

Kenneth O. Cayce Jr.
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TWENTIETH CENTURY MAIN STREET

Every town has a street which identifies with the business and professional history of the community. Church street in Nashville, Commerce in Clarksville, Broadway in Paducah, Fourth street in Louisville, and Main street in Hopkinsville. From main street long the center of the downtown radiated the commerce of the town. First it went west bounded there by the natural barrier of the river and then with the arrival of the railroad, the Tennessee Central and the Illinois Central on the west and the L&N to the east, the boundaries were pretty well established. For purposes of this paper I am going to confine the north and south borders of Main Street to 4th street on the north and 14th street on the south.

The twentieth century has seen many changes on Main street. We have seen the exclusive entrepreneur, single store operator give way to and share the retail scene with the multi-store operators, commonly referred to as chain stores. Doctors offices which at the turn of the century, and until after World War II were almost exclusively located in second floor offices in the downtown area departed for the outskirts of the downtown to be closer to the Hospital and clustered together for easier referral as medicine became more specialized. Lawyers, due to their need to be closer to the courthouse and governmental entities have in many instances moved from second and third floor locations to occupy former store fronts on the street level. Many of these now occupy remodeled and elaborately furnished quarters

befitting the rising affluence of the profession. At the beginning of the century we found twelve law offices with Main Street addresses - and as late as 1986 we counted twenty, almost all of whom occupied first floor offices on Main Street.

With the development of suburban shopping areas strip centers and enclosed malls we have seen the departure of every chain store related retail establishment from the Main Street scene. After the almost wholesale exodus in the early 1970's gradually the vacant storefronts were occupied by various offices professional or retail establishments until most all available properties were again filled. However, in the last three years with the demise of Keach Furniture, Carrothers, Boyd's with their three stores, Joy Jeweler's, Main Street again found itself with gaping vacancies both in tenants and choices of merchandise.

Main Street has many 20th Century firsts. In 1905 the first moving pictures were shown at the Old Holland's Opera House (the building which now houses Wood's Drug Store and the Main Street Pool Room). In 1914 the first electric street lights were erected to replace the 1879 coal oil lights. The 1914 system went underground in 1960 when the present white was installed. The first traffic control lights were installed at 9th and Main and 7th and Main in 1925. An early memory of mine is the gigantic Christmas trees which were each year mounted to the column supporting the lights. These huge trees, decorated and lighted, gave a Christmas look to Main Street which is difficult to duplicate

since the suspended lights were installed in 1937. The increasing vehicular traffic was responsible for the 1962 one-waying of Main Street, South and Virginia Street, North. Those of you who were not on the Hopkinsville scene in those days were not privy to the prophets of doom who predicted the demise of the whole business district because of this.

What are some of the changes that have taken place on Main Street in the last 89 years? - Let's start first with banks-which are necessary to the commerce of any community. The oldest bank in 1900 was the Bank of Hopkinsville founded in 1865 but was demolished 1900 to 1929 in the building at 7th and Main where Corlette's Office Supply previously was before it burned some three years ago. -In 1929 the Bank of Hopkinsville was bought by City Bank & Trust Co.

The City Bank had been organized in 1880 in the location where Hopkinsville Federal is now. It was to remain in that location until 1930 when it merged with First National Bank.

The First National Bank, the only nationally chartered bank in Hopkinsville's history, opened in 1888 on the S.E. corner of 9th and Main, where Tony Kirvis has his photography studio. (formerly the location of Three's, Burnettes, and for you old timers Higgins Drug Store-tea room and package liquors store). It moved across the street in 1902 to the former location of First City Bank & Trust Co. The name was changed in 1931 after the consolidation of The City Bank, The Bank of Hopkinsville and First National Bank, to First City Bank & Trust Co. It remained in that location until 1974 when it moved to its present Virginia Street location.

The Planter's Bank & Trust Co. was organized in 1873 and was located in the Mercer Block, corner of 6th and Main. It moved to its present location at 8th and Main in 1902.

