for a second term, he withdrew his name from consideration and

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20 Crull interview; and Stone, Price and Stone, *City Manager Government*, pp. 341-342.

21 *Dallas Morning News*, April 21, 1937.
enthusiastically supported Sprague. Part of Sprague's popularity resulted from the fact that he was the father of two Southern Methodist University football heroes. He was a kindly man whose genial personality made him the perfect mayor at a time when the Council's five-to-four split membership might have made it more contentious than the previous one had been. He made friends with city employees easily and had a habit of carrying candy in his coat pocket to share with those who visited his office.

Immediately after the election, there was speculation concerning whom the new Council might select as city manager. Many thought that because Forward Dallas held a majority of the council seats and had accepted Legion of Honor support, Moseley might lose his job. When the Council voted, however, Sprague sided with the Charter councilmen, and Moseley retained his office. Although this vote led many observers to believe that the Charter Council members would control

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22 Ibid., April 28, 1937; and Daily Times Herald, May 1, 1937.
23 Corning interview.
24 Dallas Morning News, April 21, 1937.
the municipal government for the next two years, this did not happen.  

Sprague was eager to establish an atmosphere of compromise during the first few Council meetings and persuaded Charterites to accept Forward Dallas supporters as members of the Park Board. Under his leadership, they renamed Sullivan as chairman, gave Harry E. Gordon, a defeated Forward Dallas candidate the vice-chairmanship, and appointed Railton, the Legion of Honor head, to be a member. The choices, particularly those of Gordon and Railton, were later to prove unwise, but at the time they helped the council to achieve a unanimity it had lacked during the previous two years.

Council members at Sergeant's suggestion decided against holding secret sessions except to discuss personnel problems and property buying. This decision marked a considerable victory for Sergeant, who had advocated the abolition of closed sessions during his previous term of office. It

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26 Corning interview.
28 Crull interview.
29 Dallas Morning News, September 4, 1937.
ended the reporters' washroom eavesdropping, and increased citizens' confidence in their municipal government.\textsuperscript{30}

Fulfilling both groups' campaign promises, the Council urged the city manager to instruct the police chief to "crack down on gambling devices." He complied quickly, and within a months time had confiscated more than 100 slot machines. This forced the Council to consider renting warehouse space to store them and the ones which would be picked up in the future. Despite the city manager's success, the Council continued to press him to act more quickly to end vice operations. Rumors circulated that if he did not he might lose his job.\textsuperscript{31}

The Council answered Utility League complaints by appropriating $150,000 to investigate the companies' pricing policies. The League had threatened to circulate recall petitions, but this Council action staved off the threat.\textsuperscript{32}

Despite the Park Board's efficient handling of bond money during the Centennial, the new Council questioned the board's purchasing procedures. Councilmen believed that when the board built roads on park property, it should send its

\textsuperscript{30}Crull interview.
\textsuperscript{31}Dallas Morning News, August 4, September 10, 15 and 26, November 6, 1937.
\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., August 5, 1937.
purchase requisitions through the public works department, which was in charge of other city street construction. Chairman Sullivan disagreed with this stand and showed the Council a letter from the previous Council, dated in September, 1936, authorizing the Park Department to buy through the city purchasing agent without any outside supervision. Sullivan finally agreed to show the contracts to the public works director although Railton objected, saying that the Council was trying to curb the power of the Park Board, an opinion which was probably correct. The controversy might have ended there, since Sullivan controlled the Park Board; however, several weeks later two Park Board members reported to the Council that they had received a letter from a state senator stating that he knew about "rakeoffs" on a park paving project. Sprague called a special meeting of the Council to hear his allegations, but the senator failed to appear, explaining that his evidence concerned matters which had taken place in 1930. The Council probably believed the whole affair absurd and dropped any plans for any investigation they might have been considering.  

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33 Ibid., September 26, 29, and 30, 1937.
34 Ibid., September 30 and November 2 and 3, 1937.
Railton, in the meantime, had instigated the formation of a group to promote a return to the commission form of city government. His faction formulated four charter amendments which they believed would accomplish this change. The amendments included (1) a full-time mayor with a $7,500 yearly salary; (2) six councilmen with $2,400 yearly salaries; (3) an elected Park Board; and (4) a clarification of city purchasing procedures. This move was not successful because the group was unable to secure enough names on its petition to force an election. Because he was not forced to do so, Sprague refused to call an election.

