

### III

#### Growth of the Neighborhood

The present day VECA neighborhood had its beginnings just after the turn of the century when plats for three subdivisions were filed. The next sixty years saw the development of over thirty subdivisions. Some, such as University Park with 89 acres, were large while others, such as the resubdivision of Lots 1 and 2 of the C. C. Cline Subdivision, were small. Many builders were active in the area. However, several stand out as having been responsible either as builders or landowners for the major development of the area; these were F. W. Faxon and Co., H. M. Hall, the Delugach (Dlugach) families, Will Terry, W. A. Hein, E. B. LeMaster, Foster & Stevenson, and C. M. Jacobson, who later formed a partnership with Lloyd Lovitt, Jr.

Several narrow, unpaved streets traversed the neighborhood prior to the turn of the century. The following years saw the extensions of adjacent streets into the neighborhood and the opening of many new ones. This chapter will examine the major subdivisions and observe the reasons for some of the street names. Additional information on the subdivisions, including dates and locations, may be found in Appendix.

The 1899 Williamson map listed the following area streets: Watkins, McLean, Old Raleigh Road (Jackson), Summer (North Parkway), Trezevant, May (University), Springdale, Hill (Evergreen) and Maxwell (Dickinson). Most of these street names reflect the early history of Memphis and the neighborhood.

Much of what is now Jackson Avenue was originally the Old Raleigh Road which led to the early county seat of Shelby County. The road was officially established in 1829.



Sometime between then and 1833 "it was made a post road over which James Brown ran tri-weekly four horse coaches."<sup>1</sup> It became a plank road in the 1850s. The name was changed to Jackson Avenue in 1907. The downtown portion of the street was always called Jackson Avenue; it was named for Andrew Jackson, who was one of the founders of Memphis and later became the seventh president of the United States. At one time the eastern portion of the street was called Johnson Avenue.<sup>2</sup>

Vollintine was named for Hiram Vollentine, an attorney who owned property west of VECA as early as 1862. In 1930, when Memphis street names were revised, the city received a letter stating that the street was named for a naval figure whose name was spelled Vollintine.<sup>3</sup> Thereafter confusion has existed over the spelling.

In 1901 the Park Commission bought 337 acres which became Overton Park and a tract of 388.54 acres, situated on the Mississippi River, which became Riverside Park.<sup>4</sup> The following year the city began a project to connect the two parks with a scenic parkway which would encircle the city on three sides and would, in time, become North, South, and East Parkway. The completion of this undertaking was not realized for some twenty years.<sup>5</sup>

In 1902 what would become the VECA portion of North Parkway was known as both Summer and the Speedway (See Map III). It is interesting to note that Spring and Autumn are located just to the east and south of VECA. Speedway is the name best remembered; it was so named because:

. . . Speedway was an exactly marked mile of dirt straightway for amateur horseracing. It was between the drives on which ordinary traffic moved eastward from Stonewall.<sup>6</sup>

Former Mayor Rowlett Paine explained that when the Speedway was laid out, "it was designed for the horse and



buggy age. There were few autos in Memphis but lots of horses."<sup>7</sup> Men liked to show off their trotters and pacers.

so the Parkway was fashioned to provide a wide horse and buggy speedway in the center between the two paved driveways for regular traffic. Horsemen were permitted to race up and down that strip with no limit on speed.<sup>8</sup>

By 1910 the city put an end to this privilege and established a 20 mph speed limit on all three parkways. The Commercial Appeal reported:

