



## TODAY'S FRONT PAGE WILL BE A NEW CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY BOOKS.

Those books will arrive on Cleveland County students' desks in less than 24 hours.

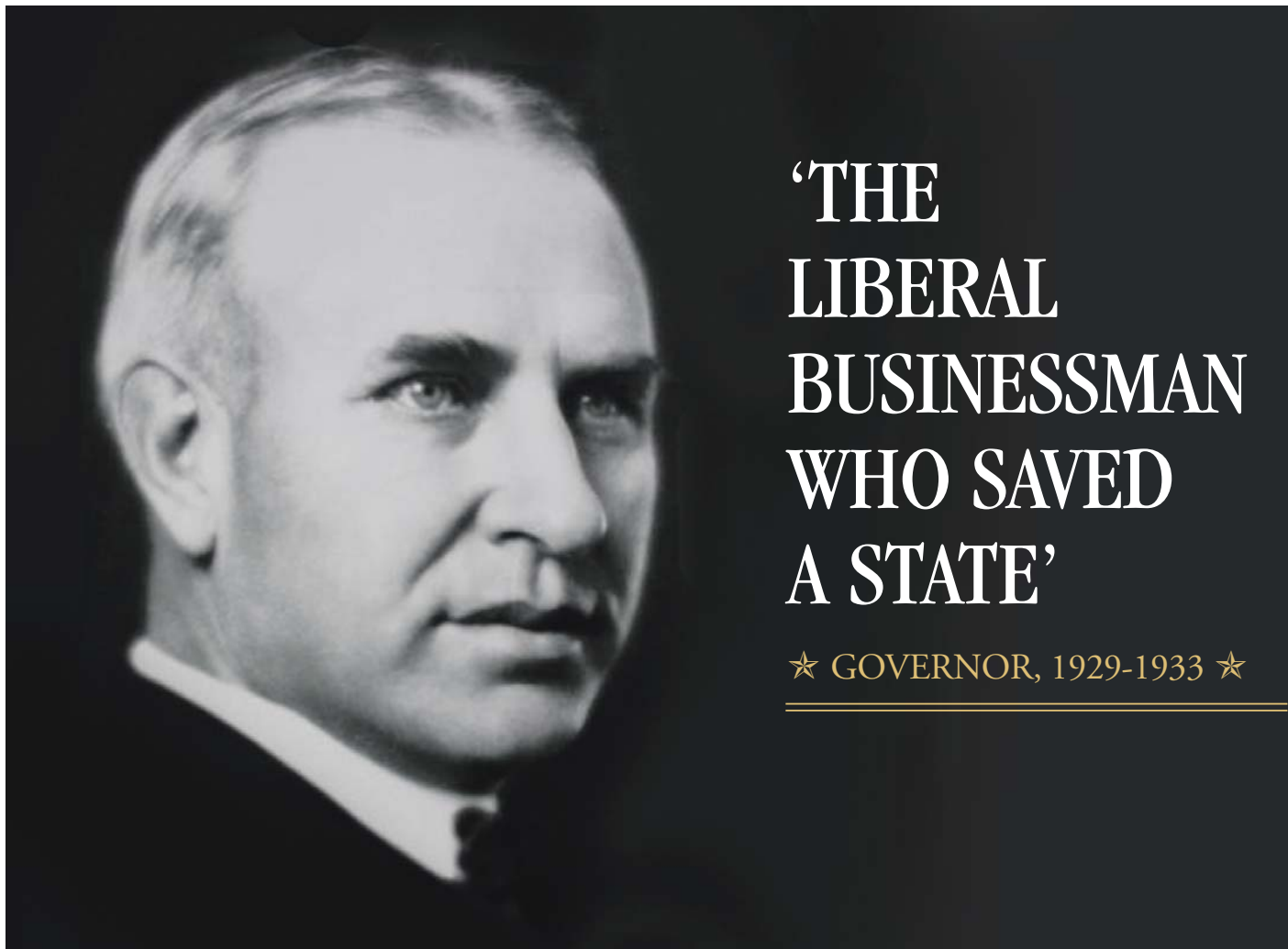
Thanks to a generous grant by the O. Max Gardner National Historical Association, of which O. Max Gardner III is the chief executive, a copy of today's *Star* will be delivered to every one of the 16,000 students in the Cleveland County School system when they return to classes on Thursday. This is part of *The Star's* Newspapers in Education program, a partnership between *The Star*, the Cleveland County Schools and other valued sponsors which allows the world's most current textbook to be delivered to participating classrooms year-round and includes features and content recommended by teachers as the best way to help our students learn.

