“AN HONEST CONVERSATION ABOUT RACE”: RACIAL RECONCILIATION IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, 1954-PRESENT

by

MARVIN T. CHILES

(Under the Direction of Robert A. Pratt)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that Richmond, Virginia—the former Confederate capital—compelled the nation to heal its race relations after the modern Civil Rights Movement. As a black suburbanite born in the 1990s, I grew up experiencing an unprecedented level of racial harmony in Richmond. I later learned that residents used downtown revitalization in the 1980s and public history in the 1990s to mend their racial divides. Richmond’s efforts became national in the next century when several cities, along with the White House, began socially engineering a post-racial America. My dissertation informs the historiographic consensus that the South maintained its regional distinction after World War II. The South, once seen as a blight upon the nation in terms of race relations, has become one of the most racially progressive regions in America. Scholars focusing on Charlotte, Atlanta, and Houston credit *metropolization* with this development. However, I argue that Richmond’s struggles with acknowledging, embracing, and changing its collective identity better explains the South’s recent thirst for racial reconciliation.

INDEX WORDS: Southern, Urban, African American, Political, Social, Public History, Richmond, Virginia, Racial Reconciliation.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the City of Richmond, a place and people who are still struggling to overcome the burdens of American history.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge that there are too many people to thank, and not enough space to thank them. Nevertheless, I start my laundry list of gratitude with my fiancé Alia Jubran. She has been, for the last eight years, a pillar of support to and for me. This dissertation would not exist if she refused to sacrifice her nights and weekends for me to research and write. I owe special thanks to my family: The Chiles/Massies from Richmond, Virginia. We descended from slaves who earned their freedom and rose above Jim Crow to produce a proud, successful clan filled with doctors, lawyers, educators, and business persons. This legacy of self-improvement and racial uplift through the strict code of *excellence without excuses* drives my work.

If it takes a village to raise a child, then an academic community must uplift their junior scholars. With that in mind, I owe Dr. Robert A. Pratt more than I will ever have to pay. His guidance provided an invaluable blanket of support during the winters of self-doubt and disappointment that invariably haunts academia. This dissertation is a reflection of his mentorship, criticism, and sharp eye for detail. I would like to thank my committee members (Drs. Scott Reynolds Nelson, Timothy Cleaveland, and Brian J. Daugherity) for helping me streamline my thoughts, sharpen my argument, and identify my scholarly contribution.

Lastly, I would like to thank the City of Richmond, and its people. The librarians and archivists guided me to sources that had not been touched in decades. The people I interviewed let me into their homes to share their life stories with me. This dissertation is as much theirs as it is mine.

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PREFACE

"THE GREAT CONTRADICTION OF THIS CITY"

This project began in the winter of 2000 when I had just turned eight years old. Like most young boys, I spent most of my time playing with toys and video games. My father, however, did not care for child's play. The patriarch often told me that it distorted ones image of the world and, more importantly, distracted young boys from becoming men. Manhood was the foundation for everything in my father's eyes. So he spent most of his life trying to understand and strive towards it. A part of this process was cultivating and maintaining the respect of others. He did this by shedding his working-class origins through refined dialect and appearance. When my father left our home for work or leisure, he regularly spoke proper English and wore handmade suits and formal clothing. Just weeks after my eighth birthday, he told me that it was time that I, as his first born son and second child, should start my transition to manhood by doing the same. While his ideas about manhood were a bit cold, one dimensional and outdated, I later understood that they reflected his personal struggle to overcome racial bigotry in the urban South.

I remember sitting in the passenger seat of his black Camaro one Saturday morning as we headed to the tailor. My father parked his car along West Broad Street in Richmond and a slight sparkle caught my eye. There it was, a shiny antique yo-yo on display at a toy store. I did not know much about yo-yos at the time. But at that moment I knew that I wanted one, and not just any one but that one. My father refused to buy it for me. He said that my recent birthday was the beginning of me learning "how to be a man." To my father, men obtained possessions through their labor. So, he offered to pay me enough money to buy the yo-yo if I completed more chores

around the house. However, he would deduct so-called *taxes* from that allowance to teach me the delicate balance of earning, spending, and saving money. “Now tell me how that sounds,” he often said after making demands that were disguised as propositions. I saw any means to purchase the yo-yo as a fair deal, so I agreed to his terms and began months of working to earn my coveted prize.

My thrifty father failed to mention that he would keep sixty-six cents of every dollar I earned. As I shoveled snow, washed dishes, scrubbed floors, pulled weeds, and folded a tremendous amount of laundry, my labor slowly turned into dollars; and those dollars quickly dwindled to cents. The patriarch thought he was teaching me about capitalism. However, he conditioned me to overly value and anticipate playing with that yo-yo. I finally saved up enough money to buy the yo-yo by the end of summer. As promised, my father took me back to the toy store to make my first real purchase. “You saw it, you worked for it, now go buy it boy,” I remembered him telling me before I gleefully ran into the store.

I approached the cash register and asked to buy the yo-yo sitting in the window. The slender, elderly white storekeeper told me that, “oh that’s a display. The actual yo-yos are in the back of the third aisle.” Without wasting a second, I dashed to the back of the store and picked up one of the last five yo-yos. I quickly noticed that the price of the yo-yo had increased since I last visited the store. Forgetting whether I had enough money to buy it, I placed the yo-yo back on the bottom shelf and pulled out my money to count it. At that moment, a white employee appeared around the aisle and accused me of trying to steal a toy. I pleaded my case. But she did not believe me, repeating that, “I know what I just saw.”

She escorted me to the cash register and told the store owner that I tried to steal. The elderly white man paused a minute before placing his hands on the counter and asking his

employee “what did he try to steal.” She told him it was a silver yo-yo, similar to display model in the window behind him. The old man chuckled a bit and told her that I had asked him to buy the display model a few minutes before. “He looks like a good kid, I’m sure this is a mistake,” he told the employee. The owner then took the display model out of the window and sold it to me at a discounted price. I left the store with the yo-yo I so coveted. However, it felt like a hollow prize. I had never been accused of stealing before. Even worse, I did not understand why I had been accused in the first place. Feeling ashamed of the accusation, I did not tell my father what happened after leaving the store. I sat in the passenger seat and remained fairly quiet on the car ride home. I played with the yo-yo maybe once or twice, but certainly no more than that. The toy had become a reminder of an incident I barely understood and never wanted to relive. Later that year, I completely divorced myself from the yo-yo. The once-coveted object became a discarded item along with other toys I donated to less fortunate children that Christmas season. I do not remember much about the year 2000, or being eight years old for that matter. However, I have never forgotten that antique yo-yo, or what I went through to get it.

Six years went by before I told my parents that story. The topic came up during a conversation about the police murder of New York native Sean Bell. My mother mentioned how hard it was to raise black children -- especially a black son -- because she felt that, as was the case during her childhood and adolescence, black skin was a lifetime charge against one’s character. This was the first real conversation I recall my parents every having about race. Their words touched me so deeply that I told them about my experience with the yo-yo. Upon hearing my testimony, my father and mother seemed dejected and relieved. We concluded by discussing ways to avoid such incidents in the future. Whenever I entered *any* store, I was to always have my hands, and the items I plan to purchase, in plain sight. After making a purchase, I was to

request a bag with the receipt inside. My parents later admitted that the conversation was difficult for them because they sought to raise their children without the mental burden of American racism. A recent conversation with my mother confirmed this agenda. “I remember referring to a man as Chinese when you were about six or seven. You looked up to me and said, ‘mommy what’s Chinese?’ I smiled because you reminded me that I was raising children to never see or judge someone by their race,” she said. However, national events and my experiences heightened my senses to race in America and in my hometown, wrecking my parents’ quixotic mission by reminding them that race would remain an important issue in the next generation.

I later learned that my parents came of age in post-Civil Rights Era Richmond. They took advantage of progressive policies to solidify their middle-class status and assimilate into white suburbia. In the process, they sought to suppress painful memories of racial discrimination. From school integration, open housing, and affirmative action, they earned a decent public education, well-paying jobs, a recently-built home in Chesterfield County, private school for their children, and welcoming white neighbors. This assimilation was a part of a national trend, as suburbanization shrouded the black middle-class experience in the 1990s. By the end of the decade, almost half of America’s black bourgeoisie lived outside of America’s largest inner cities. Suburban life was a norm for me. For black Richmonders in my parents’ generation, however, the suburbs were much more than that. It was the marriage between social equality and financial equity; the affirmation that blacks could fully coexist among, and not beneath, white

people, their historic enemies -- the same race that used slavery and Jim Crow to oppress their ancestors.[1]

Together my family and I frequently crossed the James River to visit Richmond's Far West End. As Courthouse Road turned to Huguenot Road, and then eventually River Road, we passed the beautiful Chesterfield Town Center Mall, University of Richmond campus, and the storied Windsor Farms neighborhood. Most of our Saturdays were spent at William Byrd Park, the Virginia Fine Arts Museum, and the tree lined streets of Monument Avenue. Some weekends we ventured down West Broad Street, past the Science Museum of Virginia, Stuart C. Siegel Center, and the Medical College of Virginia to visit some family in the East End area of Church Hill. This majority black area was, and still is, worlds apart from Richmond's Far West End and the Chesterfield suburbs. It was underdeveloped by industry, red-lined by the real estate community, and concentrated with housing projects by city government. The systemic poverty translated into an overabundance of crime, underachieving schools, and a general hopelessness by Church Hill residents in particular and Richmonders in general. Today, the area is at the epicenter of a citywide gentrification movement as developers convert abandoned factory and office buildings into new restaurants and upscale townhomes. However, when one mentions the name Church Hill to longtime Richmonders, they evoke its legacy of Richmond's unresponsiveness to black urban poverty.[2]

By the time I reached high school, I often asked my parents about their experiences as black youths in Richmond. They routinely dismissed my questions. Because I had not experienced slavery, Jim Crow, or the uneasy transition to racial integration, they stressed that I

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[1] James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity*, (Oxford University Press, 2005), 214; and Steven Estes, *Charleston in Black and White: Race and Power in the South After the Civil Rights Movement*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 164.

[2] Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, May 14, 2019; and *Growing Up in Civil Rights Richmond: A Community Remembers*, (University of Richmond Museums, 2019), 11.

should enjoy the racial climate I lived in and not dwell on the painful stories of the past. My extended family, however, was much more receptive to my questions. Family reunions, barbeques, and Sunday dinners in Church Hill, Jackson Ward, and Barton Heights became classrooms where I listened to older and younger relatives describe Richmond in ways I would later come to fully understand. To me, Richmond was the Far West End and Chesterfield suburbs, a place of comfort and privilege. My extended family saw Richmond as a decrepit inner city built to suppress its black people. They felt that the best schools, jobs, and housing were reserved for whites mainly, and the few blacks who "went along to get along." They felt that in Richmond, *race was a class construct*.

I matriculated at James Madison University in 2014 to exchange my personal inquiries for a scholarly pursuit. In two intellectually toiling years, I worked on a master's thesis about race in twentieth-century Richmond. My advisor Steven A. Reich helped to shape this ambiguous subject into a defensible project about school desegregation and electoral politics in the 1960s and 1970s. After reading the final draft, and promising to approve it for defense, Reich looked me in the eyes and said, "Good work Marvin, but this doesn't smell like Richmond." The white Chicago native and Northwestern University PhD had only been to Richmond a handful of times. But he is an urban man, and an even better urban historian. Reich understood that my finished thesis examined race as an object of a city that long functioned as a racist institution. My thesis also did not give readers a sense of place, portraying Richmond as a just another city dealing with racial issues. After months of disappointment, I accepted Reich's criticism that the thesis, as he stated, did not *smell like Richmond*.

Reich's critique led me to further explore this topic as a doctorate student at the University of Georgia. Under the tutelage of Robert A. Pratt, I restructured my research and

focus. Pratt reinforced another one of Reich's messages that the best historians fully immerse themselves into their work. I spent most of my free time in Athens, Georgia reading old newspapers, journal articles, and monographs about Richmond and Virginia history. It was not until I revisited an old interview between a white Richmond minister and myself, however, that my dissertation started to make sense. During the March 2015 interview, I asked the minister: "What is the nature of race relations in Richmond?" He leaned forward in his chair, smiled, as he often does before speaking, and told me that, "Richmond is at the heart of Virginia's obsession with race. When people speak of land, taxes, schools, transportation, and resources in general, they are talking about race." This idea is shared by public policy scholars. More recent studies have concluded that seemingly race-neutral topics have inherently racist outcomes. The socially-conscious minister hammered his point home when he described race as "the heart of Richmond, which is at the heart of Virginia; a state that is the model of the nation."[3]

Rediscovering this interview provided the spark my project needed. I reached out to the minister for a second interview four years later, and he graciously accepted. This interview took place at Richmond Hill, a former Catholic cathedral-turned-retreat center he founded along Richmond's East Grace Street. As we sat facing the windows that overlooked much of downtown, I pressed play on the tape recorder and asked the reverend, as I did four years earlier, about the nature of race relations in Richmond. He jumped out of his seat, walked towards the window, and proceeded to break down race relations from the perspective of a person who had experienced its change over time.[4]

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[3] Interviews with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 12 and 14, 2019; Leland T. Saito, *The Politics of Exclusion: The Failure of Race-Neutral Policies in Urban America*, (Stanford University Press, 2009), 4-5; and Christopher Mele, "The Strategic Uses of Race to Legitimize 'Social Mix' Urban Redevelopment." *Social Identities* 25, No. 1 (January 2019), 27-9.

[4] Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 7, 2015.