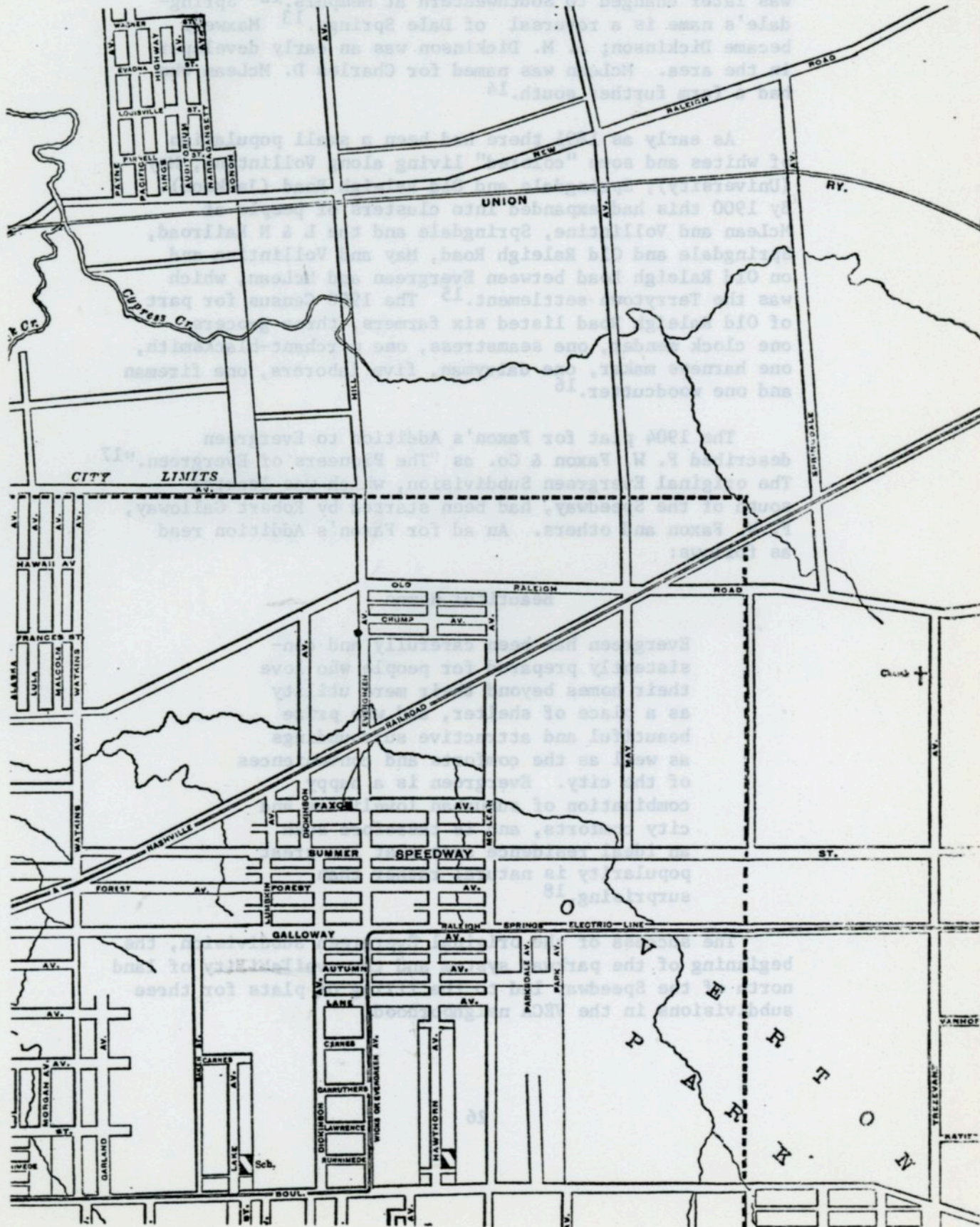
The Memphis Speedway is a thing of the past. This applies as far as the official designation is concerned and to the privilege of motorists to traverse the thoroughfare without regards to speed limits. Hereafter the Speedway from McLean to Trezevant and the Parkway from McLean to Manassas will be known as North Parkway.<sup>9</sup>

Trezevant, south of North Parkway, was renamed East Parkway, but the Trezevant name was retained on that portion of the street north of North Parkway. Trezevant Street had been named for Col. N. M. Trezevant, whose 1,000-acre plantation extended from Poplar south to the Memphis and Charleston Railroad tracks (now Southern) in the 1830s. This street was the western frontage of his property.<sup>10</sup> In early Memphis Trezevant Street was "a cross-town route connecting the early roads to Memphis - the Pontotoc Trace (Lamar), the Cherokee Trace (Poplar), and the road to Raleigh (Jackson)."<sup>11</sup>

May, which originally extended only north from Old Raleigh Road, was later extended south to North Parkway. It was renamed University in honor of the move to Memphis



MAP III: PAUL'S MAP OF GREATER MEMPHIS, 1905  
 Courtesy of Memphis and Shelby County Public Library and Information Center





## SPEEDWAY TERRACE

Offers you just this opportunity. It is only 12 minutes from Main Street with a 6 minute car service and lies on both sides of the broad Speedway on which the Park Commission has spent so many thousands of dollars. It has extra wide paved streets parked in the center and at the side, and finished with granolithic curbs and gutters, wide granolithic sidewalks, terraced and sodded lawns, rows of shade trees and every modern convenience. Lots on the Speedway itself for only \$30. Lots on other streets for only \$15 a foot. F. W. Faxon Co., Inc. Sole Agents  
71 Madison Avenue<sup>25</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. William G. Cavett bought property in the Speedway Subdivision ca. 1914. Their home at 1630 North Parkway was "a very joyous house in which to grow up . . . large rooms and very high ceilings . . . about ten feet," said their daughter, Mina Cavett Chase.<sup>26</sup> Her father had fine bird dogs and horses. Consequently the deep lots and the bridle trails on North Parkway attracted him to the location. As a girl, Mina rode horseback with good friends, Dell Guthrie (now Mrs. Dell Guthrie Henson) and Walter Pistole. The Guthrie family lived next door to the east, and the spacious Pistole home was just to the west.<sup>27</sup> (See picture) The Cavetts occupied their home until 1965 when it was sold to the Robert Fogelmans, who later sold it to the present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Jerry E. Jones.<sup>28</sup> The Pistole home was torn down, and the property is now the setting for the Woodmont Towers Apartments. Mrs. Stovall Jeter owns and occupies the former Guthrie home.

The street names, Snowden, Faxon, Crump and Dickinson begin to have meaning as one recalls the families who owned the land and/or developed the early subdivisions.