The Council had almost completed its orderly, mildly progressive term under Sprague's leadership, when a scandal broke in the Park Department. The controversy which followed put the Council's unity to its severest test.

Rumors had begun to circulate in December, 1938, about the results of an inquiry being conducted into department affairs by Park Board member George A. Ripley. This

36 Daily Times Herald, January 12, 1938.
37 Corning interview.
38 Daily Times Herald, December 14 and 18, 1938.
investigation would show that two Park Board members, Gordon and Railton, and several Park Department employees had been receiving payments from contractors and had been diverting park-owned materials for their own use, informants asserted. Although the Park Board members mentioned had been endorsed by Forward Dallas councilmen, these Council members joined their Charter colleagues, the mayor, and Park Board Chairman Sullivan, in demanding that Ripley present a full report of the results of his inquiry at a combined Council-Park Board meeting early in January. 39

City officials, the Council, Park Board and an overflow crowd of 300 citizens jammed the council chamber when Ripley revealed the initial results of his findings. At his request, Texas Rangers, who had been sent by the governor to assist and protect him, searched Gordon and Railton for weapons before he began his testimony. Ripley first charged that Gordon's home had been extensively repaired and remodeled by Park Department employees using Park Department materials. He then presented eight former employees who told about the nature of the work done and an affidavit from former Superintendent, Claude Jordon, describing the work as

39Crull interview.
having been done between September and Christmas, 1937. Ripley promised further revelations in the next few weeks when his investigation was complete.  

Before another crowded Council chamber later in January, Ripley, again escorted by Rangers, declared that Railton, Gordon, and a former park Department employee, Al Simpson, had received payments from contractors and that Railton had also had extensive work done on his home. Furthermore, Railton had ordered a load of Park Department sod be delivered to the home of his friend, Tony Brignardello, the chairman of the Legion of Honor campaign committee. Ripley accused employee Ernest Allen of collecting rent from city owned houses and keeping the money for his own use. Again corroboration of Ripley's charges came from affidavits and the testimony of Park Department employees, some of whom were implicated in the charges.  

Both Park Board members denied any wrongdoing. They insisted that they had known about the charges and were the victims of a "frame up" by Jordan, Simpson and Allen who were "out to get them" and were trying to cover up their

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40 Daily Times Herald, January 6, 1939.

41 Ibid., January 20, 1939.
guilt by involving their superiors. Gordon, while admitting
that he had seen a city cement truck in his driveway,
declared that he had paid Allen for the job and did not
know that he was using city-owned supplies. Railton demanded
that the charges against him be brought before the grand
jury instead of the Council and called the Council a
"kangaroo court." He became so agitated during the second
Council hearing that Rangers had to restrain him from
attacking a witness. 42

Meanwhile, Sprague had asked a subcommittee of the
Council composed of city attorney Henry P. Kucera, Councilmen
Hughes Knight and Brinker, and Park Board member George
Chesnut to prepare charges against Gordon. The mayor had
also submitted Ripley's charges and the other testimony to
the grand jury before Railton had asked for this to be done. 43

A few nights before the Council was to hear the formal
charges against Gordon, a watchman at the court house was
startled to see three men trying to break into the office
where the transcript of the previous hearings was stored.
He scared them away but was unable to capture them. 44

42 Ibid., January 21, 22, and 26, 1939; and Dallas Morning
News, January 21 and 26, 1939.

43 Daily Times Herald, January 9, 16, and 21, 1939.

44 Dallas Morning News, January 24, 1939.
The Council heard the formal charges against Gordon at an evening meeting which lasted until well after midnight. At the end the councilmen removed both Gordon and Railton from the Park Board. Because no formal charges had been brought against him, Railton had a right to appeal the decision within ten days. This appeal would have meant another hearing, but Railton declared that he did not want one. Both men continued to protest their innocence.  