The reverend directed my attention towards a building just one block north of Richmond Hill. It was St. John's Church, the place where "Patrick Henry said *Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death*," he said. Then he pointed to the Capitol of Virginia and Executive Mansion. "Right over there is *All Men Are Created Equal* at the Capitol of Virginia, the Declaration of Independence, and over here is Patrick Henry's *Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death*," he stated proudly. Then his mood darkened when he pointed to the James River located just a few blocks below us. "Down there is the largest slave market on the East Coast, at the bottom between these two statements…..So, we are standing in the middle of the great contradiction of this city and of this nation." For the reverend, there was no mistaking that Richmond was foundational for America's divide between the theory of human equality and the practice of inequality. Until that *great contradiction* was reconciled, he believed that race would remain a pivotal issue in Richmond and the nation for generations to come.[5]

Racial division is an American problem. But in Richmond, it operates within the city's mystique. Iron, bronze, and marble statues are an important part of its landscape. However, Richmond is not an outdoor museum. Two major interstates connect its gentrifying downtown to the bourgeois suburbs. Yet, Richmond is far from a commuter city. Red brick buildings and Italian architecture decorate its manufacturing districts. Still, Richmond is postindustrial. Ten colleges and universities rest within the metropolitan area. Even so, no one considers Richmond a college town. Richmond is more than its eclectic landscape: it is its people. Richmonders are unmistakably American while flaunting their southern distinction. They are both progressive minded and socially hidebound, using their troubled and honorable past to shape the present and prepare for the future. Richmonders are punctiliously genteel in their speech and actions. This

[5] Ibid, May 14, 2019.

cultural decorum, however, disguises their issues with race. While Richmond is today one of the most culturally progressive and fastest growing cities in America, it was once home to the largest slave port on the East Coast, the former capital of the Confederacy, and often considered "Down Where the [Jim Crow] South Begins." To understand Richmond's mystique, one must understand America's history with race and racism. That history is undoubtedly baked deep into the social fabric of Richmond.

Years of personal curiosity and scholarly pursuit have led me to conclude that race is Richmond's *transcendental praxis*. It is both *the* prime mover and *product* of the city's social, economic, and political affairs. Race relations, mainly between blacks and whites, show Richmond's struggle to understand its place in American life. Its issues with systemic racism is clearly identified by the persistence of segregated schools and neighborhoods. Its race relations, while a key part of the South's periled progress after the 1960s, are not so easily quantifiable. Richmond's race relations are contested terrains where generational barriers have become bridges to societal progress. Still, race relations remain an unpredictable continuum that troubles many Richmonders. Local efforts to control race relations have led to a collective myopia where racial equity succumbs to the immediate satisfaction of racial harmony. With respect to the minister I interviewed, this myopia is Richmond's *greatest contradiction*. Southern historians have come to similar conclusions. Through the use of local, regional, gender, political, and urban studies, they see America's racial progress as dilatory at best. Slavery bred a form of systemic racism that has outlasted Emancipation, Reconstruction, and the Modern Civil Rights Movement. American history is a story of two races that were never *one* people. From that perspective, racial

reconciliation is an oxymoron, a disingenuous concept, and nebulous *dream* that reformers like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., could only hope for, but never bring into fruition.[6]

This dissertation examines the connection between race relations and collective identity. In the process, it tells the story of an arch-conservative city's inner fight to change its culture, self-image, the South, and the nation after the 1960s. In this dissertation, I will argue that Richmonders use urban redevelopment during the 1980s and public history in the 1990s to reconcile their history of racism. These efforts gave birth to biracial organizations, redevelopment projects, historic monuments, and a progressive citywide identity. By the twenty-first century, Richmonders shed the racist baggage associated with being the former Confederate capital and led a national movement for racial reconciliation. This legacy has gone largely ignored by scholars, as well as those outside of Richmond, because of the city's past stance against racial equity, and its more recent defense of Lost Cause symbolism.

Chapter I argues that the removal of Jim Crow segregation, between 1954 and1977, exposed Richmonders to the depths of its racial division. Richmond maintained a reputation as one of the most racially harmonious cities in the Jim Crow South. This harmony was really a mosaic of different Richmonds being held together by the suppression of black human capital.

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[6] Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and The Making of Modern Conservatism*, (Princeton University Press, 2005), 1-10; Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in The Sunbelt South*, (Princeton University Press, 2006), 1-20; Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution*, (Princeton University Press, 2007), 1-16; Steven F. Lawson, *Running For Freedom: Civil Rights Black Politics in America Since 1941*, (Temple University Press, 1991), 1-20 and 65; Harold A. McDougall, *Black Baltimore: A New Theory of Community*, (Temple University Press, 1993), 91-9; Ronald Bayor, *Race and The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*, (University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 52, 193-5, and 256-7; Dwight Watson, *Race and Houston Police Department, 1930-1990 A Change Did Come*, (Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 62-93; Kent B. Germany, *New Orleans After The Promises: Poverty, Citizenship, and the Search for the Great Society*, (University of Georgia Press, 2007), 1-20; Alton Hornsby, Jr., *Black Power in Dixie: A Political History of African Americans in Atlanta*, (University of Florida Press, 2009); Leonard N. Moore, *Black Rage in New Orleans: Police Brutality and African American Activism from World War II to Hurricane Katrina*, (Louisiana State University Press, 2010); Estes, *Charleston in Black and White*, 1-7; Chanelle N. Rose, *The Struggle for Black Freedom in Miami: Civil Rights and America's Tourist Paradise, 1896-1968*, (Louisiana State University Press, 2015), 12-20; Shirletta J. Kinchen, *Black Power in the Bluff City: African American Youth and Student Activism in Memphis, 1965-1975*, (The University of Tennessee Press, 2016), 10-4; and Maurice J. Hobson, *The Legend of the Black Mecca: Politics and Class in the Making of Modern Atlanta*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 1-10.

As the federal government passed civil rights legislation, the white middle class -- the electoral and financial base of the elite -- fled to the growing suburbs to continue practicing racial segregation. They left behind a city that struggled to adjust to racial integration. This seismic shift tore the city's social fabric, revealing that Richmond was never a harmonious city. The story of racial reconciliation starts here, with a city broken after the internal collapse of its Jim Crow regime.

Chapter II argues that Richmond leaders used two downtown revitalization projects, between 1978 and 1989, to promote racial harmony. The fiscal goal was to reverse white flight and attract suburban consumers back downtown. The idealistic goal was to turn the previously segregated downtown into ground zero for social integration in post-Civil Rights Richmond. These projects put black political and white business leaders in the vanguard of city race relations. By the late 1980s, the economic failures of downtown revitalization forced city leaders to acknowledge that white Richmonders were no more invested in racial integration in the 1980s than they had been during Jim Crow. This left many blacks and whites disenchanted with the prospect that city government could create and sustain racial harmony in the region. However, these failed redevelopment projects also created informal networks between black and white elites, making racial harmony the foundation of public policy in the late twentieth century. Residents would later pick up on these efforts to lead their own march towards reconciliation in the following decade.

Chapter III argues that Richmond led a national movement for racial reconciliation in the final decade of the twentieth century. Grassroots organizations integrated Richmond's previously white-dominated public history narrative by including exhibits and monuments about slavery, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights Era. This "turbulent history" not only created a public discourse

about the city's polite silence on race and racism, it forced every day Richmonders to see racial division as a *problem* that they, not city leaders, needed to fix. Richmond hosted the Healing the Hearts of America Conference in 1993, erected the Arthur Ashe statue along Monument Avenue in 1995, and nationalized its most famous non-profit organization (Hope in the Cities) in 1998. By the end of the decade, Richmond had become nationally recognized as the nation's hotbed for *racial reconciliation*. Cities across America, and the White House, later solicited Richmonders to help them use history to promote social harmony and racial reconciliation as they progressed into the twenty-first century.

The Epilogue will segue towards Richmond's current reconciliatory struggle. The city has currently capstoned its historical narrative change. That, along with the revitalization of downtown, has removed the emotional and psychological burden of racism that comes with being the former Confederate capital and Lost Cause Mecca. Current residents and leaders are focusing on overcoming the largest corollary of southern history: the racial wealth gap. While white Richmonders see themselves as progressive, they cling mightily to the economic racism of the past. Those working to reduce the poverty rate recognize that the city is all-too-comfortable segregating its black underclass. The new racial healers -- or as they like to be called equity practitioners -- have infiltrated city government to match Richmond's progressive image with racial equity. This means creating cooperative bonds between business, schools, and City Hall to insure that poverty is not a life sentence placed disproportionately on black Richmonders. Their final frontier is to create a city that has little to no race-based poverty. However, their workable goal is to lower race-based poverty by forty percent in the next two decades. The epilogue merely highlights this developing phase with the hopes that it succeeds in matching the effort of those before them.

The Essay on Sources concludes the dissertation with a historiographical essay and conclusive assessment of the research needed to complete this project. Historiographically, the dissertation informs the debate about southern distinction after World War II. Monographs such as *The Silent Majority* (2006), *The End of Southern Exceptionalism* (2006), *In Search of Another Country* (2007), *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism* (2010) collectively argue that, in the words of historian Matthew Lassiter, "the era of southern exceptionalism is over" because corporatization, suburbanization, and integration brought the formerly backwards South in-line with mainstream America after the 1960s. Hence, the modern South should not garner analysis based on its perceived regional distinction. The opposing side, marked by works such as *Boom for Whom?* (2004) *After the Dream* (2011), *Southern Crucible* (2015), *What Can and Can't Be Said* (2015), and *Charleston in Black and White* (2015) argue that the post-Civil Rights South is still peculiar enough to warrant examination as a distinct American region. My dissertation sides with the latter stream by focusing on the South's struggle to overcome its history of racism, the largest burden of exceptionalism. In doing so, I argue that the post-Civil Rights South became a critical juncture for public discussions about race and collective identity after the Civil Rights Movement. Richmond, the former Confederate capital, merely led this endeavor.

The race healers documented in the subsequent pages ran the marathon for a city that has all but forgotten them. The real tragedy is that their arduous trek ended without the city becoming *fully healed*. Although Richmond still suffers from racial inequity, efforts to reconcile the city's past with its present made residents aware of their race problem. That development, alone, made this story worthy of being told. This work is also ambitiously pioneering more investigation into racial reconciliation in the modern South. Racial reconciliation has roots in the interracial cooperation movement prior to *Brown*. After 1954, biracial efforts to improve race

relations changed to accommodate the new social order. This dissertation wishes to promote more investigation into this change.

CHAPTER 1

"PRESSURE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT," 1954-1977

In 1962, a twenty-year old black Bostonian and Harvard Law School student named Fred Wallace accepted an internship at a law firm in Richmond, Virginia. As a northerner, he may have anticipated Richmond being a sleepy southern town because for a long time, it was. When English settlers encountered the Powhatan Indians in 1607, the land now called Richmond was an uncultivated frontier. Over the next century, Richmond shook its rural beginnings and became one of the nation's largest manufacturers of flour, iron, tobacco, aluminum, and paper. The city lost much of its economic standing after the Civil War. Lacking both an effective transportation system and monopoly over wheat and iron production, Richmond shifted to the periphery of the New South economy. By the twentieth century Richmond was a second tier southern city, its population and economic growth ranking just behind major hubs such as Birmingham, Atlanta, Charlotte, and Houston. This did not change much after World War II. However, industrial flight from the North between 1945 and 1960 helped Richmond develop a vastly advanced manufacturing sector, and by proxy, the economic foundation to become a metropolitan city.[1]

By 1962, Richmond's Civil War monuments and gothic-style homes shared space with sleek glass-plated business buildings, one of which housed the Virginia-Carolina Chemical Corporation at the intersection of 4th and Main Streets. Another newer building belonged to DuPont Chemical Company, which sat on 7th and Grace Streets. These factories employed low-skilled laborers and white-collar administrators who shopped at downtown stores such as

[1] Marie Tyler-McGraw, *At The Falls: Richmond and Its People*, (University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 1-181; and Steven J. Hoffman, *Race, Class, and Power in The Building of Richmond, 1870-1920*, (McFarland & Company Publishers, 2004), 3-8.

Thalhimers, F.W. Woolworth, and Miller-Rhodes along East Broad Street. Ten banks -- not including the U.S. Federal Reserve branch -- with about $1.4 billion in deposits sat just below Main Street. Richmond's emerging economy spurred suburban growth in the neighboring Chesterfield, Henrico, and Hanover Counties. Around 220,000 people (100,000 black) called Richmond City home in 1962. However, 500,000 people lived, worked, and played within an area that was remaking its collective identity. Richmond was no longer a sleepy southern town. It was a modern industrial and corporate city.[2]

While economics were in a constant state of flux, race relations were not. "When we came to Richmond, we were just shocked. Even as an old southerner from West Texas, Richmond in terms of mentality, race, and whatnot, while not part of the Deep South geographically, was a part of the Deep South in terms of racism," a resident remembered about moving to the city. Since 1607, Richmond operated on the economic, political, and social suppression of its black people. The official end of slavery on April 9, 1865, did little to change that fact. Richmond became a leading Jim Crow city at the dawn of the twentieth century. In 1902, the Virginia legislature, located in downtown Richmond, effectively disenfranchised black voters throughout the state. Local merchants segregated public accommodations two years later. The Democratic and Republican Parties followed this wave by barring blacks from their conventions and primary voting. In 1911, the city council disproportionately segregated residential areas and city employment. This racial apartheid, while perfected in the early twentieth century, persisted well into the 1960s.[3]

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[2] Gregg D. Kimball, *American City, Southern Place: A Cultural History of Antebellum Richmond*, (University of Georgia Press, 2000), xi-xxv; and James K. Sanford, ed., *Richmond: Her Triumphs and Tragedies & Growth*, (Metropolitan Richmond Chamber of Commerce), 204-30.

[3] Interview with Dr. John Moeser, March 11, 2019; and Marvin T. Chiles, "Down Where The South Begins: Black Richmond Activism Before the Modern Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of African American History*, Vol. 105, No. 1, (Winter 2020), 1-27.

