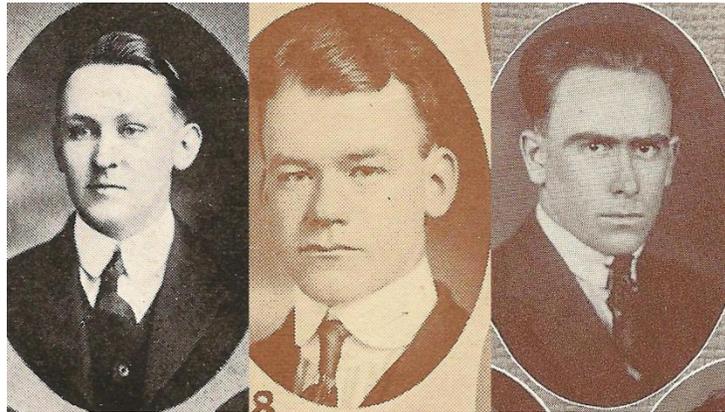


## Automotive Mechanics History

When O C Kirkman, Central's first Manual Arts Instructor and Department Head, left Central to start up the Mechanics Dept at the new Cookeville, TN college - Tennessee Polytechnic Institute - in 1916, Central replaced him with Charles J Anderson from Illinois. Anderson, whose expertise was in mechanized power equipment, saw the need for specialized automotive repair training, and convinced Central to hire, as his assistant, local automotive expert Otto Hassler in 1918. Hassler, with his brother Leon, also operated Hassler Bros. Automotive Shops on Pine Street.



**Auto Mechanics Instructors (L to R):**

**Otto Hassler 1918-19; Winston Burton 1919-21; JJ Fletcher 1921-69**

Hassler taught at Central for only the 1918-19 school year, then returned to manage his new automotive business on Main Street. Hassler was replaced by Charles Winston Burton, a science instructor at Middle Tennessee Normal School (MTNS) in Murfreesboro. Burton oversaw the installation of Central's new auto repair shop in 1920 and caught the attention of Kirkman, who had been hired to direct the new Manual Arts Dept at City High's new campus on East Third Street. Burton accepted the offer from Kirkman, and left Central at the end of the 1921 school year, but not before recommending another Murfreesboro mechanic and former MTNS student, Jesse Jordan (JJ) Fletcher, to succeed him. Fletcher assumed the reins of the auto shop in the fall of 1921 and never relinquished it for the remainder of Central's time at Dodds Avenue. Fletcher also became the head of Manual Training upon the unexpected death of Anderson in June 1943. Fletcher made the transition to the new Central for the 1969-70 school year, then retired. He passed away on May 26 the following year. Of Old Central's 51 years of automobile repair instruction, J J Fletcher directed all but the first three years.



Burton and Crew with New Bay in Background, 1920



Fletcher & Crew, 1962