After the meeting, Sprague announced that the Council would not fill the vacancies on the Park Board before its retirement on April 30 and said sadly, "We have already made too many mistakes. We don't want to make another." The next day he suggested that the Park Department's public works staff, which Sullivan had reduced before the scandal investigation, be merged with the public works department staff.  

The men who had drafted the new charter and charter amendments in 1929 and 1930 had not realized that their one deviation from the model city charter would pave the way for a scandal. When they made the Park Department an

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45 Daily Times Herald, January 26, 1939.

46 Ibid., January 26 and 27.
autonomous body and exempted its employees from civil service, they believed themselves to be merely satisfying the desires of a man whose help they needed in establishing city manager government. That their concession would open the door to petty corruption never entered their minds.47

While the scandal at city hall was occupying the thoughts of most Dallas citizens, others were busy setting up organizations to conduct the coming municipal election campaign. Most agreed that the issue of corruption in city government would be particularly important.48

One group which did not discuss corruption was the Progressive Civic Association, headed by Brignardello. He had been involved in the recent scandal, for Ripley had accused him of receiving a load of Park Department sod for use at his home. This faction's candidates advocated a return of city government to the control of the people, a phrase which the Catfish had used in the 1935 campaign.49

The Charter Association underwent a complete reorganization in 1939. With the prospect ahead of again reforming the city

47 Jackson interview.
48 Daily Times Herald, January 20 and February 5, 1939.
49 Ibid., February 2, 1939.
government, it was able to attract the same type of leadership the Charter had had in 1931. The businessmen who had become disenchanted with reform government were only too happy to participate in this city campaign, for they were aware of the damage the scandal had done to Dallas' reputation. The slate the Charter presented was composed of civic and business leaders as outstanding as those who had served on the first Charter Council. These men asked voters to "elect nine businessmen."

A new party in the race was the Citizens' Nonpartisan Association. It was composed of remnants of the old Civic Association and Forward Dallas and campaigned on a platform promise to "clean up city hall." Its leaders further warned citizens that the "bankers will get a stronghold on city hall if the Charter is elected." Supporting the Nonpartisan cause were members of the old Catfish Club.

The Club had broken into several factions after the 1935 election when members found that they could not control the Council's actions. By 1939, the group aiding the

50 Crull interview.
51 Daily Times Herald, April 4, 1939.
52 Ibid., February 5 and 16, and April 4, 1939.
Nonpartisan Association, of which Sullivan was a member, had become principally a social organization. In January, they had held an open dinner which featured fried catfish as the main course. 53

Six independent candidates also entered the race. In all there were thirty-three men running for nine seats on the Council. 54

On election day, the Charter Association won all nine places without a runoff. His fellow Councilmen elected lawyer J. Woodall Rogers as mayor, a position he was to hold until 1947. After some discussion, the group decided to retain Moseley as city manager. 55

The election of the 1939 Council ushered in an era of respite in city government, born of two causes. First, citizens were weary of the bickering and turmoil which had marked the past decade. They had seen a change in city government, had suffered through a depression, had watched a continuing fight at city hall, had witnessed the Park Department scandal, and were ready for a period of calm and quiet. Second, World War II was beginning. With the

54 *Daily Times Herald*, April 2, 1939.
55 Ibid., April 5, 1939.
nation geared to a wartime economy, the country's financial resources dedicated to that end and the nation's manpower in military uniform, there was little left for the cities and states. Regardless of what the citizens of Dallas and the Council might have wanted to do in more normal times, they could find neither the funds nor manpower to accomplish changes. 56

Politics during this period were largely dormant. There were few challenges to the Charter Association and even fewer changes on the Council. When a non-Charter candidate did manage to get elected, he was quickly absorbed and usually would become a Charter candidate in the next election. 57

The Rodgers administration, however, did leave the city with one important legacy. Because they could do no building, Councilmen and city officials devoted themselves to planning for the postwar period. Master plans for land use were drawn up in voluminous detail. Although some of these were never

56 Robert E. Hollingsworth, private interview held in his home, Dallas, Texas, December, 1970. Hollingsworth was city hall reporter for the Dallas (Daily) Times Herald and city editor in the 1950's.