Laws were not enough. Jim Crow Richmond relied on rituals of racism that enabled whites to control interracial contact. Blacks often called the lowliest of whites *sir*, *ma'am*, *mister*, *misses*, and *boss*. Whites, in keeping with accepted southern norms, referred to black men they did not know as *boy* and black women they did not know as *gal*. If whites knew a black person, they would call them by their first name, but rarely mister or misses followed by their last name. "People did not go out of their way to call black folks niggers. But when they were among themselves, they would use that term without question," a white Richmond attorney once said during an interview. Some blacks did not even receive this respect. A white Richmond liberal later recounted in his memoir, "many times I witnessed white people making degrading remarks about blacks in the presence of black individuals, as if they were just potted plants." This normalization of black inferiority compelled black Richmonders to create their own communities that helped shield them from the dehumanization of Jim Crow.[4]

Black Richmond was filled with a diverse body of factory, domestic, and retail laborers. However, political and economic leadership came from the white-collar middle class. They resided in well-manicured neighborhoods miles away from the laboring classes. Yet, the collection of ministers, undertakers, teachers, postal workers, professors, social workers, and business people headed key institutions that represented the various black communities. Blacks worshiped in their own churches, learned in their own schools, and operated their own social clubs. This was as much custom as it was law. After emancipation and before Jim Crow laws, blacks and whites resided in separate neighborhoods, attended separate schools and churches, headed separate civic organizations, worked in separate spaces, frequented separate saloons, and

[4] Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 12, 2019; Interview with Sylvester Turner, March 13, 2019; Interview with Dr. Edward Peeples, June 24, 2019; Interview with Viola Baskerville, June 28, 2019; Interview with William Mason, July 23, 2019; Interview with Terry Dumheller, July 23, 2019; and Edward H. Peeples, *Scalawag*: *A White Southerner's Journey Through Segregation To Human Rights Activism*, (University of Virginia Press, 2014), 15.

voted in separate precincts. Blacks even sought refuge in separate almshouses. This culture of separation coupled with Jim Crow laws made Richmond a truly segregated city. By 1962 Richmond was the economic capital of black Virginia, boasting at least 50 thriving businesses and hundreds of middle class professionals.[5]

Black Richmond's economic and cultural independence helped the city garner national recognition as one of the most progressive cities in the South. There was little black protest in Jim Crow Richmond. This allowed leaders of both races to work under-the-table to slowly repeal discriminatory laws. In 1962, the city council passed a fair employment ordinance, making it illegal to openly discriminate against black labor. That same year, some white-only establishments opened their doors to blacks. Local schools also began to integrate as many as 130 black children into previously all-white institutions. "Non-discrimination in Richmond is one of the most exciting racial stories in the South," said the *Washington Post*. That news may have been even more exciting to forward-thinking black Richmonders, and the soon-to-be legal intern Fred Wallace.[6]

Richmond's progressive image ironically came from the work of the Hill & Tucker Law Firm, the group that employed Wallace for the summer. They orchestrated much of Richmond's, and Virginia's, Modern Civil Rights Movement. In 1940, this firm -- at the time named the Hill, Martin, and Robinson Law Firm -- helped black teachers in Richmond and Norfolk start petitions that led to the equalization of black and white teachers' salaries. In 1944, they won the *Morgan v. Virginia* case, forcing the Virginia legislature to repeal its law that ordered racial segregation

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[5] Christopher Silver and John V. Moeser, *The Separate City: Black Communities in the Urban South, 1940-1968*, (University of Kentucky Press, 1995), 20-7; Gertrude Woodruff Marlowe, *Right Worthy Grand Mission: Maggie Lena Walker and the Quest for Black Economic Empowerment*, (Howard University Press, 2003), 79-92; Hoffman, *Race, Class, and Power*, 95-145; and Margaret Edds, *We Faced the Dawn: Oliver Hill, Spottswood Robinson, and the Legal Team That Dismantled Jim Crow*, (University of Virginia Press, 2018).

[6] "Richmond Quietly Leads Way in Race Relations," *Washington Post*, July 29, 1962, E-1.

on interstate carriers. Four years later, the most famous law partner, Oliver W. Hill, started a black voting campaign that resulted in his election as the first southern black city councilman in the twentieth century. By 1951, the Hill & Tucker Law Firm had filed enough school equalization lawsuits throughout Virginia to disprove the notion that separate could be equal, as ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. These cases made Jim Crow Virginia the foundation for the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954. After the 9-0 Supreme Court decision, this firm litigated several cases to integrate public schools and accommodations throughout the commonwealth. Richmond was indeed the Old South in terms of culture. However, its black legal community pushed Virginia towards the front of the black freedom struggle in the mid-twentieth century.[7]

Richmond, a corporatized southern city in the trenches of the Modern Civil Rights Movement, allowed Fred Wallace to perform the duality of race work. Monday through Friday, he trained to become a lawyer. On the weekends, Wallace joined a number of black volunteer teachers to work at a makeshift school in rural Prince Edward County, about sixty miles west of Richmond. Although Richmond was at the center of Virginia's black freedom struggle, Prince Edward -- because it was home to one of the five cases that made the *Brown* case -- was its big bang. By 1962, however, the Civil Rights Movement had outgrown this rural piedmont county. Local whites shut down the public schools and refused to admit black students into their publicly-funded Prince Edward Academy (now Fuqua School). Public accommodations also remained segregated, and "there has been no trouble with the NAACP, such as sitdowns, wade-ins, and kneel-ins," a local white reporter once bragged. After spending the summer of 1962

[7] Final Judgement of the *Bowler v. Richmond*, May 13, 1942, Folder 7, Box 1:B208, (*NAACP Papers,* Library of Congress, Washington D.C.); *Morgan v. Virginia*, 328 U.S. 373 66 S. Ct. 1050; 90 L. Ed. 1317, 429; Brian J. Daugherity, *Keep on Keeping On: The NAACP and The Implementation of Brown v. Board of Education in Virginia*, (University of Virginia Press, 2016), 8; and Edds, *We Face The Dawn*, 76-301.

between Richmond and Prince Edward, Wallace and fellow student activists decided to return the following year and bring racial equality to rural Virginia.[8]

The following summer, Wallace and other black college students organized the *Black Belt Project*, a collection of protests, marches, sit-ins, and kneel-ins in Virginia's majority black Southside and piedmont counties. Local and state police responded swiftly by arresting the protesters for numerous charges related to trespassing and disturbing the peace. One of the largest group were arrested in Prince Edward. Wallace contacted the firm he worked for in Richmond and convinced them to represent the student protestors in court. He then rushed to the Prince Edward Courthouse, only to be greeted by a host of white policemen. Wallace inquired about his friends' health and well-being. What happened next is less clear. What is known is that Wallace ended up in a physical altercation with two white officers. He was promptly arrested and charged with assault and malicious wounding, carrying a maximum sentence of twenty years in prison.[9]

Fred Wallace was a promising activist who understood very little about race in Virginia. Since the Civil War, the commonwealth maintained the reputation of having the most harmonious race relations in the South. Virginia's white oligarchical elite -- a collection of wealthy and well-to-do legislators/businessmen -- maintained that reputation through voter suppression, limited welfare spending, and economic coercion to control the political, legal, and social economy. This paternalism was so pervasive that racial violence was not necessary to maintain social control. While implementing Jim Crow laws in the early twentieth century, the

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[8] Peter Wallenstein, *Blue Laws and Black Codes: Conflicts, Courts, Change in Twentieth-Century Virginia,* (University of Virginia Press, 2004), 60-7; Robert A. Pratt, *The Color of Their Skin: Education and Race in Richmond, Virginia, 1954-89*, (University of Virginia Press, 1992), 31-6; and Jill Ogline Titus, *Brown's Battleground: Segregationists & The Struggle for Justice in Prince Edward County, Virginia,* (University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 63-130.

[9] Titus, *Brown's Battleground*, 60-109; and "Student Sentenced: Fined in Farmville Appeals are Noted," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 27, 1963, 3.

Virginia elite openly denounced the Ku Klux Klan and the use of racial violence against blacks. They even kept tabs on white hate groups who openly professed racist rhetoric. Virginia elites also participated in interracial civic groups that promoted black uplift. A well-known black Richmond minister once wrote that this elite progressivism created a misunderstanding where blacks "presupposed that full citizenship was just around the corner." Whites shared this misunderstanding, thinking that blacks were content with second-class citizenship. However, black support for *Brown* brought about the threat of federal intervention in Virginia politics. This possibility corroded race relations. "The white man [now] understands the Negro and the Negro understands the white man," said the preacher. Because "the whites of the Old South understand the Negro's ambition of full citizenship," he suggested, Virginia elites became just as resistant as every other southern state to black civil rights.[10]

Wallace was not fortunate enough to get this history lesson; and that ignorance would cost him dearly. The Virginia General Assembly criminalized unwanted public demonstrations the summer before his arrest. A Prince Edward judge made Wallace aware of these developments when he issued a $5,000 bond, and later sentenced him to one year in jail with a $650 fine. Wallace appealed the case and petitioned the federal courts to intervene given the "intense racial prejudice" he had experienced in Prince Edward. Wallace's appeal sparked over 100 black organizers across central and southern Virginia to request their cases to be moved to the federal courts also. However, Wallace and the other protesters saw their requests be denied. It took four years of appeals and petitions for Wallace to successfully avoid jail time. In 1967,

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[10] Right-Winged Conservatives Operating in Virginia, Newsletter from the Virginia Council on Human Relations, April 14, 1966, Mss1 W5603b FA2 Series 1, Housing Committee, (*James C. Wheat Papers*); "Interracial Tensions Interpreted," Article from Clipping and Writings, Race Relations, Box 2, (*Gordon Blaine Hancock Papers*, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina), hereafter cited as *Hancock Papers*; "The Interracial Commission Comes of Age," undated Commission of Interracial Cooperation History, Southern Regional Council, 1938-1943, (*Hancock Papers)*; Ronald L. Heinemann, *Harry Byrd of Virginia*, (University of Virginia Press, 1996), 328-31; J. Douglas Smith, *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 46; and Wallenstein, *Blue Laws and Black Codes*, 7-10.

Wallace, by now a trial lawyer in New York City, was allowed to forgo jail time after accepting a plea deal for misdemeanor charges and paying a $300 fine.[11]

"Build People, Not Things" 1966-1968

The introductory section illustrated the peculiarities of Virginia's genteel Jim Crow regime. The capital city of Richmond was its most representative microcosm. Fred Wallace was baptized in the fire of the Virginia courts, and he arose a trial attorney with a clear understanding of fighting for civil rights in the commonwealth. Henry L. Marsh, III., Wallace's attorney and former employer, was beginning to master this double tap dance. When Wallace appeared in Prince Edward for the final time, Marsh was a rookie city councilman. He did not picket or protest unfair laws. Marsh instead litigated hundreds of civil rights cases and used City Hall to undo years of systemic racism. Race work defined Marsh's legal and political career, later propelling him to the position of mayor in Richmond. Although very accomplished, Marsh was not preordained to become a black leader. His parents were not ministers, educators, or business owners. They were members of Richmond's black working-class, a group of people that Marsh represented as an attorney and as a politician.[12]

Marsh also did not cut his teeth at Harvard Law School. He was groomed in a more conservative tradition of black activism at Virginia Union University (Union). Black Richmonders, then and now, revere the Baptist college that lies just beyond the grey stone pillars of Kings Gate. However, this storied university began with chains, not stone. It was founded in

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[11] "Trial Date Set for Demonstrators," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 18, 1963, 2; "Judge Withdraws from Racial Trials," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 20, 1963, 4; Wallenstein, *Blue Laws Black Codes*, 123; "Wounding Case Sent Back Prince Edward," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 11, 1964, 5; "Racial Cases' Transfer From Danville Opposed," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 12, 1965, 5; "Federal Courts Refuse to Hear Danville Racial Demonstrators," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 22, 1966, 2; and "Lawyer for NAACP Convicted, Fined in Prince Edward," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 28, 1967, 19.

[12] Birth Certificate for Henry Levander Marsh, III., December 10, 1933, (Virginia Health Department, Richmond, Virginia, ancestry.com); Leonard N. Moore, *Black Rage in New Orleans: Police Brutality and African American Activism From World War II to Hurricane Katrina*, (Louisiana State University Press, 2011), 140-64; and Hobson, *Legend of the Black Mecca,* 52-5.

1869 by a slave minister who helped coordinate Richmond's portion of the Underground Railroad. Union's first classes were ironically held near the old Manchester slave docks, at the Lumpkin Slave Jail, infamously nicknamed the Devil's Half Acre. Northern white benefactors eventually helped to relocate Union to its present campus in Northside Richmond, a place where "evidently everybody was doing well," a black resident remembered.[13]

Northside was largely a white middle-class community at the turn of the century. Between 1930 and 1960, the area received a large influx of black middle class doctors, teachers, lawyers, ministers, and businessmen from other red-lined neighborhoods. Aspiring black bourgeois could not integrate the upscale Ginter Park or Jewish Highland Park neighborhoods, so they made tight-knit communities in Barton Heights, Battery Park, and Laburnum Park. "If people did not walk outside their doors, you would not be able to tell the black neighborhoods from the white neighborhoods," a white observer once told a black Northsider. The black and white middle classes were so alike that the school board, at the behest of black Northside parents, chose its Chandler Middle School and John Marshall High School to be among the first integrated schools in Richmond. This class homogenization was never mistaken for racial harmony, however. White Northsiders were always concerned about the presence of black home buyers and residents. One white family once complained to the school board in the 1960s that "hardly a month goes by without a real estate man calling trying to get them to offer their house for sale to Negroes." White-collar neighborhood organizations later formed to prevent middle-

[13] "Alumni Notes," *Virginia Union Bulletin*, Vol. XXXII, Nos. 2-3, January-February, 1932, 10-12; "Alumni Campaign Progress," *Virginia Union Bulletin*, Vol. XXXVIII, No.3, February 1938, 5-7; "Alumni Corner," *Virginia Union Bulletin*, Vol. XL, No.1, November 1939, 13-97, (*Virginia Union University Archives*, Richmond ,Virginia), hereafter cited as *Union Archives*; and Interview with Reginald Gordon, June 27, 2019.

class blacks from buying into Northside. Their efforts largely failed. By the mid-twentieth century, Northside became the most transitional area in Richmond.[14]

It was in Northside, where the black moneyed class enjoyed tennis courts, pools, and decorative Victorian homes, that Union rose from the ashes of Reconstruction like a phoenix. Union's stated goal was to "make men rather than money." That was convenient because the school often lacked what it sought not to make: money. Faculty members took enormous pay cuts to help Union achieve its never-ending mission. In the process, they created, enforced, and maintained a culture of academic excellence and Christian service. Students of all majors entered the gothic-style granite lecture halls fully expecting to master German, Latin, Hebrew, and Ethics. This heavy emphasis on liberal arts allowed Union to become one of the first black colleges to have its degrees accepted by white graduate institutions. Outside of the classroom, students were required to participate in outreach clubs and organizations. With its emphasis on academic excellence and required service, Union soon gained a national reputation for representing the best of black people and black education.[15]

Northern white mission groups relinquished their financial and administrative control over Union during the Great Depression. Black administrators, trained in the Union tradition, began investing less into education for education's sake, and more into shaping its black students

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[14] Meeting with Patrons of North Side Schools at Ginter Park School, June 11, 1968, Mss1 SA772a, Sections 54-106, (*James A. Sartain Papers*, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Richmond, Virginia); Notes of the Northside Community Council, sent to the Council of the City of Richmond, February 1967; Educational Institutions in Northside Area of Richmond, Va., Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Housing Committee, (*James C. Wheat Papers*); Interview with Reginald Gordon, June 27, 2019; Interview with Viola Baskerville, June 28, 2019; Interview with William Mason, July 22, 2019; and Interview with William (Bill) Martin, July 23, 2019.