There was one other bank on Main Street in this century, The Commercial & Savings Bank. It opened in 1906 in the Phoenix Bldg., where the Gold Gallery is presently located. Its president was W. T. Cooper, who owned the building and strange as it might seem Mr. Cooper was on the board of all four of the other Hopkinsville Banks during his presidency of the Commercial & Savings Bank. In 1910 The Commercial & Savings Bank was bought by Planter's Bank.

Both Savings and Loans associations also located on Main Street. Hopkinsville Federal dates from 1879 and First Federal from 1935. Through recent legislation both of these institutions have the power to perform all the functions of regular commercial banks.

At the turn of the century the forerunner of the department store commonly known then as a dry goods store was the anchor of the retail trade in Hopkinsville. The department store arrived after John Wanamaker opened his new store in time for the visitors to the Philadelphia World's Fair. This glass and steel emporium was so awe inspiring that many of the visitors to Philadelphia upon getting off the train and seeing this gleaming site across the street from the station are said to have spent all their time observing the wonders of John Wanamaker's Store and returned home without ever visiting the fair.

Hopkinsville had a number of Dry goods Stores. - J.H.

Anderson opened in 1888 in the building next to Z-100. In 1892 Mr. Anderson built the Market On Main building and moved to it where he stayed until 1920. At that time Anderson's moved to the building on the N.W. corner of 8th and Main (now occupied by Fashion Furniture. In 1932 Anderson's was bought by Mr. George Crenshaw and it was closed in 1942.

Frankels Busy Store was the original occupant of the Anderson location. When Frankels moved in 1920 to a location next to the present Z-100, they leased their building to Anderson's. About 1921 Frankels closed their doors.

E. P. Barnes & Bros. moved here from Beaver Dam in 1921. and opened in the Market on Main building which had been vacated by Anderson. They operated at that location until they sold to the John Green Stores in 1954. A legion of stores exist about Barne's and its owners and employees. One of the most memorable of these characters was W. E. Blewett. He was known for his fondness for his female customers, his inability to keep his toupee' on his head, his knowledge of the merchandise, and as the best brokerage customer in town. (story about selling Mary Bronaugh a blanket)

Bassett & Co. located at 7th and Main, where Bob Fears law office is, was operated by Col. E. B. Bassett—a brother of the legendary longtime County Court Clerk Dr. F. B. Bassett. They opened about 1880 and operated at that location until it was phased out during World War II.

T. M. Jones and the John Moyan Co. were both located in the block where Bartholomew's and Tom C. Jones Insurance Agency are now T. M. Jones was not in business long, but John

Moyan was a long time merchant. His descendants are still large property owners of downtown real estate, located on Main, Ninth and Virginia Streets. Two of their buildings are occupied by Wade's Mens Store and Clayton Jewelers.

The longest operating department store in Hopkinsville was Klein's at 6th and Main. It operated from 1883 to 1980, almost 100 years. Many of you will remember Mose Klein who was the last owner/operator of this old store.

Then there was the advent of the chain department store foremost of which was J. C. Penney's which came to Hopkinsville's Main Street about 1925. First located at 809-811 South Main it moved to the J. H. Anderson location in 1942 and remained there until moving to the Pennyrite Mall upon its opening in 1971. Montgomery-Ward made an auspicious entrance to the Main Street scene in 1929, occupying a newly constructed building at 1005-07 South Main. It also departed upon the opening of the mall.

The other chain department store was Charles Store located at 9th and Main. It opened in the 1930's and closed in the mid-60's. It carried merchandise priced under Penney's quality lines.

In the interest of time I must hasten on. There have been at least eight jewelry stores located on Main Street. I think it is interesting to note that one of these Forbes Jewelry was but one of the 23 retail businesses operated by Forbes Manuf.. Co. on or near Main Street. In addition there was R. C. Hardwick, M.D. Kelly, Kolb & Howe, Kolbs, Barr, and Joy's. Recent jewelry store openings have been the Gold

Gallery on the corner of 9th and Main in 1987 and John Schreiker in the Market-on-Main October 1989.