57 Hollingsworth interview.
really followed, others proved their usefulness in the period of rapid growth which followed the war.\textsuperscript{58}

In Dallas, the city manager system eroded gradually. The first two Councils with Edy as manager acted as an advisory board of directors and allowed the manager to run the city. The next two Councils took over more of the operation of municipal government for themselves, spent more time at city hall, and frequently forced the manager to act as they wished. The Rodgers' Council made the mayor the city's spokesman and increased his importance.

The entire idea of a nonpolitical and nonpartisan government was, perhaps, impractical from its very inception. As historian Charles A. Beard told the National Municipal League in 1916 in a prophetic statement:

\textit{I am prepared to defend the thesis that nonpartisan-ship has not worked, does not work, and will not work in any major city in the United States. We have plenty of nonpartisan election laws designed to smash party organizations. We also have direct primary laws designed to take nominations out of the hands of party leaders. I think these laws have, in many instances, put a wholesome fear in the minds of political leaders, but I do not believe that they have permanently reduced the power of the expert political minority that manages public affairs.}\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{58}Jackson interview.

\textsuperscript{59}Stewart, \textit{Municipal Reform}, p. 96.
The men who established council-manager government in Dallas refused to recognize the Citizens' Charter Association as a political party, although it participated in all the activities of political leadership. The mere fact of an election with more than one candidate running for a particular office produces a situation in which politics is a necessary feature.
APPENDIX A

MAYORS OF DALLAS, 1927-1947

Commission Government

1927-1929  R. E. Burt - Nonpartisan Association
1929-1931  J. Waddy Tate - Independent

Council-Manager Government

1931-1932  Thomas L. Bradford (died in office) - Charter Association
1935-1937  George B. Sergeant - Civic Association
1937-1939  George A. Sprague - Forward Dallas
1939-1947  J. Woodall Rodgers - Charter Association
APPENDIX B

CITIZENS CHARTER ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS

Hugh Grady
Carl B. Callaway
Dr. W. D. Jones
Oscar D. Brundidge
M. J. Norrell
Roscoe L. Thomas
APPENDIX C

FIRST CHARTER ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Thomas L. Bradford--chairman of the board of Southwestern Life Insurance and donor of Bradford Memorial Hospital.

Edward R. Brown--president of the Magnolia Petroleum Company and director of Standard Oil Company of New York.

Thomas M. Cullum--owner of a large sporting goods firm.

Charles E. Turner--real estate man and vice-president of the Dallas Real Estate Board.

Arthur B. Moore--president of Cox-Moore Drug Company.

H. C. Burroughs--owner of two large drug stores.

Victor H. Hexter--attorney, vice-president of Union Title and Guaranty Company and former president of the school board.

William H. Painter--assistant secretary of the Texas Electric Railway Company and secretary of the Dallas Securities Company.

Joe C. Thompson--secretary-treasurer of Southland Ice Company.
APPENDIX D

COUNCIL-MANAGER COUNCILS, 1931-1947

1931-1935

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<th>Position</th>
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1933-1935--continued

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1935-1937

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## Appendix D--Continued

### 1937-1939

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1937-1939--continued

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*denotes winner in runoff
APPENDIX D—continued

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1939-1941--continued

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<td></td>
<td>Joe Irwin--Independent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Welbert O'Daniel--Independent</td>
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APPENDIX D--continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Candidate*</th>
<th>Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place 1</td>
<td>W. B. Johnson</td>
<td>2,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place 2</td>
<td>M. M. Straus</td>
<td>2,856</td>
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<td>Place 3</td>
<td>L. L. Heigel</td>
<td>2,856</td>
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<td>Place 4</td>
<td>Bennett H. Stamps</td>
<td>2,875</td>
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<td>Place 5</td>
<td>Oscar D. Brundidge</td>
<td>2,858</td>
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<td>Place 6</td>
<td>William C. McCord</td>
<td>2,852</td>
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<td>Place 7</td>
<td>J. Woodall Rodgers</td>
<td>2,897</td>
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<tr>
<td>Place 8</td>
<td>J. B. Adoue, Jr.</td>
<td>2,869</td>
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<tr>
<td>Place 9</td>
<td>O. W. Cox</td>
<td>2,813</td>
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*All are Charter Association*
APPENDIX D--continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place 1</td>
<td>W. B. Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Place 2</td>
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<td>Place 5</td>
<td>Oscar D. Brundidge</td>
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<td>Place 6</td>
<td>William C. McCord</td>
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<tr>
<td>Place 7</td>
<td>J. Woodall Rodgers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Place 8</td>
<td>J. E. Adoue, Jr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Place 9</td>
<td>O. W. Cox</td>
<td>4,572</td>
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APPENDIX E