McNeil was named for Malcolm McNeill (two "l's") who owned a large tract of land on the northeast corner of what is now McNeil and Madison before the Civil War. Once again the spelling is not the same as the original.<sup>29</sup> Maury was named for Dr. R. B. Maury, prominent physician, who came to Memphis at the close of the Civil War.<sup>30</sup> Barksdale was



of Southwestern Presbyterian University; the school's name was later changed to Southwestern at Memphis.<sup>12</sup> Springdale's name is a reversal of Dale Springs.<sup>13</sup> Maxwell became Dickinson; J. M. Dickinson was an early developer in the area. McLean was named for Charles D. McLean who had a farm further south.<sup>14</sup>

As early as 1891 there had been a small population of whites and some "colored" living along Vollintine, May (University), Springdale and Old Raleigh Road (Jackson). By 1900 this had expanded into clusters of people at McLean and Vollintine, Springdale and the L & N Railroad, Springdale and Old Raleigh Road, May and Vollintine, and on Old Raleigh Road between Evergreen and McLean, which was the Terrytown settlement.<sup>15</sup> The 1900 Census for part of Old Raleigh Road listed six farmers, three grocers, one clock mender, one seamstress, one merchant-blacksmith, one harness maker, one dairyman, five laborers, one fireman and one woodcutter.<sup>16</sup>

The 1904 plat for Faxon's Addition to Evergreen described F. W. Faxon & Co. as "The Pioneers of Evergreen."<sup>17</sup> The original Evergreen Subdivision, which was located south of the Speedway, had been started by Robert Galloway, F. W. Faxon and others. An ad for Faxon's Addition read as follows:

Beautiful Homes

Evergreen has been carefully and consistently prepared for people who love their homes beyond their mere utility as a place of shelter, and who prize beautiful and attractive surroundings as well as the comforts and conveniences of the city. Evergreen is a happy combination of suburban loveliness and city comforts, and is therefore such an ideal residence spot that its great popularity is natural rather than surprising.<sup>18</sup>

The success of the original Evergreen Subdivision, the beginning of the parkway system and the availability of land north of the Speedway led to the filing of plats for three subdivisions in the VECA neighborhood.



Judge F. M. Guthrie became a partner with the Crump brothers, Will and Claude, and with F. E. P. Daniel; they filed the plat for Crump and Guthrie's North Evergreen Subdivision. Then both F. W. Faxon and J. M. Dickinson filed plats for Additions to the Evergreen Subdivision. These were the first subdivisions in the neighborhood. While the plats were filed between 1903 and 1905, few homes were built until later. According to the 1908 City Directory, the first subdivision resident was E. O. Bailey, who was listed at 1716 Summer Avenue (North Parkway) in a house that had been built the previous year in Faxon's Addition. (See picture) R. M. Armistead was his neighbor at 1782 Summer. By 1910 there were at least fifteen homes there.<sup>19</sup> By 1915 ten families lived on Crump between Evergreen and McLean.<sup>20</sup>

Many of these homeowners were no doubt attracted by the beauty of the Speedway. The later development of bridle paths in the median after the closing of the Speedway would make the location even more appealing.

Faxon Avenue has homes from these early subdivisions. Karen and Lawrence W. Kern occupy 1700 Faxon. They were told that this was the original Dickinson farm house which was built on about forty-five acres of land in the early 1900s.<sup>21</sup> This could not be documented by city directory listings, but often property outside the city was unlisted. This obviously is an older home typical of those built around that date.

Finley Faxon was one of the organizers of an additional company, the Speedway Land Company, which opened for business in 1905. Others interested in the business were J. M. Overton, May Overton, Judge J. M. Dickinson, W. J. Brinkley, R. Brinkley Snowden, J. W. Canada, G. W. Macrae, N. C. Perkins and A. B. Carruthers. A newspaper article told of the company's large land purchase that year.



Speedway Land Company purchased 200 acres of land in 1905. This property (adjoined) that purchased by the company several months (earlier) containing 100 acres, which cost \$75,000. The cost of the 300 acres (exceeded) \$225,000, which (was) the largest purchase of land and the largest amount of money invested in subdivision property on record in Memphis.<sup>22</sup>

The work was to begin immediately.

That property which (was) contiguous to the Speedway for one and one-half miles (would) be improved and placed on the market. A building limit of \$5,000 for residences (would) be placed on the Speedway property.<sup>23</sup>

The property was bounded on the west by Mhoon Avenue (Bellevue Boulevard), on the north by Old Raleigh Road, on the east by McLean Boulevard, and on the south by Autumn, Galloway and Faxon Avenues.<sup>24</sup>

Speedway Terrace, opened in 1910, was the first subdivision created out of this purchase; a second, University Park, was started in 1912. Only Section C of Speedway Terrace, which was bounded on the west by Watkins, was located in the VECA area. An ad encouraged Memphians to buy:

When You Buy A Lot For Your Home Get  
One That Is Certain to Increase In  
Value

You will find finished lots in a large number of different neighborhoods throughout the city. The prices of these lots you will find to range between \$30 and \$50. If you could buy a finished modern lot with suburban surroundings, yet close to the center of the city and with every advantage offered by the \$30 to \$50 lots, wouldn't you be interested?