Furniture stores were often operated along with undertaking. Sometimes a business of cabinet making evolved into making coffins and then the furniture and undertaking business developed. Such was the case with the Charles A. Thompson Furniture and Undertaking located in the block where Sovran Bank is. Charles A. Thompson was the father of Mrs. Frank H. Bassett-Waller and Trice followed the pattern of combining furniture with undertaking. They were located in the Sovran South building. In 1914 this became Waller & Harton (dropping furniture) Then Harton's, then Keightley, then Hughart Keightley, then Hughart, and now is known as Hughart & Beard. The longest tenure of any furniture store on Main Street was Keach Furniture Co. It moved to, and opened on Main Street in 1907 and was in continuous operation in the same location until they closed in 1986. Jordan Furniture opened in what is now Sovran South in 1922. W.A. Bill Schmidt took over operation of the business in 1926 and operated it until 1965. There are today three furniture businesses on Main; Fashion Furniture, Dallas Brawner's Furniture Savings, and Cayce Yost's Furniture Department.

No variety store or what used to be referred to as a 10 cent store survived the exodus of the 1970's. At various times there have been 5 variety stores on Main. The first known as the Racket Store was the first occupant of the Bartholemew's Building. In 1905 S.H. Kress opened in the building now occupied by M & H Interiors. In 1960 they moved

to the corner of 9th and Main where they remained until they closed. F.W. Woolworth came in 1916 and stayed on Main until 1964. They closed there then and were one of the original tenants of the Mall when it opened. Two more variety stores occupied the building next to Sovran, Holt's 5&10 was sold to Bentley's and eventually went out of business.

Only one shoe store Dollar Brothers remains today of the seven which existed as primarily shoe stores. Many other stores sold shoes but here we are dealing with those stores whose primary offerings was shoes.

Among the earliest hardware and queensware merchants were F.A. Yost, although early accounts list F.A. Yost as a manufacturer and dealer in trunks, traveling bags and harness. Forbes Manuf. Co. opened as a hardware and implement dealer in 1871. Gus Young, the forerunner of the present Young Hardware was located on Main Street in the building next to the old Keach Building. Planters Hardware opened in 1903 in the block where Ferrell's is and in 1907 my grandfather D.D. Cayce, Sr. bought into F.A. Yost Co. and moved to the present location of Bartholemew's where it remained until 1951. The name was changed to Cayce-Yost in 1917. Other hardware stores on Main were D.D. Cayce Hardware which was located in the Boyd's Sidetrack location for about two years in the later 1930's. Bassett and Clark operated a hardware store in a building next to Sovran Bank for a few years in the 1960's

No fewer than thirteen drug stores have come to Main Street in this century. Of the thirteen only two remains,

Wood's & Horn's. A few names from the past, Anderson & Fowler, Campbell-Coats, Higgins #1, Higgins #2, L.L. Elgin, Hall's, Taylors, Nolons, Horn who opened first in the Clinic Building, 1110 S. Main where Pennyrite Travel is now, SavRite, and The Phoenix Drug Store.

Main Street has seen two publishing ventures in the 1900's. The Hopkinsville Independent 1907-1910 was located between 4th & 5th streets on the East side of Main. The longest lasting publication Charles M. Meacham's Hopkinsville Kentuckian first published in 1893. Mr. Meacham built the Tom C. Jones Ins. building in 1893 and published from there until he was bought by The New Era in 1920. It is interesting to note that an annual subscription to the Kentuckian, published every other day was \$2.00. An annual subscription to The New Era, published weekly, was \$1.00.