ELECTION COMPARISONS, 1930-1935

Charter Election, 1930

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precincts</th>
<th>Charter Association</th>
<th>Opposition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>4207</td>
<td>587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>2035</td>
<td>764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>1534</td>
<td>985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group D</td>
<td>1123</td>
<td>1903</td>
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</table>

Councilmanic Election, 1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precincts</th>
<th>Charter Association</th>
<th>Opposition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>3608</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>2350</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group D</td>
<td>2230</td>
<td>530</td>
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Councilmanic Election, 1933

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precincts</th>
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<th>Opposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>5195</td>
<td>1413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>2485</td>
<td>1418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group D</td>
<td>1476</td>
<td>2548</td>
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Councilmanic Election, 1935

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Precincts</th>
<th>Charter Association</th>
<th>Opposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>4493</td>
<td>2883</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>2234</td>
<td>2716</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>2681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group D</td>
<td>1465</td>
<td>3795</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group A: well-to-do residential areas.
Group B: middle class residential areas.
Group C: middle and lower class residential areas.
Group D: lower class residential areas.

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Books


Santerre, George H. Dallas First Hundred Years, 1856-1956. Dallas: Book Craft, Inc., 1956. (Dallas Public Library, Texas Collection.)


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Head, Louis P. "Dallas Joins Ranks of Manager Cities." National Municipal Review, XIX (December, 1930), 806-809.


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Dallas (Texas) City Council. Minutes of weekly meetings, April, 1931-April, 1940. (Typewritten)

Hayden, Violet. Dallas, Its First Hundred Years, Dallas Public Library, Texas Collection, 1956. (Typewritten)

Newspapers


Dallas, Daily Times Herald, January, 1927-January 1940. (This newspaper changed its name to the Dallas Times Herald in 1951.)

Dallas Morning News, January, 1921-January, 1940.


Interviews

Condos, Constance Stathacos, private interview held in her home, Dallas, Texas, June, 1969. Mrs. Condos has been an active member of the Citizens' Charter Association for a number of years and knew many of the other women who have participated in its campaigns.
Corning, Ruth, private interview held in her office, Dallas, Texas, November, 1969. Miss Corning was secretary at Dallas City Hall from 1929 until her retirement in 1970. She served mayors, Tate, Sergeant and Sprague and was later secretary of the City Plan Commission.

Crull, Elgin, private interview held in his office, Dallas, Texas, October, 1969. Crull was a reporter for the Dallas Journal in the late 1920's and early 1930's. He served later as Dallas city manager.

Grady, Hugh, private interview held in his office, Dallas, Texas, October, 1970. Grady was active in the charter commission which wrote the first city manager charter and subsequent amendments. He was the first president of the Citizens' Charter Association.

Hollingsworth, Robert E., private interview in his home, Dallas, Texas, December, 1970. Hollingsworth was city hall reporter for the Dallas (Daily) Times Herald and city editor in the 1950's.

Houston, L.B., private interview held in his office, Dallas, Texas, July, 1969. Houston was an assistant to John N. Edy and has been for many years the director of the Dallas Park Department.

Jackson, Albert, private interview held in his office, Dallas, Texas, September, 1969. Jackson was city hall reporter for the Daily Times Herald in the late 1920's and early 1930's and was vice-president of the Dallas Times Herald.

Merriam, Allen, private interview held in his office, Dallas, Texas, July, 1969. Merriam was managing editor of the Daily Times Herald in the 1920's and 1930's and is now editor emeritus of the Dallas Times Herald.

Public Document

Charter of the City of Dallas, 1923, 1927 and 1930. Compiled and published by the authority of the commissioners of the city of Dallas.