

The Shelbina Lake

During the summer of 1936 three men went to Hannibal with the view of locating a district W.P.A. office in Shelbina, but learned that the office would be located in Macon, due to a much larger government payroll in that county resulting from work in progress on the dam of the Macon lake. The three men were Mayor L. B. Henderson, J. J. Sanders and Wm. K. Lasley, and although their mission to Hannibal was not successful, it was the beginning of the Shelbina lake.

The depression of 1932 was not over and the government was undertaking vast work programs over the country under supervision of the Works Progress Administration in order to provide employment for millions of people without jobs. The drouths of 1934 and 1936 were the worst in the history of this area, and the water supply from Salt River was almost exhausted during both years. It was possible to walk down the center of the bed of the river for a mile or more without getting one's shoes wet. The situation was rather desperate, and the people of the town were disposed to do something about it. The two drouth years and the W.P.A. program made possible the building of the lake.

The W.P.A. office at Hannibal offered to approve a lake project at Shelbina if an application for that purpose were presented to them properly sponsored. The city council, then composed of Harold G. Clapper, J. C. Houck, O. L. Payne and S. S. Barkelew, approved the project at the next meeting of August 25, 1936, and designated a committee of three—J. C. Houck,

George Grant and Wm. K. Lasley, to secure an option on 157 acres of land.

The city council then on September 23, 1936 approved an application to be presented to the W.P.A. office, and Sept. 29th ordered a special election for Oct. 22nd to provide for the issuance of \$12,000 in bonds to finance the proposed lake. The vote was 754 for the bonds and 61 against.

The main body of the required land was then purchased from Wm. J. Dungan on January 19, 1937 for \$3,500, and other necessary land was added later to complete the project. The total land acreage was about 220 acres, purchased at an average price of less than \$30 an acre.

On March 2, 1937 Mayor Henderson, having served five years, tendered his resignation as mayor, and at the next regular election of April 7, 1937, Chas. B. Ford was elected mayor to fill the unexpired term, and with him came two new aldermen, Harry Libby, Jr. and Tom Jackson.

On April 24th a committee composed of Libby, Payne and Lasley was designated by the council to supervise construction, and the contract for construction was let on May 24th to E. W. Jewett, contractor, for building the dam. Work began a few months later, the construction being authorized by an ordinance dated July 23rd.

On April 5, 1938, before the dam was completed, Mr. Jewett filed for mayor and was elected, and the dam was finally finished during the year 1938. The water acreage was about



Belles of the Bonnet—Top row, Mrs. Ervin Gibson, Miss Jill Chapman, Mrs. Carl Miles, Mrs. Harlan O'Daniel, Mrs. Delbert Snider, Mrs. Chester White. Bottom row, Mrs. Charles Fry, Mrs. Ray Willhoit, Miss Barbara Gaines, Mrs. Art Carlson and Mrs. Harold Lake.