

# E.H. Crump: Boss of all Bosses Essay

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When driving west down Lamar in Memphis, Tennessee, the street turns into E.H. Crump boulevard. That is about as much as I knew about the name E.H. Crump. Never would I have guess what the name meant to the city of Memphis and the amount of weight it once carried. It was not until I enrolled into this Tennessee History course that I began to realize how significant the man behind this name was. Before Elvis Presley put Memphis on the map with his Rock n Roll music, Willie Herenton took office, or various Memphis musicians claimed to be the “King of Memphis”, there was one man who undoubtedly ran the city, and his name was Edward Hull Crump. Political bosses in American were not something that was uncommon in the early 1900s. According to dictionary.com a political boss is “a leader in a political party who controls votes and dictates appointments”. Crump emerged from humble beginnings to become the most powerful man in Memphis in a reign that would span over a few decades.

Crump was born October 2, 1874 to a poor family in Holly Springs, Mississippi. Crump attended public schools until the age of fourteen when he dropped out. In 1892 at the age of 18, Crump moved to Memphis. Crump got educated in bookkeeping and worked a few clerical jobs. It was there that he began dating and eventually married his wife Bessie McLean.

He joined social clubs and at age 27 he married the daughter of a socially prominent

family. His wife's family provided him with the funds to buy out his employer. He then started to think about going into politics. In 1903 he ran for some minor offices in the local Democratic Party organization and set his sights in securing a paid political office.

(Watkins)

Crump entered local politics as a reformer, recognizin...

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... efficiently or had as good of an image as it did when Boss Crump ruled. Symbols of Crump's life are still all around Memphis. Today there is a life sized statue of Crump in Overton Park, a hospital, and a street named after Crump. No matter what you think about Crump, his legacy is cemented in the history books as one of Memphis's most important political figures.

#### Works Cited

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