There have been two hotels on Main Street, The Phoenix 1812-1903 and The Main Hotel 1915-1958. The Phoenix on the corner of 9th & Main, present Gold Gallery, was first known as The Lower Tavern, operated by Carter T. Wood a son of Bartholemew Wood. In 1840 this location was operated by another son of Bartholemew Wood and it was called The American Inn. During The Civil War it was known as The Foard House. In 1882 J.E. Cooper opened it as The Phoenix Hotel and operated it until it closed in 1903.

Specialty men's stores and ladies wear stores have appeared on the scene and departed. In the early 1900's there were two prominent names in men's stores on Main Street. Wall & McGowan, the successor to J.T. Wall & Co.,

later to be known as McGowan's. This well known mens store was located at 7th and Main where Bill Deatherage's law office is. Roseborough's was located on the east side of Main where Joy's Jewelry was. It was the first of a series of men's stores in that location namely, Glover-Williamson, Cayce-Yost's Men's Store, Frank Cayce Co., Carol Kane Co. Another old mens store that departed the scene was Dan Metzler's, long located where Carother's formerly held forth. Dan Metzler and his son Dan, Jr. operated from soon after World War I until the later part of the 1960's. The other well remembered and last mens clothing store on Main was Boyds. This was the successor to E.P. Barnes Men's department and was operated by the Boyd family until it closed in 1987. Today no men's store operates on Main Street.

My research and memory recalls that at least fourteen ladies shops have operated over the years in the blocks between 7th and 11th streets. Of these only Buck's remains along with a shop which opened in the old Carother's location recently. Taylor's, Sally Gray, Thrifty Shop, Mildred-Sue, Morton's, Hat & Dress, Blum's, Carl's have long since disappeared. Carother's closed two years ago and Arnold's moved to the Pennyrile Mall when it opened in 1971. Buck's remains as the lone survivor on Main Street.

Main Street has been the site of at least fourteen grocery stores. G.R. Clark & Co., W.T. Cooper & Co., Forbes Bros., E.W. Henderson, B.B. Rice, J.K. Twyman, Pick-em-and Pack-em, J.T. Walker's, and Jitney Jungle to name the

Independents. Chain groceries which have operated on Main Street are Piggly-Wiggly, Kroger in two locations, Red Front had two locations, and A&P. Today, the closest full line groceries to the downtown Main Street area are Drury's and Giles.

The tallest building on Main Street formerly stood on the corner of 11th and Main where First Federal Savings and Loan now stands. It was the five story Pennyroyal Building which housed various offices and residents in the only apartment building ever built for that particular purpose on Main Street. This building appeared on the scene about 1913 and was destroyed by the fire of 1927 which consumed the whole block where Ferrell's is located.

The automobile has changed the life style of Americans more than any other twentieth century development. This might be a debatable point to some, but the mobility created with its introduction, the roads which have been built to accommodate it have changed the buying patterns and improved the economy of the United States, while requiring the cities and towns of America to spend billions in an effort to adjust their mission and retain their vitality as a gathering place for those seeking goods and services.

Main Street Hopkinsville, has shared in the prosperity which the introduction of the horseless carriage provided. Main Street has housed five service stations (some of these under several owners) in this century. In 1920 J.W. Maddox and Cy Williamson, Sr. opened a service station at 12th and Main, where Winston's is now. That location is the oldest

continuously operated auto related business in Hopkinsville and on Main Street. The original 1920 building was moved and now stands on 9th Street between the railroad and Campbell Street across from Peace Park. Thompson and Perkins opened at 4th and Main in 1929 and has been in continuous operation. Since other locations have been R.C. White Tire & Vulcanizing Co., Service Tire and Gas Co., and a Gulf Station located on the site of First Federal Saving's and Loan.