[15] "Minutes of the Virginia Union University Alumni Association," *Virginia Union Bulletin*, May, 30, 1959, found in clipping form, 4-7; "Annual Alumni Number," *Virginia Union Bulletin*, Vol. XLVI, No.1., November 1945, 10-11; "Annual Alumni Issue," *Virginia Union Bulletin*, Vol. LI, No.1, November 1950, 5-23; "A Century of Service to Education and Religion, Virginia Union University, 1865-1965," *Virginia Union Bulletin*, Vol. LXV No. 5, June 1965, 1-107, (*Union Archives*); and Raymond Pierre Hyton, *Virginia Union University, 1865-2015: Creating a Bridge to Intellectual Freedom Through its Distinguished Alumni*, (Richmond, Virginia: Virginia Union University, 2014), 46.

into race leaders. “The times were good, the student body increased, and friends and alumni were loyally liberal,” a school history said about the 1950s, when Henry Marsh attended. Students “were not overtly militant or rebellious, but self-respecting and proud, eager exemplars of middle-class virtues,” said an alumnus who became the first black person to earn a doctorate from the University of Virginia. Between 1930 and 1970, over sixty Union graduates obtained doctorate degrees from top tier universities across the nation. Twenty-five graduates became college presidents and deans at various schools along the east coast. Its lawyers, later educated at Howard, Yale, Columbia, and Harvard, numbered around thirty four. Many of them became well known for helping integrate schools throughout the nation. Some of the alumni became prominent judges and politicians. “There was a genius in this student body,” a commencement speaker once raved about Union. Its later graduates built on this tradition and broke more barriers in art, journalism, medicine, and business.[16]

Union was an oasis devoid of white supremacy, a place where blacks could build their race after whites used slavery, disenfranchisement, Jim Crow, and miseducation to tear it down. Marsh took Union’s lessons with him when he left for Howard Law School on a full academic scholarship in 1956. He did not return to Richmond until five years later. In the meantime, older Union alumni who had established themselves as doctors, lawyers, insurance executives, and professors took a particular interest in city politics, a game previously reserved for whites only. In 1956, they created a political machine called the Crusade for Voters (The Crusade). The Crusade used voter education projects to convert Richmond’s growing black population into a powerful voting bloc. Their organizational structure consisted of a president, executive board,

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[16] Virginia Union Graduates Who Earned Doctorates, Contributions to the Legal Profession, A Partial List of Virginia Union Graduates Who Have Served as Presidents or Deans, tables found in Hyton, *A Century of Service to Education and Religion*: *Virginia Union University*, 1-50; and Henry L. Marsh, undated profile, Alumni: Archives Vertical File, (*Union Archives*). For more on Union alumni, see folders entitled Alumni, 1941-1942, Alumni 1950s, Alumni 1950-52, Alumni 1955, and Alumni 1956-57 in (*Union Archives*).

research committee, fundraisers, precinct club, block leaders, and field workers. Marsh returned from Howard and became one of their many block leaders. They were, according to an organizational memo, "the life lines of communication between the organizations and the people of the neighborhood." The young attorney conducted in-home visits with prospective black voters. While there, he often spoke with residents about their issues with city government, the importance of voting, and ensuring that they went to the polls on Election Day.[17]

The Crusade quickly became black Richmond's *Party of Lincoln*, uplifting the black vote from the legal bondage of poll taxes and literacy tests. The Northside elite more than tripled black Richmond's overall voter registration and turnout between 1958 and 1964. This development caused the *Richmond News Leader* to caution that, "Richmond's Negro voters are rapidly moving into a position of formitible [sic] political power….and [white] Richmonders will be wise not to ignore it." The Crusade's newfound power was not without tradeoffs, however. While the Crusade was "pushing the Negro voter into the mainstream of Richmond's political current," they entrenched themselves in the lower rungs of City Hall. Similar to black elites in cities like Atlanta and Memphis, the Crusade steered black votes towards the least conservative

[17] "Negro Voting in Richmond," *Richmond News Leader*, June 13, 1958, 12; Biographical Sketches of Dr. William S. Thornton, John Michael Brooks, Dr. William Reid Ferguson, Dr. William A. Thornton; Richmond Crusade for Voters Report of the Historian William Armestead Thornton; Registered Voters in the City of Richmond as of February 12, 1963, Historian Binder 1, 1953-1988 (1 of 11), Box 1, M306, (*Crusade for Voters Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia), later cited as *Crusade for Voters Papers*; Raymond Gavins, *The Prospects and Perils of Southern Black Leadership: Gordon Blaine Hancock, 1884-1970*, (Duke University Press, 1977), 22-6; "Sharp Debate Held on Referendum," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, December 1, 1955, A1;Henry L. Marsh III, Jonathan K. Stubbs, and Danielle Wingfield-Smith, Esq., editors, *The Memoirs of Honorable Henry L. Marsh, III: Civil Rights Champion, Public Servant, Lawyer*, (Grant House Publishers, 2018), 4-7; Bond Interview with Marsh, (https://blackleadership.virginia.edu/transcript/marsh-henry); U.S. Public Records Index, 1933, Volume 1; 1955 Richmond City Directory, U.S. City Directories; The Records of the Selective Service System, Record Group 147, Box 484, (*National Archives*, St. Louis, Missouri); Virginia Union University Year 1971, U.S., School Yearbooks, 1880-2012; "Voter League Hosts Massive Resistance," *Richmond Afro American*, October 4, 1958, 1 and 3; Instructions for Block Leaders, undated; Workers Guide, undated; Telephone Message, undated, Historian Binder 1, 1953-1988 (5 of 11); Overby, "The Crusade for Voters in Retrospect;" List of Individual Contributors, Contributors from Organizations, Open Letter, 1960-1961, Historian Binder 1, 1953-1988 (6 of 11), Box 1, M 306, (*Crusade for Voters Papers*); "Keep Vote Solid," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 6, 1964, 3; Steven F. Lawson, *Running for Freedom: Civil Rights and Black Politics Since 1941*, (New York: Wiley, 2014), 45-50; and Julian Maxwell Hayter, *The Dream is Lost: Voting Rights and The Politics of Race in Richmond, Virginia*, (University of Kentucky Press, 2017), 40.

white councilmen in 1960, 1962, and 1964 citywide elections. As a reward, the Northside elite received "places on personnel, housing, welfare, recreation, beautification and planning boards," according to a 1964 Crusade memo. That same year, they secured the election of black insurance agent and political insider Bernard A. Cephas to the nine-member city council.[18]

Marsh had become fed up with the Crusade's slow political gains by August 1965. So he decided to run for city councilman in the 1966 election. He later remembered that his goal was to create "a coalition to take over the council… [and] provide [black] leadership to the city." That goal would not be easy. Marsh was a Union alum, NAACP member, Crusade block leader, and respected local attorney, but he had not paid enough political dues to become a city councilman. The Crusade leadership saw Marsh as a young visionary whose job as a civil rights attorney could have upset the arch-conservative white leadership. The Crusade refused to endorse Marsh's candidacy, telling him that they already "had two blacks on the ticket. That's enough!"

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[18] Hobson, *Legend of the Black Mecca*, 48-51; "Biracial Committee of 12 Named by City," *Richmond News Leader*, August 8, 1960, found in clipping form; The Crusade for Voters Story, undated; "Council Approves Resolution for Fair Employment," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 2, 1962, 1; "Letters To The Forum: Mr. Carwile Comments on Councilmanic Election," *Richmond News Leader*, June 18, 1964; "Keep Our Vote Solid," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 6, 1964, 1 and 3; "Pannell's Quitting Confirms Suspicions, Carwile Says;" *Richmond News Leader*, July, 2, 1965, found in clipping form; "Keep Vote Solid" and "Cephas Cites City Needs in Safety, Recreation," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 6, 1964, 3; "Cephas Is Elected to City Council," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 13, 1964, 1-2; Carwile Deplored 'Vote Manipulators," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 15, 1964, 18; "Councilman Cephas Pledges No Mistakes From the Heart," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 20, 1964, 1-2; Councilmanic Elections, June 10, 1960; Councilmanic Elections, June 12, 1962; and Councilmanic Elections, June 10, 1964, Exhibits 3 and 4, Box 3, M183, (*Annexation Files*). B.A. Cephas was the black council member elected in 1964. He typified the local black establishment. Cephas moved to Richmond from New York City in 1910 at the behest of his real estate agent father. He attended Navy Hill School, Armstrong High School, and eventually Union, graduating in 1931 with a bachelor's of science in sociology. In 1934, Cephas was appointed to the Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Board. After taking over his father's real estate company in 1959, Cephas became the president of the Virginia Association of Real Estate Brokers, Richmond Real Estate Association, and a member of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors at the Southern Aid Life Insurance Company. In 1961, he became a member of the city planning commission. He served on this committee until his election in 1964. For more on Cephas, see Autobiography of B. Addison Cephas, Jr., People: Biographies, Box 1, M277, (*Eleanor P. Sheppard Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia).

Marsh later announced his candidacy in September 1965, promoting himself as "a voice of the people without any obligation to consider the will of any *political machine*."[19]

Marsh's challenge to the Crusade captivated the curiosity of black Richmonders. The former Crusade block leader and member of the black middle class resided in the black working-class section of Church Hill. He used this to market himself as a "an articulate young civil rights lawyer [whose] commitments and consistency were considerably different from the [black] moneyed class," a Crusade memo documented. Black ministers "unanimously" endorsed Marsh in the *Richmond Afro-American* newspaper. Marsh also took out a bank loan and paid Union students to register voters and campaign on his behalf. Although the campaign season was relatively short, Marsh made a profound impression on black locals. The polls showed that, in spite of his break with the Crusade, he would be one of the nine candidates chosen to sit on the city council by June 1966. This forced Crusade leaders to meet with him a week before the election and offer an official endorsement. In the interest of political solidarity, Marsh accepted the offer and joined their two other black endorsees (Cephas and Winfred Mundle) who also won seats on the nine-member council.[20]

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[19] Transcript from an Interview between Julian Bond and Henry L. Marsh, III, for the Explorations of Black Leadership Series at the University of Virginia, (https://blackleadership.virginia.edu/transcript/marsh-henry); Crusade Memo, April 2, 1966, Historian Binder, 1953-1968, (4 of 11), Box 1, M306, (*Crusade for Voters Papers*); "Marsh to Run for Council," *Richmond Afro-American*, April 16, 1966, 1-2; "Throckmorton, Holt, and House," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 16, 1966, 2; and Marsh, Stubbs, and Wingfield-Smith, *Honorable Henry L. Marsh, III*, 4-7. Because Marsh's struggle with the Crusade was not widely known at the time, and is not widely written about today, I will draw heavily from his more recent personal interview with Julian Bond and his memoir.

[20] "Endorsement Seen a Big Vote Boost," *Richmond Afro-American*, May 14, 1966, 1-2; Bond Interview with Marsh, (https://blackleadership.virginia.edu/transcript/marsh-henry); "Cephas, Marsh, Mundle Win," Richmond Afro-American, June 18, 1966, 1-2; "Another Big Win For Councilman-Elect Marsh" and "A Real Big Day," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 25, 1966, 1; John Moeser and Rutledge B. Dennis, *Politics of Annexation*: *Oligarchic Power In A Southern City* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Pub. Co, 1982), 76-87; Richmond Ministers, Virginia Union University, and the Crusade for Voters, July 7, 1966; and What's Your Excuse for Not Voting, May 1966; and Go to the Polls Early This Tuesday, June 14, 1966, Crusade Memo, Historian Binder 1, 1953-1988, (2-11), Box 1, M306, (*Crusade For Voters Papers*). Marsh's victory was more impressive than historians or even the local media noted. As a rookie candidate, he finished 6th out of at least 20 candidates with experience in city government. He also finished in the top 3 in every swing precinct.

Figure 1: Photo of Henry and Diane Marsh post-election. Courtesy of Virginia Commonwealth University Special Collections.