*We thank the O. Max Gardner National Historical Association for its special sponsorship of today's edition.*



1929 to 1933 North Carolina Governor O. Max Gardner  
(March 22, 1882 - February 6, 1947)

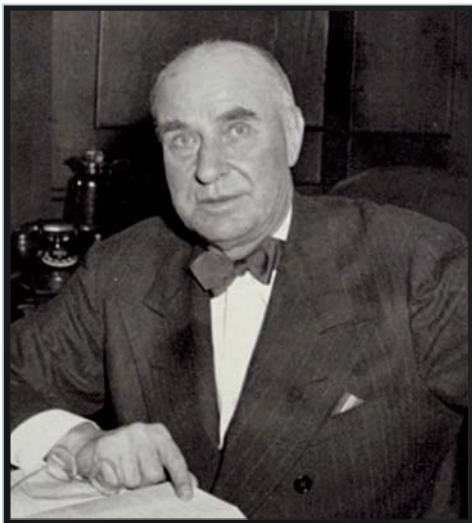
*An enduring vision. An enduring legacy.*



**‘THE  
LIBERAL  
BUSINESSMAN  
WHO SAVED  
A STATE’**

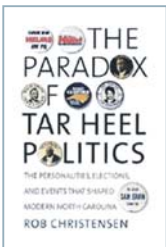
☆ GOVERNOR, 1929-1933 ☆

From 1928 to 1948, the ‘Shelby Dynasty’ ruled North Carolina politics.



Read more about Gov. O Max Gardner in Sunday’s special inauguration section.

Gardner was one of the state’s most gifted political figures. Forced to be innovative because of the Depression, Gardner reshaped state government. Before Gardner, the state’s road system was controlled by hundreds of local political barons; after Gardner, the state was responsible for the highway system. Before Gardner, each county was its own jailer; after Gardner, there was a state prison system. Before Gardner, schools were financed entirely from local property taxes; after Gardner, the state paid for the operation of the schools, including teacher salaries.



Before Gardner, each of the three major state-supported universities was an individually duchy; after Gardner, there was a consolidated university system. Before Gardner, there was no workers’ compensation law and injured employees had to sue their employers in court; after Gardner, the state had the workers’ compensation act. Before Gardner, the roadways in the state were patrolled by county deputies; after Gardner, the roads were policed by the North Carolina Highway Patrol.

And there was more. Before Gardner, profligate cities, towns and counties were free to borrow themselves into bankruptcy. After Gardner, the Local Government Commission polices their finances. Before Gardner, each state agency bought its own supplies and handled its own job applications. After Gardner, there was a state Division of Purchasing and Contract and a Division of Personnel.

Gardner was a political moderate who was willing to move to the left or the right as the times directed. But in the boardrooms of North Carolina, Gardner was seen as a liberal businessman who was sympathetic to the New Deal.

black girl who were essay winners in the “Live-at-Home” contest (the photo is shown below right), a program designed to encourage people to become more self-sufficient by growing more of their own food. When he was warned that he was handing his foes political ammunition, Gardner said he would make use of the picture himself in any future political campaign. When Depression-era legislation budget cutters proposed merging the state’s two major black public colleges – what would become N.C. A&T State University in Greensboro and N.C. Central University in Durham – he killed the plan.

In later years, Gardner encouraged the registration of blacks at the mill precinct near his factory in Shelby, so that by the 1940s there were 500 African-Americans voting in that precinct. He praised his son Ralph for organizing a black Boy Scout Troop. He donated land to Shelby for use as a park for blacks and land for Webb Memorial Cemetery. He told the mayor of Shelby near the end of World War II that it was a waste of money to build a new school for blacks because racial segregation could not last much longer. And he said in private what no southerner would say publicly.

“I have no doubt, as you know, that the young Negroes of today will be the voters of tomorrow,” Gardner wrote to his son in 1940. “In the next 20 years the Negroes will not be denied the franchise by fictitious political figments.”

*From “The Paradox of Tar Heel Politics” by Rob Christensen (University of North Carolina Press 2008)*