There have been nineteen different dealerships of automobiles located between fourth and twelfth streets on Main offering in excess of twenty different brands of motorized conveyance. The first car agency was Planter's Automobile Co. which opened in 1910 in the Planters Hardware in the block commonly referred to as the Montgomery Ward block. Some of the dealers lasted only a few years others for longer periods. Three dealers today can trace their beginning back to Main Street. Collins Buick had its early start as the Wheeler-Dowdy Motor Co. Freeman Chevrolet can trace its history to George E. Baker Motor Co., and Scott Oldsmobile (which was the last new car dealer on Main Street having departed in 1963) can trace its beginnings back to George E. Baker Motor Co. Listen to some of the names from the past - first the dealers - Ideal Motor Co., Hopkinsville Cadillac Co., Hopkinsville Auto Co., Jones Motor Co., F.A. Yost & Co., Higgins Motor Co., Melton Ellis Motor Co., Dalton Motor Co., Dalton Davis Motor Co., R.C. White Tire & Vulcanizing Co., Ideal Nash Co., Davis-Jones Chevrolet Co., Kirkman-Bartlett & Co., Kirkman-Killebrew Motor Co., Kirkman

Motor Co., Geo. E. Baker Motor Co., Wheeler-Dowdy Motor Co., Willie Jones Garage. - And the long list of brand names Cole, Everitt, E.M.F., Overland, Case, Hupp, Studebaker, Ford, Buick, Chevrolet, Cadillac, Briscoe, National 6, Maxwell sold by Cayce-Yost 1915-1916, price \$665.00 Chalmers, Oldsmobile, Anderson, and Hudson.

I have tried to give here the most important developments on Main Street in this century as I saw them. As we approach the last decade of this century and prepare for the twenty first century we are challenged to use all the intellectual and economic resources at our command to convert Main Street to the twenty first century. I foresee few if any larger stores, but a revival of the retail economy in the reappearance of the small specialty shop, the service establishment. Perhaps some far sighted individual or group will bring apartment living back to the area and with it the need and demand for these shops. Two things are happening now which I am pleased to report. The Montgomery-Ward building will soon be occupied by Cornette's Office Supply. This building has not had a stable tenant since Ward's departure in 1971. The second development is a major change in the looks and use of the Keach block. An out of town group is attempting to put together a package that will see the tearing down of all the buildings on the property they acquire and the construction of a facility adaptable for their purposes. -Real Estate and architectural firms have been working on this project for some six months and hopefully there can be some announcement of a positive nature

shortly after the first of the year.

I would like to conclude tonight by relating a true story, centered in downtown in the days when all the retail business of the city were located on Main Street and its sister streets. There were no vacant store fronts. On Saturday afternoon the west side of Main between 9th street and the courthouse was alive with human beings, some buying, some having come to town merely to see their friends. We were a closely knit retail community. Hopkinsville was a trading center. More state and federal highways came into Hopkinsville (some 13) than any other town in the state with the exception of Lexington. We had our character's both those in the retail trade and the customers we served. Forty years ago Mildred Hancock operated a shop known as Mildred-Sue's in the block where Bart's is. My brother Frank ran a men's store next to The Mildred-Sue Shop. Frank and Mildred visited each other almost daily, discussing business, customers, and I am sure doing a little gossiping on the side. There was one lady who was a regular customer of all the stores who had a reputation for taking merchandise out on approval one day and bringing it back the next. She was a nice person, her husband was well respected, so much so, that as a republican he had been elected to a major office in county government. His wife's favorite entertainment was to shop and then return most of her purchases. This went on for years and she was jokingly referred to as Mrs. Bring it Back. Finally, as to all of us, she died and was taken to what is now Fuqua-Hinton's. Main Street was still a two-way street.

The day of the funeral the procession went out Main to Riverside and in a very few minutes Mildred looking out the door of her shop saw the hearse returning going south on Main, the casket clearly visible. She ran next door screaming Frank, Frank, come quick they are bringing her back, they are bringing her back. Ironically the cemetery crew had opened the grave on the wrong lot and they had to take her back to the funeral home until the crew could correct their mistake.

Main Street comes and goes but there will always be a Main Street in Hopkinsville. It will take time to develop a new mission and use for the downtown area and I hope that I am privileged to live to see it in a new era serving a growing and prosperous community.