Marsh's victory represented black Richmond's desire for change. In spite of the national civil and voting rights legislation (Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965), economic suppression dominated black America broadly, and black Richmond in particular. A 1966 economic assessment concluded that, "White workers capture the newly growing fields in which labor resources are scarce, pay levels are good, prospects for advancement are bright, the technology is the most advanced, and working conditions are the most modern. In their wake lies

lesser qualified, lower waged jobs in seemingly obsolete industries" for blacks. Richmond existed among the extreme of America's economic status quo. Blacks dominated the city's lowest-waged and unskilled labor force. The majority of black city workers were trash collectors, janitors, and assistant cooks. Even in the city police (36) and fire departments (27) -- respectable jobs that did not require a college degree -- blacks numbered only around 63 out of the hundreds who served. The black middle class bore the biggest economic burden. "There was always a joke that the only respectable jobs for a black man in Richmond was a teacher, undertaker, lawyer, businessman, preacher, and mailman," a longtime resident said about the 1960s. That resident's assessment was not too far off. With the exception of teachers, black professionals were almost completely barred from city employment. This contributed to the alarming 1966 statistic that, "The average Negro college graduate, even today, can expect to earn less over his lifetime than the white who does not go beyond the eighth grade."[21]

Black Richmond's economic vulnerability had political ramifications. By 1966, it was in the "national interest to encourage and promote the development of transportation systems embracing various modes of transport in a manner that will serve the various states and local communities," a congressional memo stated. That federal encouragement inspired local businessmen to begin a series of urban renewal programs that were "active on all fronts," eliminating "slums and blight" from Richmond's inner core, said a local attorney. However, the Virginia Chamber of Commerce magazine praised city leadership for not letting "its eagerness to put a gloss on its downtown dim its pride in its past." City planners "retain[ed] such noble old

[21] Herman P. Miller, "Progress and Prospects for The Negro Worker," *Challenge*, February 1966, found in a letter from W. Kent Carter, Jr., to Mr. James C. Wheat, Wheat and Co., Inc., May 20, 1966, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (1 of 2), 40, (*James C. Wheat, Jr., Papers*); Director of Personnel to City Manager, October 17, 1966, found in Welfare Statistics, 1966, Box 6, M246, (*Horace H. Edward Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia); and An Analysis of Negro Employment in the City Government by The Research Committee for the Crusade for Voters, 1963, "Richmond City Council, NAACP, 1963," Box 6, M277, (*Sheppard Papers*). For more on the small role blacks played in city government and committee work, see Folder 6 entitled "Personnel" in Box 6, M277, *Sheppard Papers*.

structures as the Confederate White House and the historic houses that were homes of General Robert E. Lee and Chief Justice John Marshall." However, developers and politicians saw homes, churches, and business buildings in black neighborhoods, especially those near downtown, as slums and constantly under the threat of demolition.[22]

Highway construction plans accounted for cost, expected business growth, environmental impact, and even the toll revenue needed to pay off various loan debts. They did not account for the human cost of displacing black families who could not afford to leave. The black working class represented over 97% of Richmond's displaced families prior to 1966. They faced a double jeopardy, often falling prey to the city's racist housing market. A comprehensive real estate study done fifteen years later proved that, "Richmond contains two separate, distinct, and unequal sales housing markets---one for whites and another for blacks." Local banks and real estate firms controlled citywide property values by refusing to rent or approve mortgages to blacks outside of segregated neighborhoods. Some black middle-class Richmonders purchased their way into transitioning (Northside) neighborhoods before highway construction. Working and underclass blacks were not as fortunate, finding it almost impossible to secure housing after renewal plans got underway.[23]

Henry Marsh, who had campaigned to "build people not things," began his councilmanic tenure by presenting Resolution No. 66-R90. This compact piece of proposed legislation asked

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[22] Ed Grimsley, "Downtown Virginia," *The Commonwealth Magazine, The Magazine of Virginia, Virginia Chamber of Commerce*, Vol.XXXIV, No.5, May, 1967, (*James C. Wheat Papers*), 23-9; Urban Renewal in Richmond, May 26, 1962; A Research Project Conducted by H.O.M.E of Richmond, Virginia, Racial Steering by Real Estate Sales Agents in Metropolitan Richmond, Virginia, March 1980, Box 20, M258, (*Richmond Urban Institute Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia); and "Continuous Transportation Planning process Richmond Regional Area," Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1 Expressways (1 of 2), (*James C. Wheat Papers*).

[23] Dawn S. Bowen, "The Transformation of Richmond's Historic African American Commercial Corridor," *Southeastern Geographer*, Vol.VXXXIII, No.2, (November 2003), 260-78; University of Richmond Digital Scholarship Lab Unveils New Mapping Project Focusing on Urban Renewal, Family Displacements, Race, *Targeted News Service* (TNS), 2017; and Grimsley, "Downtown Virginia," 26.

for the "council's opposition to the proposed location of the Downtown Expressway" through the majority black Idlewood neighborhood. His proposal froze both local and federal funding for the $95 million redevelopment plan. Marsh used the city's abysmal housing situation to justify his proposal. Richmond had about 15,000 substandard housing units that were scheduled to be either demolished or categorized as slums. Yet, they also had 1,500 families on the waiting list for public housing. The young civil rights attorney sent shockwaves throughout the city's political channel. For the first time, the city council, filled with black and white middle and upper class businessmen, had a legitimate advocate for Richmond's economically vulnerable blacks. For once, as a liberal white lawyer surmised, "the downtrodden and exploited people of the poverty stricken areas of Richmond have a real champion;" and his name was Henry Marsh.[24]

Marsh's resolution broke the racial solidarity that had previously existed on the council. "We deplore that some would undertake to make political capital out of the human problems," the rest of the council (six whites and two blacks) said in a public statement to the press. Marsh responded publicly that, "I have bitterly opposed it [urban renewal] as being overly and unnecessarily destructive of the homes, churches, and communities in its path." To coax Marsh into dropping the resolution, the other councilmen created a housing committee to better facilitate displaced people to public housing. The other councilmen tried to "sabotage Mr. Marsh's resolution" by making the issue about "putting roofs over heads when the real issue is not to take roofs away," a political insider once said. Marsh, and the hundreds of would-be public housing residents, were not satisfied with the housing committee's agenda. The other

[24] Resolution No. 66-R90, October 25, 1966, "City Council Minutes 1966-1967," *Richmond City Journal*, (*Library of Virginia*, Richmond, Virginia), 88-9; "Anti-Poverty Workers' Rent Said Hiked," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 20, 1966, 1-2; Silver's *Twentieth-Century Richmond*, 159-197 and 270-330; and "Henry Marsh Refuses to Sin By Silence," Editorial by Howard Carwile, *Richmond Afro-American*, November 12, 1966, 3.

councilmen made it clear that nothing else would be done to aid the displaced. So, the rookie councilman took his protest outside of City Hall.[25]

At several grassroots meetings in November 1966, Marsh openly spoke about how the "route seemed to be aimed to uproot mostly colored families who are suffering from a housing squeeze because of housing discrimination." He challenged the current and soon-to-be displaced residents to attend council meetings and voice their discontent. They took up his request, showing out in force at subsequent city council meetings. One civic leader told the council that blacks "were driven out of Navy Hill, out of East Leigh Street, out of East End for Route 64. We've got no place to go, and we're going to stand up here and fight." Yet, this fight ended before it really began. The city council voted to remove Marsh's proposed resolution on November 28, 1966. Over 250 residents filled the council chambers and argued their decision. The mayor, fed up with Marsh and his black dissenters, "banged his gavel about a half-dozen times" before dismissing the rowdy residents.[26]

Marsh's failed resolution foreshadowed more redevelopment in 1967. The city council and its urban planners began tearing through black neighborhoods to build new highways, toll roads, and the Richmond Coliseum. Some of Virginia's largest cities (Hampton, Norfolk, and Roanoke) began similar projects that same year. Many of the displaced blacks ended up in low-

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[25] "Statement to the Newspapers, November 23, 1966; Resolution No. 66-R99, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Housing Committee, (*James C. Wheat Papers*); "The Vice Mayor of Richmond," *Ebony Magazine*, 173-83; "Richmond's Vice Mayor," An Editorial From the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, reprinted in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 13, 1966, 13; "A Word on Mr. Mundle," *Richmond Afro-American* Editorial reprinted in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 8, 1966, 1 and 24; "Bagley, Wheat Charge Housing Interference," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 25, 1966, 1; "Marsh Says His Stand No Threat to Housing," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 26, 1966, 1 and 4; "Marsh Will Press Expressway Plea," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 27, 1966, 1 and 25; and "Expressway View Restated By Marsh," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 28, 1966, 2.

[26] "Marsh Says Expressway Plan Anti-Colored," *Richmond Afro-American*, November 12, 1966, 1; "Idlewood Ave. Residents Urged To Pack City Hall" and "Marsh Leads Drive To Save Homes," *Richmond Afro-American*, November 19, 1966, 1, 2, and 18; "Marsh Questions $$ Angle," *Richmond Afro-American*, November 26, 1-2; "Idlewood Express Route is Again Criticized by Marsh," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 28, 1966, 1-2; and "Mundle's Popularity Continues to Drop," *Richmond Afro-American*, December 31, 1966, 1-2.

income dwellings and public housing projects. Some were left without housing because "there is an insufficient amount of construction taking place to meet the [housing] need," the city manager warned the council. Neither the other eight councilmembers nor the national media showed much concern. In 1967, Richmond's urban renewal plans earned it the All-American City Award by *Look Magazine* and the National Civic League. This award was given to cities that had harmonious relations between blacks and whites, rich and poor, white collar and blue collar workers, downtown and the suburbs; the powerful and powerless. However, "I do not believe Richmond deserves an award as an All-American City," Marsh criticized. Another soon-to-be white councilman noted that, "When it comes to the attitude of this city government toward working class people--toward racial readjustment--toward housing problems ...we do not qualify for the award."[27]

Although he may have been discouraged, Marsh did not stop advocating for the black working and under class. On November 18, 1967, Marsh nominated Walter T. Kenney to replace a white councilmember who had resigned. Kenney, a man who would later become mayor, did not fit the mold of the black political establishment. He was not educated at Union, a white collar worker, or a Northside resident. Kenney lived in Church Hill, and he was the president of

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[27] David E, Longley, Manager of Jefferson Townhouse Apartments to Mr. J.C. Wheat, Jr., March 5, 1969; Alan Kiepper to Mr. Richard J. Mase, Assistant Vice-President of F.C.H Service, Inc., April 1, 1968, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Housing Committee, (*James C, Wheat, Jr., Papers*); J.R. Pattills, Chief of Environmental Health to City Manager, September 14, 1967; Fredric A. Fay, Executive Director to Alan Kiepper and Vice Mayor Winfred Mundle, September 14, 1967; Alan F. Kiepper, City Manager to Eleanor P. Sheppard, September 25, 1967, "Richmond City Council Housing, 1967," Box 5, M277, (*Sheppard Papers*); "City Council Sidesteps Marsh's Resolution," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 29, 1966, 1-2; "RF Block Sinks Marsh's Effort to Save Homes," *Richmond Afro-American*, December 3, 1966, 1-2; "Picket Lines Loom As Bulldozers Zero In On Homeowners," *Richmond Afro-American*, December 10, 1966, 1-2; "West End Residents Renew Fights Against Expressway," *Richmond Afro-American*, December 17, 1966, 1-2; "Expressway Foes Sleeping," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 27, 1967, 13; "All-America Award Target of Criticism," *Richmond Afro-American*, April 1, 1967, 1-2; "Delay Coliseum To Free Money For Poor: Marsh," *Richmond Afro-American*, May 18 1968, 1-2; Ed Grimsley, "The New Coliseums," *The Commonwealth Magazine, The Magazine of Virginia, Virginia Chamber of Commerce*, Vol.XXXIV, No.2, February, 1967, 19-26; and "All-American Richmond? City Councilman Says No," *New York Times*, April 11,1967, 27, clipping found in a letter from A.J. Brent to James C. Wheat, Wheat & Co., Inc., April 14, 1967, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (1 of 2), 40, (*James C, Wheat, Jr., Papers*).

Richmond Postal Clerks Union, precinct coordinator for the Crusade, NAACP member, and head of other civic organizations. Until Marsh's endorsement, Kenney was not close to receiving Crusade support for public office. But now, he was the kind of ally Marsh needed on the city council because he "understands the poor and underprivileged," a housing project resident told the *Afro-American*.[28]

Marsh's nomination pressured the Northside elite to open its leadership ranks to the black working class. The Crusade backed the nomination to capitalize off of Marsh's popularity. The other two black councilmen did not, however. The insurance executives may not have known, but this vote was, like Marsh's rookie term, a transitional moment in black Richmond politics. The Crusade was expected to do more than just integrate City Hall. They had to openly represent the myriad of black interests, even at the risk of losing white allies. On the day of the vote, the other two black councilmen "told the colored community, in essence, to go jump," the *Afro-American* opined. They voted against Marsh's nomination and placed their political fates in the hands of the other white councilmen. The Crusade sensed the changing tide and refused to endorse them for the 1968 election. While Marsh was re-elected to the council, his black colleagues barely lost their council seats and respectability in black political circles, both of which they never got back.[29]

Marsh's controversial rookie term fit well within black political changes elsewhere. By the late 1960s, blacks were largely concentrated within economically desolate inner cities across the nation. This helped many black politicians win elected offices for the first time since Reconstruction. Crusade co-founder Dr. William Ferguson Reid and Marsh's Union and Howard

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[28] "Henry Marsh to Nominate W.T. Kenney," *Richmond Afro American*, November 18, 1967, 1-2; and "Cephas, Mundle Mum on Issue," *Richmond Afro-American*, November 25, 1967, 1.

[29] "Cephas, Mundle Votes Help Defeat Kenney," *Richmond Afro-American*, December 2, 1967, 1-2; and Councilmanic Election, June 10, 1968, results found in Bagley, Phil J., Jr., Deposition 1971, Box 2, M183, (*Richmond Annexation Files*, Virginia Commonwealth University Library, Richmond, Virginia).

classmate L. Douglas Wilder both secured seats in the Virginia General Assembly in 1968. This black concentration also spelled the twilight of the *traditional* Civil Rights Movement. Blacks moved mentally beyond fighting to end segregated accommodations. They wanted increased access to livable wage jobs to help offset the impacts of ghettoization. When more established black leaders could not provide these opportunities, cities such as Cleveland, Newark, Washington, D.C., Oakland, Omaha, Detroit, Chicago, Watts, Atlanta, Memphis, and others erupted in a series of riots that turned urban spaces into war zones.[30]

The soldiers in this war are credited with bringing public awareness to the Black Power Movement. While the etymology of *Black Power* is obscure, its substance is not. This rebellion emanated out of urban ghettos in the North, Midwest, and West Coast, where whites trapped the descendants of black southern migrants into underclass living. The Black Power rallies represented a collective outrage against systemic racism. However, the "Militant Negro nationalist movement," as *The Wall Street Journal* called it, was blamed for the eighty-three people dying and over 2000 being injured during urban rebellions in 1968. Stokely Carmichael, leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), interpreted the widespread belief that black power was violent during a speech at the University of California at Berkeley in 1966. "White people associate *Black Power* with violence because of their own inability to deal

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[30] Drake and Holsworth, *Affirmative Action and the Stalled Quest for Black Progress*, 37; "Dr. Reid Makes History," *Richmond Afro-American*, November 11, 1967, 1; "Crusade To Endorse Fully Integrated Slate," *Richmond Afro-American*, May 25, 1968, 1 and 22; "Mundle, Cephas Defeated; Marsh, Carpenter Win," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 15, 1968, 1-7; "What Happened in Tuesday's Vote," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 14, 1968, 1; Allan Staton Hammock, "The Leadership Factor in Black Politics: The Case of Richmond, Virginia," (PhD. diss., University of Virginia, 1972), 66; Silver, *Twentieth-Century Richmond*, 275-83; Hayter, *The Dream Is Lost*, 81; WSB-TV Newsfilm Clip of Senator Herman Talmadge Speaking about the role of African American Civil Rights Leaders during Race Riots in Atlanta, Georgia, December 1966, WSB-TV newsfilm collection, reel 1359, 40:41-41:12, (*Walter J. Brown Media Archives and Peabody Awards Collection*, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia); "$1000 Reward for Church Bombers," *Richmond Afro-American*, October 15, 1966, 1-2; "NAACP Rips Gov. Godwin," *Richmond Afro-American*, October 22, 1966, 1; "Photo Review of Headline Events in '66," *Richmond Afro-American*, January 7, 1967, no page number; "The Tragedy of Governor Godwin," *Richmond Afro-American*, November 11, 1967, 1; and "R.F. Must Go!," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 8, 1968, 1-3.

with blackness….The word *black* bothers people in this country, and that's their problem, not mine. That's the lie that says anything black is bad."[31]

Carmichael reflected black America's intellectual transformation in the mid-1960s. Younger blacks no longer saw themselves as *Negroes*, the property of whites during slavery and the stepping stone of white supremacy during Jim Crow. They were now *black*, a transnational identity that connected them to the decolonization struggle in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Many Black Power activists believed that they could never obtain racial equality as Americans because they were never American. They were stolen peoples who were stripped of their identity in a nation founded on racial apartheid. Hence, the Civil Rights Movement could never deliver rights to people who, under America's legal and social culture, had none. The solution then was to create a black ethno state within America and engage in anti-colonial warfare.[32]

Stokely Carmichael came to Richmond in 1968 to help build the Black Power nation. His presence put the mostly white city council on high alert. "Restore law and order," a Washington insider wrote a white Richmond councilman after he inquired about how to prevent a race riot. Over the next two years, white councilmen militarized the local police force, noting that "the police department must prepare for demonstrations and for civil disobedience" after Carmichael's visit. White councilmen also worked with non-profit organizations to help create

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[31] Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Civil Rights Movement in the North*, (Random House, 2008), 45-67.

[32] Excerpt from "Black Power Speech by Stokely Carmichael," 1966, (https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/1966-stokely-carmichael-black-power/); Carl T. Rowan, "Crisis in Civil Rights Leadership," *Ebony Magazine*, November 1966, 27-37; Hasan Kwame Jefferies, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt*, (NYU Press, 2009), 143-79; Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Black against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, (University of California Press, 2016), 1-15; and Dr. Thomas H. Henderson to Mr. J.C. Wheat, August 11, 1967, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (2 of 2), 41, (*James C, Wheat, Jr., Papers*).

jobs for blacks in an effort to "reduce urban tensions and overcome the influence of radical extremists who seek to exploit poverty and sinister ends."[33]

Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes once asked, "What happens to a dream deferred?" After running down a list of possibilities, he asked rhetorically, "does it explode?" The Black Power Movement was the ultimate expression of that explosion. However, Richmond maintained a safe distance. "We do not want Richmond to turn into a Watts," so "we should not seek Black Power," a black resident once wrote to the *Afro-American*. Much of this sentiment came from the work of Henry Marsh. Black Richmonders had no need for car bombs and Molotov cocktails. Marsh gave them leadership and representation in City Hall, assuring that black leaders would prioritize the myriad of black interests in the coming years. It was at this time that, as a recent historian argued, the Northside elite "transitioned from balance of power politics to the politics of black empowerment." This transition did not come not from astute political planning, or the passage of federal civil rights laws. The architect was Henry Marsh, the social engineer who made local government more accountable to black people; a man whose political rise came from the idealistic mission to "build people, not things."[34]

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[33] Council Crime Report, Conducted by Councilman Phil J. Bagley, B.A. Cephas, and Mayor Morril M. Crowe, January 21, 1968, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (1 of 2), 40; Alfonso J. Cervantes, "To Prevent A Chain of Super-Watts," *Harvard Business Review*, September-October 1967, 55-65, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (1 of 2), 40; The Kiplinger Washington Letter, Circulated Privately to Businessmen, August 4, 1967, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (1 of 2), 40; Frank R. Barnett, president of the National Strategy Information Center, Inc., to Mr. J.C. Wheat, Jr., J.C. Wheat and Co., Inc., February 21, 1968, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (2 of 2), 41; "The Negro Veteran, Urban Stability and The National Purpose," National Strategy Information Center Third Draft, February 14, 1968, 1, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (2 of 2), 41; "Urban Coalition Formed to Meet Crisis in Cities," *United States Municipal News*, Vol. 34, No.16, August 15, 1967, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (2 of 2), 41; "Rebellion in Ohio," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 13, 1967, clipping found in the letter from John S. Battle, Partner of McGuire, Woods, & Battle Law Firm, July 14, 1967; and "Model Neighborhood Planning Grant Application," Alan Kiepper, City Manager of Richmond to Dr. Robert C. Weaver, Department of Housing and Urban Development, October 2, 1968, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Housing Committee, (*James C. Wheat Papers*).

[34] "Uneasy Peace Grips Six Ghettos," "Black Power: What the Term Means to Richmonders," and "Cleveland, N.Y. Hardest Hit by Wave of Wave of Violent Unrest," *Richmond Afro-American*, July 30, 1966, 1-2; Moeser and Dennis, *Politics of Annexation*, 50-73; Avon, and Holsworth, *Affirmative Action*, 50; and Hayter, *Dream Is Lost*, 81.

"Niggers Won't Take Over This Town," 1968-1970.

Henry Marsh's rise to prominence placed Richmond's white elite on notice. Before his rookie term, the *Establishment*'s power was so pervasive that one of its members later joked in the *Times-Dispatch* that "there is no unit of people you can call the Establishment." History and quite a few residents would later say otherwise. "When we talk about the Establishment, we must remember that it was white," a longtime Richmonder once said in an interview. The Establishment was a collection of arch-conservative oligarchs who controlled the city's most powerful religious, economic, and political institutions from the affluent Far West End. They frequented the same Episcopal and Methodist churches, they attended the same private schools and universities -- namely the University of Richmond, the College of William & Mary, Virginia Military Institute, the University of Virginia, and Yale University -- and they also owned the key brokerage firms and banks along Main Street (in downtown) that controlled Richmond's corporate and industrial economy.[35]

From the comforts of their country clubs and downtown business offices, the Establishment handled Richmond and its race relations with velvet gloves. An Establishment fixture once admitted that they selected Henry Marsh to be vice mayor in 1968 "to improve race relations in the city" following his rookie term. However, beneath their velvet gloves lay iron fists. Nothing of economic and political importance got done in Richmond without the Establishment's approval. "There was a widespread sense that the upper classes, through their

[35] Interview with Dr. John Moeser, March 11, 2019; Team of Progress, undated biographies of white leadership; The Honorable Morrill M. Crowe, Mayor, City of Richmond, Virginia, undated biography; Clipping of James C. Wheat, Jr., Editorial Page of the *Richmond News Leader*, June 7, 1968; Biography of Thomas P. Bryan, Chairman of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*; Biography of Edward Grimsley, Editor of the *Richmond News-Leader*, "People: Biographies," Box 1, M277, (*Eleanor P. Sheppard Papers*); History of Richmond, Prepared by the Office of the City Clerk, January 10, 2019, 1-20, (*City Clerk's Archives, Richmond City Hall,* Richmond, Virginia); List of Contributors and Prospect List to the Virginia Municipal League, April 21, 1969, Richmond, Va., Box 5, M246, (*Horace H. Edwards Papers*); "Old Leadership Not Swayed," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 22, 1981, 1 and 6; and Interview with Terry Drumheller, July 23, 2019.

commerce and influence over government, ultimately controlled our lives," a white working class resident once noted in his memoir. He continued that, "We knew full well that there were higher rungs of the ladder of success," yet "we also knew that we had no access to that ladder." The Establishment kept their ranks closed from outsiders of both races. This assured that the city's socioeconomic power, while cultivated along Main Street, ultimately resided in the Far West End. The Establishment shared this responsibility among their oligarchic membership. By 1968, however, this responsibility fell largely upon the shoulders of one man, Richmond's Mayor Philip J. Bagley, Jr.[36]

Bagley was one of the few Establishment men who was not groomed in the right family, church, or school. He was the grandson of Irish-born peasants who resided in the working class East End. His father worked several jobs before becoming a professional laundryman. Bagley attended Richmond City Public Schools, later earning admission to Georgetown University in 1922 and the University of Richmond Law School in 1925. The talented student quickly hit Richmond's glass ceiling upon passing the state bar. According to another white attorney of a similar background, "what high school did you attend, and what does your father do for a living" were the only two things that mattered to downtown-based law and brokerage firms. Bagley's answers cemented his place as an outsider who would always be looking for a way in. For over twenty years after law school, he worked as a laundryman and part-time attorney in Richmond. Bagley later became a civic leader in the East End. His ability to galvanize white working class support for urban renewal earned him a coveted seat on the city council in 1952. After joining

[36] Committee on Trafficways Meeting Held at the Commonwealth Club, November 24, 1964, Mss1 W5063b FA Series 1, Expressways (1of 2), (*James C. Wheat Papers*); and Peeples, *Scalawag*, 15.

the council, Bagley was welcomed into the Establishment. He moved his family to the Far West End and began a lucrative career as a real estate attorney with prominent Main Street firms.[37]

After sixteen years on the city council, Bagley's fellow council members chose him to be the Mayor of Richmond. Since 1948, the city operated under a city manager form of government. This meant that most of the administrative duties fell upon a city manager who was hired by the popularly-elected city council members. After every citywide election, the city council chose one of their own to become the mayor and vice mayor. Both positions were largely ceremonial with little-to-no executive powers. The mayorship, specifically, was a rotating trophy between friends who shared the reins of power for decades. While its main function was to propose legislation and vote it into law, the mayorship required more active involvement in city affairs during Bagley's tenure.

Bagley walked into the mayor's office during, as he stated, "a time of urban crisis in America." The nation's fifty largest metropolitan areas grew significantly after World War II. The already-white suburban counties absorbed most of the affluent tax base. Inner cities became filled with, as an Establishment member once stated, "racial unrest, poverty, and the ghettos that blacken our city environment." Urban crises had already reached epic proportions in Virginia's largest cities. "Conditions are bleak, and threatening to become worse. Downtown indeed appears to be dying," the Virginia Chamber of Commerce once said after examining economic

[37] University of Richmond 1925 Yearbook, U.S., School Yearbooks, 1880-2012; U.S. Federal Census, 1900-1970; Richmond City Directory, 1900-1950, in U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995 database; Virginia, Death Records, 1912-2014, in Virginia Department of Health Records; Virginia, Select Marriages, 1785-1940, film number 2048498, 70; "Five More Enter Race for Council," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 12, 1952, 1 and 4; U.S. WWII Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947, Records of the Selective Service System, 147, Box 28, (*National Archives*); 1959 Richmond City Directory, in U.S. City Directories, 1814-1989 database; Philip J. Bagley, Jr., Social Security Application, number: 223-10-1923, Issue State: Virginia, Issue Date: Before 1951, in U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014, ancestry.com; Daniel J. Arkin, "Regime Politics Surrounding Desegregation Decision-Making during Massive Resistance in Richmond, Virginia," (PhD. diss at Virginia Commonwealth University, 1991), 50-5; "Bagley to Run as Independent," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 5, 1966, 2; and Interview with Terry Drumheller, July 23, 2019.

stagnation in Norfolk, Lynchburg, and Roanoke. Richmond did not fare much better. "We are a community of almost 220,000 people -- about half black, about half white. We are a community into which has moved thousands of impoverished families from the rural sections of our and other nearby states," the mayor said in an internal memo. Not only had the surrounding Chesterfield and Henrico Counties absorbed most of Richmond's middle-class tax base, but they had constructed shopping malls along its borders. These new facilities helped bleed the city's once-robust retail economy, forcing the Establishment to raise taxes across the board in the mid-to-late 1960s.[38]

The tax hikes did not cure the city's economic problems. Richmond's mostly black working poor doubled whites in every welfare category: Aid to Dependent Children, Foster Care, General Relief, Old Age Assistance, Aid to the Blind, and Aid to the Permanently Disabled. The welfare budget increased from $2,000,000 to over $20,000,000 (249%) between 1959 and 1968, with no signs of slowing down. Poverty had always been disproportionately black in Richmond. By 1968, however, black poverty was defining the inner city. Bagley's tenure was also defined by the democratization of city politics. Before 1960, the black and white middle classes were the majority of the voters, office holders, and committee members. Between 1960 and 1968, the white and black working class districts helped double the voter turnout from 22,000 to just over 44,000. There was also a rise in the number of black and white non-Establishment councilmanic candidates within the same timeframe. The economy and recent electoral statistics assured the

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[38] Robert L. Hill, Planning Consultant, to the Mayor and Council of the City of Richmond, February 26, 1969, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Housing Committee; Richmond Bill Sauder, "Jim Wheat: Stocks and Civic Enterprise," *The Commonwealth Magazine, The Magazine of Virginia, Virginia Chamber of Commerce*, Vol. XXXIV, No.1, January 1967, 32-4; Ed Grimsley, "Downtown Virginia," *The Commonwealth Magazine, The Magazine of Virginia, Virginia Chamber of Commerce*, Vol. XXXIV, No.5, May, 1967, 23-9; Mayor Morrill Crow, "Richmond Summer '68-Hot or Cool," a memo sent to James Wheat, March 6, 1968, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (1 of 2), 40; and "A Policy of Economic and Human Resources," Speech delivered at the Annual Convention of National League Cities in Boston, Massachusetts, July 31, 1967, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (2 of 2), 41, (*James C. Wheat, Jr., Papers*).

Establishment, and Bagley in particular, that if drastic measures were not taken, city politics would no longer belong exclusively to the local white elite.[39]

Mayor Bagley secretly reached across the Robert E. Lee Bridge into Chesterfield County less than two weeks after the 1968 election. For most of its history, Chesterfield was emblematic of most Virginia counties: largely agricultural, administratively limited, and more populated with farm animals and equipment than people. It was then that "Richmond should have annexed the suburbs…, mainly because the suburb wanted services which the city could give and the counties could not," a Chesterfield lawyer once said. By 1968, Chesterfield had ample public services and a strong local government that were "all made necessary by the demands of thousands of new [white] suburbanites," the same lawyer gloated. Chesterfield leaders slightly mirrored the Richmond Establishment. They were businessmen and attorneys who were born and raised in the county. They also attended private schools, elite universities, and Episcopal churches. However, Chesterfield's leadership mostly worked in Richmond and they were able to maintain power amid Chesterfield's changing demographics. Thus, when Mayor Bagley marketed annexation as

[39] Hobson, *Legend of the Black Mecca*, 58-9; 1960 Family Income Comparison for Richmond City-Henrico County; Increase in Welfare Costs City of Richmond, 1950-1968; Foster Care & Aid to Dependent Children, Number Served and Cost 1960 & 1967; Changes in Richmond's Population, 1950-1967; Table 4--Family Income for Richmond City, Metropolitan Area Less Richmond, and Metropolitan Area; Family Income by Race in City of Richmond, tables found in a packet from George R. Talcott, Boundary Expansion Coordinator of Chesterfield County to Mr. Nathan Forb, Councilman for the City of Richmond, February 26, 1968, Exhibit Px.14, 1968, Annex, Box 3; Councilmanic Elections, June 10, 1960; Councilmanic Elections, June 12, 1962; Councilmanic Elections, June 10, 1964; Councilmanic Election June 14, 1966; Councilmanic Election June 10, 1968, Exhibits 3 and 4, Box 3, M183, (*Annexation Files*); For more on the precinct breakdown on city voting patterns, see Box 3, M183, (*Annexation Files*); Nonwhite Population As A Percent of Total Population of 50 Largest U.S. Cities, Report to Henrico County and Chesterfield County, Box 5; Welfare Taken on April 1, 1966, Welfare Statistics, 1966, Box 6; City Exhibit No.57, Racial Composition Trends of Metropolitan Area, 1940-70, *Bradley v. City of Richmond* (Negro Composition of Area School Systems), 1970-1971, Box 1; and Annual Message by Horace H. Edwards, President of the Virginia Municipal League Assembled in Convention in Richmond, Virginia, September 19, 1966, Significant Developments Facing The City of Richmond, 1960, Box 5, M246, (*Horace H. Edward Papers*).

a public benefit to the entire metropolitan area, Chesterfield leaders heard, "Let us merge so you can help us pay for all the evils of the city," a country official criticized.[40]

Chesterfield leaders had successfully prevented the Establishment from merging the two localities in a series of annexation trials. However their resistance waned when state leaders sought to keep an economically healthy Richmond in the Establishment's hands. During the 1968 session of the General Assembly, the legislature passed financial legislation to help Richmond pay for annexed territories. They later amended the state constitution, giving the legislature power to expand Richmond's borders in any direction they deemed necessary by January 1, 1970. The shift in state authorities towards a more, as some called, *Metropolitan Virginia* was not the only reason Chesterfield leaders began brokering a deal with the Richmond Establishment. "Because Chesterfield is a vital part of the Richmond metropolitan area, it is extremely interested in the vitality of the entire area," a Chesterfield official said in reference to annexation. By vitality, they meant keeping the metropolitan's largest employer (Richmond) out of the political grasp of black leadership. A Chesterfield executive said it best when he later testified in court that annexation negotiations were predicated on the understanding that "the city of Richmond was gradually growing black."[41]

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[40] Report of Chesterfield County to the Virginia Metropolitan Area Study Commission, June 14, 1967, Chesterfield Annexation (Burnett Statement), 1969, Box 1, M246, (*Horace H. Edward Papers*).

[41] The Report By the Virginia Metropolitan Areas Study Commission, November 15, 1967, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (1 of 2), 40, (*James C, Wheat, Jr., Papers*); "Population of Richmond City, Henrico County, and Chesterfield County, Virginia," U.S. Federal Census, 1930-1980; "Money Men Rule Political Group," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 8, 1968, 1-2; "Old Leadership Not Swayed," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 22, 1981, 1; Moeser and Dennis, *Politics of Annexation*, 34-8 and 80-5; "Carwile Rips Merger Plan," Richmond Afro-American, November 12, 1966, 1; *City of Richmond, v. United States of America*, No. 74-201, U.S. Supreme Court (1974) Appendix 1, p.16-8; "Annexation Will Meet Resistance," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, December 14, 1961, 1; "Annexation Suit Time Predicted," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, December 15, 1961, 1; "Precedent Challenged by Annexation Move," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, December 24, 1961, 1; "Hopes Differ on Annexation Suit As New Year Arrives," *Richmond News Leader*, January 1, 1962, 1; "Carwile Rips Merger Plan," *Richmond Afro-American*, November 12, 1966, 1; "Proposed City Budget Might Pass Untrimmed," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 9, 1961, 2; "2 In Council Ask Merger Change," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 29, 1961, 1 and 4; and "The Important Facts About The Proposed Merger of Henrico and Richmond," Brochure found in Consolidation 1961-1972, Box 1 M283, (*Virginia Crockford Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia).

The Establishment and Chesterfield leaders met at homes, golf courses, restaurants, hotel luncheons, bars, and sporting events to broker an annexation. "Race was not necessarily mentioned at every meeting, but we both knew what we were talking about...This was the fundamental underlying feature of all of our discussions," the Chesterfield secretary testified in federal court almost a decade later. The meetings always involved the use of maps and census tracts to determine how many white middle-class residents Chesterfield would relinquish to the city. "We don't want the city to go to the niggers. We need 44,000 white bodies," Bagley allegedly told a Chesterfield official at a football game. The official went on to say that Bagley doubled down on that sentiment by stating that, "As long as I am mayor of the city of Richmond, the niggers won't take over this town." So, both sides got to work to assure that Bagley kept his promise to keep Richmond's leadership and population majority white.[42]

By summer 1969, Bagley brokered a deal for Richmond to annex a twenty-three square mile territory in North Chesterfield. This was one of the most affluent areas in Chesterfield County, hosting around 44,000 white middle-class residents. The motives behind this land and people deal were revealed in the 1970 election. With several black candidates running for city

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The Richmond newspapers closely followed the annexation trials. For more media coverage of the trials, see the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 3, 1962 to March 26, 1966 and the *Richmond News Leader*, January 1, 1962 to April 27, 1964; and Report of Chesterfield County to the Virginia Metropolitan Area Study Commission, June 14, 1967, Chesterfield Annexation (Burnett Statement), 1969, Box 1, M246, (*Horace H. Edward Papers*).

[42] *City of Richmond, Virginia, v. United States of America*, No. 74-200, U.S. Supreme Court (1974), Appendix, Vol. I, p. 142-60; *Curtis Holt, Sr., v. City of Richmond*, No.151-71 R, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, September 20, 1971, 90-100; Deposition of C. Leland Bassett, *Curtis Holt, Sr., v. City of Richmond* and Thomas J. Bliley, No.151-71-R, July 14, 1971, *Holt vs. City of Richmond*, 1971; Deposition of Melvin Burnett, July 13, 1971; Deposition of Irving G. Horner, July 13, 1971, Deposition, Horner, Irving G., 1971; Deposition of Alan F. Kiepper, July 15, 1971; Holt I Drafts of Arguments, 1969: *Curtis Holt, Sr., v. City of Richmond*, No.151-71-R, November 20, 1971, Box 2, M183, (*Annexation Files*); "An Act to Create a Virginia Metropolitan Area Study Commission, to Provide its Composition to Prescribe its Powers and Duties," *Acts of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia,* April 4, 1966, *General Assembly Regular Session* 1966, 1-50; A Bill to provide for the Merger of the City of Richmond and the County of Henrico and to Create a Commission to be known as the Richmond-Henrico Merger Commission: providing Composition, Terms, Powers, and Duties, and to Appropriate Funds, February 1968, Senate Bill No.441; "Proceedings and Debates of the Virginia House of Delegates pertaining to Amendment of the Constitution," Extra Session 1969, 515-30, (*General Assembly Archives*, Richmond, Virginia); and "Boundary Step, Ok'd by Senate," *Richmond News Leader,* April 2, 1969, 1.

council, the annexed suburbs voted overwhelmingly for Establishment candidates. This assured that Henry Marsh was the only black councilman. A group of white residents later hung a large Confederate Flag from the beams of the Richmond Coliseum to symbolize that they had kept black leaders from controlling City Hall. Ironically, the man most responsible for the annexation did not seek re-election. Bagley retired from city politics with the peace of mind that he had earned his stripes to be among the Establishment. The son of working-class Irish immigrants did what very few in his family could boast. He earned a bachelor's degree from Georgetown, a law degree from Richmond, and the acceptance of native white oligarchs. Most importantly, he kept his promise to ensure that, "Niggers won't take over this town."[43]

"Dogtown," 1970-1974

The 1970 annexation helped the Establishment maintain control of City Hall. However, its architects failed to account for the aftermath. Almost 45,000 suburban whites were forced to become a part of Richmond's Southside, an area known at the time as *Dogtown*. The name was a local slur to describe the mostly white and overtly racist trucking, tobacco, and aluminum manufacturing workers and their families. There were some middle-class areas, the most notable being Forest Hill and Westover Hills. However, Southside was defined as "a large area which is now in the state of decline," said the city manager. Many of the neighborhoods, such as Broadrock, Blackwell, Swansboro, Oak Grove, Bellmeade, were routinely included in local welfare surveys. Three highways connected Southside to the rest of Richmond. However, Dogtown was as insular as any area in the city. "We never crossed the [Robert E. Lee] Bridge.

[43] *Curtis Holt, Sr., v. City of Richmond*, 174-5 and 422-7; "Horner Says Accord Came on June 12," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 17, 1969, 1; Re: Annexation Plans, Office of the City Manager of the City of Richmond, July 14, 1969, 1-6, "Folder 2 Annexation 1969-1976," Box 1, M283, (*Virginia Crockford Papers*); "Complete Listing of Objections Pursuant to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965," U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, January 1, 1981, found in Moeser and Dennis, *Politics of Annexation*, 15; "They're Still Ahead, 6-3: Carwile, Marsh, Carpenter Win," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 13, 1970, 1; "Dixie Flag Waves on City Building," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 20, 1970, 1; and "Richmond City Council Election of 1970," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 10, 1970, 1.

Who the hell would want to cross the [James] River. The Yankees are over there," a Southside resident later said in an interview. The Lee Bridge and the James River symbolically divided the proud blue-collar Southsiders from a conservative city that they deemed too liberal.[44]

Less than a month after the annexation took effect, a group of black parents sued the Richmond School Board for maintaining racially segregated schools. This suit was one of several cases that the city had faced since the *Brown* decision. This time, however, the school board refused to fight the accusations. They instead asked the federal courts to make a "recommendation as to a plan that would ensure the operation of a unitary school system." Richmond schools had operated under the Freedom of Choice Plan for the last six years. This allowed parents to choose their children's schools regardless of race. Several studies done by the school board and the federal courts concluded that most of Richmond's schools were plus-90% either black or white. The federal courts, fed-up with Richmond's unwillingness to adhere to *Brown*, ordered the busing of black and white children to integrated schools in March 1970. For the newly-annexed Dogtown residents, this meant that their 9,000 school-aged children would bear the largest brunt of Richmond's integration crisis.[45]

Virginia's struggles with school integration has attracted much scholarly attention. Historians see the commonwealth as the birthplace of *Massive* and *Passive Resistance*: a series

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[44] Proposed Southside Concentrated Code Enforcement Project, December 11, 1967; Model Cities Grant and Code Enforcement Program for the Blackwell Area of South Richmond, November 21, 1968, in the letter from Alan Kiepper, City Manager to James C. Wheat, Jr., November 21, 1968, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Housing Committee, 40, (*James C, Wheat, Jr., Papers*); Interview with Dr. Ed Peeples, June 24, 2019; "NAACP Rips Gov. Godwin," *Richmond Afro-American*, October 22, 1966, 1; "Photo Review of Headline Events in '66," *Richmond Afro-American*, January 7, 1967, no page number; "The Tragedy of Governor Godwin," *Richmond Afro-American*, November 11, 1967, 1; Reverend Robin D. Mines Testimony, *Growing Up in Civil Rights Richmond: A Community Remembers*, (University of Richmond Museum, 2019), 62; and Interview with Terry Drumheller, July 23, 2019.

[45] *Bradley v. School Board of the City of Richmond, Virginia*, 317 F.Supp. 555, August 17, 1970, 5-8; Pratt, *Color of Their Skin*, 46-7; "Crusade Backs Busing, 250-2," *Richmond Afro-American*, March 25, 1972, 1-2; Doherty, *Race and Education*, 2-3; Racial Change Enrollments For North, East, West, and South Sides of City, April 16, 1970, Plan III Revised, 1970, Box 1, M283, (*Crockford Papers*); Roscoe E. Reeve, "Freedom of Choice," Section Four Miscellaneous Writings and Papers, Mss1 SA 772a, Section 134-138, (*James A. Sartain Papers*).

of coordinated attempts to bypass the *Brown* decision and maintain racially segregated schools. White parents with means often avoided this issue by enrolling their children in local preparatory schools or private segregationist academies. Black parents, regardless of income, did not have this option. The Richmond School Board attempted to offset this disparity by helping black students gain admission to New England preparatory schools at no cost to the parents. Southsiders, both new and old, did not benefit from either scenario. Most of their children would be chosen to fulfill the federal busing order. With this reality ever-present, Dogtown stalled busing by barking and howling their way through the federal courts, General Assembly, and U.S. Congress over the next half-decade.[46]

Southsiders had to first confront the Richmond School Board, a group of white liberals who paid lip service to school integration. This was rare in Richmond, as most whites, both liberal and conservative, quietly resisted school integration. The whites who willingly integrated city schools were particularly cautious. "When the percentage of Negroes reaches 50% or more, the [liberal] whites lose confidence -- tend to write it off as a Negro School," a report concluded. This dynamic reflected Richmond's larger white sentiment that blackness was a badge of inferiority. Many white parents believed that black students *naturally* lowered a school's academic standards and moral codes. A liberal white parent openly expressed that sentiment

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[46] Interview with Viola Baskerville, June 28, 2019; Robbins L. Gates, *The Making of Massive Resistance: Virginia's Politics of Public School Desegregation, 1954-1956*, (University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 1-24; Robert A. Pratt, "A Promise Unfulfilled: School Desegregation in Richmond, Virginia, 1956-1986," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol.99, No.4, (Winter 1991): 415-48; Pratt, *Color of Their Skin*, 52-9; Sara K. Eskridge, "Virginia's Pupil Placement Board and the Practical Applications of Massive Resistance, 1956-1966," V*irginia Magazine of History & Biography*, Vol. 118, No. 3 (June 2010): 246–76; James R. Sweeney, ed., *Race, Reason, and Massive Resistance: The Diary of David J. Mays, 1954-1959*, (University of Georgia Press, 2008); William P. Hustwit, *James J. Kilpatrick: Salesman for Segregation*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Jeffrey E. LittleJohn and Charles H. Ford, "Booker T. Washington High School, History, Identity, and Educational Equality in Norfolk, Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History & Biography* Vol. 124, No.2 (Winter 2016): 134–62; Daugherity, *Keep on Keeping On*, 21-40; and Douglas F. Thompson, *Richmond's Priests and Prophets: Race, Religion, and Social Change in the Civil Rights Era*, (University of Alabama Press, 2017). There are more monographs and articles that have been omitted from the brief list above. For more on Virginia's struggle to integrate public schools, see the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*.

when she removed her daughter from an integrated public school. She claimed that her daughter was "suffering both socially and educationally" from having to make more black friends as the white students withdrew from the school. The parent also criticized her daughter's teacher, noting that "with the coming of Negroes….she had lowered her standards in order to meet the needs of her students." This one admission symbolized the mountain of studies that proved white Richmonders would not voluntarily send their children to an integrated or majority-black school. Luckily for those invested in integrating city schools, longtime school teacher and civic leader Virginia Alden Crockford understood that all too well.[47]

Crockford was not born into the white Richmond Establishment. She came from working-class origins in Virginia's poor white southwest region. After attending Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (now known as Virginia Tech) and Madison College (now James Madison University), she moved to Richmond, married a *Times-Dispatch* reporter, and became a teacher in the Far West End. Crockford involved herself in civic groups such as the Richmond Committee for Youth, Richmond Federation of PTAs, Richmond Council of Women's Organizations, and many more. These groups helped combat childhood poverty and unemployment, as well as promote sex education and racial harmony. Crockford became a darling among elite white women, and even more so among the Establishment. The city council appointed Crockford to be the second woman to serve on the Richmond Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in 1962. Years later, she was appointed to head the Richmond School Board, as well as the Richmond and Virginia Congress of PTAs.[48]

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[47] Bill Leftwich, Ginter Park Data, undated, Mss1 SA772a, Sections 54-106; and The Views of a Former White Liberal, Mss1 SA772a, Sections 110-116, (*James A. Sartain Papers*). For more on the extensive studies done to examine white comfort levels with integrated schools, see Mss1 SA772a, Sections 1-106 of the *James A. Sartain Papers*.

[48] The National Congress of Parents and Teachers Biographical Data, Personal Information; Box 1, M283, (*Crockford Papers*). For more information about Crockford's civic activities, see folders entitled Committee on

After the March 1970 busing order, Crockford used PTA meetings to ease white parental fears about busing and integration. Black parents generally, and poor white parents who lived in majority black neighborhoods, supported the busing order. White middle-class parents, mostly Southsiders, vigorously refused to attend Crockford's meetings. One white father justified his own absence by saying, "It is extremely hard to keep whatever latent prejudice that I might have from rising to the surface." Instead of attending PTA meetings, many Southside parents wrote letters of dissent. "Is this the kind of equal justice now being dispensed by the federal court system? The rich can buy out and the average citizen will be forced to accept FORCED government integration plans [*sic*]," a white father once complained. Most white middle-class parents wanted to keep their children in the public school system. However, they made it clear that, as one white father said, "If busing takes place, I will have no alternative than to seek out private school at great expense."[49]

The most vocal Dogtown parents formed two anti-busing groups called the West End Concerned Parents and Friends (WECPF) and the Citizens Against Busing (CAB). WECP was composed of about 500 families from the newly built Bon Air suburb in the northwest corner of

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Youth, 1962-1966, Richmond Council of Women Organizations, 1965-1968, Richmond Federation of PTA, 1955-1972, and Citizens for Excellent Public Schools, 1970-1972, in Box 1, M283, (*Crockford Papers*).

[49] "Guidelines for School Desegregation: A Summary Explanation of the Revised Statement of Policies For School Desegregation Plans Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," pamphlet published by U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, undated; Concerned Parents Association of West Hampton School to School Board, City of Richmond, May 4, 1970; Albert S. Katz to Mrs. W.H. Crockford, May 5, 1970, "Busing 1970-1972;" Mrs. Anne Glenn Tinsley to Mrs. W.H. Crockford, Chairman, May 5, 1970; Mr. and Mrs. Wythe Kelly, III to Mrs. W.H. Crockford, III, May 8, 1970; Mrs. W.H. Crockford to Mrs. Virginia F. Rice, May 11, 1970; Mr. Charles A. Coleman, Jr., to Mrs. W.H. Crockford, May 11, 1970; Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Patterson, Jr., to Mrs. W.H. Crockford, Chairman, May 11, 1970; Mrs. W.H. Crockford, III to Mrs. W. M. E. Rachel, May 12, 1970; J.C. Moss, Jr., to The Honorable Robert R. Merhige, Jr., May 19, 1970, Desegregation 1966-1971; Mrs. W.G. Mize Past President of the Robert Fulton P.T.A to Mrs. W.H. Crockford, July 16, 1970, Busing 1970-1972; Mrs. Philip Frederick, Jr. to Mrs. W.H. Crockford, August 8, 1970, Desegregation 1966-1971, Box 1, M283, (*Crockford Papers*); and John Strubank to Judge Robert R. Merhige, Jr., February 1, 1972, January 28-Marsh 7, 1972, Box 4, (*Robert R. Merhige, Jr., Papers*, University of Richmond Law Library: Richmond, Virginia), hereafter cited as *Merhige Paper*s. For more examples of white parental discontent with busing, see the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of The School Board of the City of Richmond, March 19-December 31, 1970, 149-325, Box 2, M283, (*Crockford Papers*); and Susan M. Corbell to Judge Robert Merhige, August 27, 1970, August 1970-December 1970, Box 4, (*Merhige Papers*).

Southside. CAB consisted of about 1,700 lower-middle-class families from the central Manchester district in the newly annexed area. Between June and August 1970, these groups petitioned the Virginia governor, state legislature, and U.S. Congress to pass anti-busing legislation. They also used rallies and motorcades to recruit other white families. The WECPF chairman told Crockford that they "feel the crucial factor is preserving the public school system." CAB on the other hand promoted "opening churches as private schools" and defunding public schools entirely.[50]

These tactics did not endear Dogtown to local and state leadership. The Richmond City Council, General Assembly, and Governor of Virginia did not pass or support anti-busing legislation. This solidarity came from the national sentiment against massive resistance, and the local fear of losing federal funds and out-of-state industry. Hence, Dogtown's persistence was, as one state delegate said, "a futile gesture." White parents pestered Crockford to pull her support from busing weeks before schools were set to open. "It just won't work for either race. The Negroes will not feel at home in our neighborhoods and the whites in the inner city neighborhoods," said a white single mother of three. Crockford refused to budge. She always responded by telling parents that, "The Richmond School Board is working and will continue to work for the best education possible for ALL of Richmond's children."[51]

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[50] West End Concerned Parents and Friends Newsletter, July 1970, "Busing 1970-1972," Box 283, (*Crockford Papers*); "West End Parents Protest Busing Move," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 3, 1970, 15 and B4; "Cary School Plan Suggested," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 9, 1970, 1-2; Petition Opposing Busing, newspaper ad for West End Concerned Parents and Friends, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 19, 1970, 70; "Richmond Eyes Second School of Cary Type," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 10, 1970, 4; "Busing-Never," political ad for Citizens Against Busing, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 23, 1970, 8; "1,700 Hear Ways To Fight Busing," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July, 24, 1970, 17; "3 Area Groups Hold Antibusing Rallies," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 31, 1970, 23; "No Role For Assembly In Busing Issue Sen," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 1, 1970, 1 and 13; Doherty, *Race and Education*, 3; and William H. Fowlkes to W.H. Crockford, III, July 13, 1970, Desegregation, 1966-1971, Box 1, M283, (*Crockford Papers*).

[51] "Busing Foes Will Petition Congress," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 11, 1970, 11; "Busing Possibility Spurs Home Sales," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 12, 1970, 41; "West End Group Eyes Suit Against Busing," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 16, 1970, 35; "Anti-Busing Federation is Sought, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*,

By August 1970, the federal courts approved a plan to bus 6,000 white Southside and West End students along with 7,000 black East End and Northside students to opposing neighborhood schools. Richmond Mayor Morril Crowe "urge[d] all Richmonders to comply" in a last-minute press conference. WECPF reiterated their support for the public school system in the *Times-Dispatch* as well. However, when the first buses arrived in Bon Air, 650 of the 900 assigned students were already enrolled in private schools. Other parents were "trying to buy homes farther out so they'll be beyond busing," a Southside realtor told the *Times-Dispatch*. Other less fortunate parents bypassed legalities and withheld many of the remaining 5,000 children from city schools. "You'd be upset and scared. You wouldn't want your kid to go to a black school," a student wrote to the federal courts. One parent encapsulated the white resistance by telling Crockford that, "We do not want to be cruel, but no thanks. We want our children in our schools."[52]

The whites who obeyed the busing order faced tremendous challenges. Mainly, they were looked down upon by other whites for sending their children to school with black children. A white educator remembered his *liberal* colleague asking him, "Where do your children go to school?" When he said Richmond City Public Schools, the colleague responded, "How could you do this to your children?" The two of them never spoke again. Another white parent had

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August 4, 1970, 13; "Holton Receives Busing Opponents," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 6, 1970, 67 and 70; "Urban Team Study on Northside Schools," Richmond School Board Grant Proposal to the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, June 1970; James L. Doherty to the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, August 6, 1970, Folder 9, Box 18; and Mrs. Mattie Lee Simmons to Judge Robert Merhige, August 9, 1970, "August 1970-December 1970," Box 1, (*Merhige Papers*).

[52] Open Letter to the Richmond School Board and the United States District Court by the Summer Hill Concerned Parents and Friends, August 12, 1970; Laurie Lulman to Judge Robert Merhige, undated; Robert F. Harman, DDS to Judge Earl Abbot, Judge Clifton Forge, August 24, 1970; "August 1970-December 1970, Box 4, (*Merhige Papers*); "Both Sides Dislike Ruling," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 18, 1970, 15-16; "School Plan Given Interim Approval; Stronger Action Required in 90 Days," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 18, 1970, 1 and 4; Doherty, *Race and Education*, 7-10; George Mader to Mr. L. D. Adams, Superintendent, August 29, 1970; James L. Doherty to Mrs. W.H. Crockford, September 21, 1970, Desegregation, 1966-1971; Mrs. D.H. Welchons to Mrs. W.H. Crockford, III, November 11, 1970; and A. Prescott Rowe to Mrs. W. Hamilton Crockford, III, November 12, 1970, Consolidation, 1961-1972, Box 1, M283, (*Crockford Papers*).

similar experiences. “In some social settings, conversations would dry up the minute we mentioned our children went to the city’s public schools,” he said. The busing order stigmatized Richmond schools, and as another white parent stated, “We did not realize how alone we would be.” White parents grew even more dissatisfied with the lack of quality bus services. “The city refuses to provide regular bus service to our annexed area,” a white father wrote to Crockford. The flood of white complaints, suburban flight, and flagrant truancy forced many to admit that “Richmond’s new desegregation plan appears to be a flop,” said the *Times-Dispatch*. Some city leaders and PTA members called for Crockford’s resignation. When she refused to quit, a white city councilman proposed a resolution to remove her from office. Crockford’s Establishment allies in City Hall voted against the resolution, allowing her to remain in office for the foreseeable future.[53]

The white students who obeyed the busing order are often forgotten in the city’s struggle to integrate schools. “You have to do it, we have to save the public schools,” a white parent remembered telling his daughter when her busing assignment was issued. Unlike their parents, these students faced a two-sided “indifference, disdain, and hostility” from both whites and blacks. Obeying the busing order often meant social alienation from other white children. It was, as one former student remembered, “almost like [being] an outsider in your own race.” The

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[53] Rob Corcoran, *Trustbuilding: An Honest Conversation on Race, Reconciliation, and Responsibility*, (University of Virginia Press. 2010), 128; T. Steven Daugherty to Mayor T. W. Bliley, Mrs. Hamilton Crockford III, Gov. A.L. Holton, and others, August 20, 1970, Consolidation, 1961-1972, Box 2, M283, (*Crockford Papers*); J. Claiborne Mills, Jr., to Judge Robert Merhige and Mrs., W. Hamilton Crockford, September 6, 1970; T.L. Pickle, III to Judge Robert R. Merhige, Jr., September 7, 1970; Paul T. Bassett to Dr. L.D. Adams, Superintendent and Mrs. W. Hamilton Crockford, September 10, 1970, August 1970-December 1970, Box 4, (*Merhige Papers*); *Bradley v. Richmond School Board*, 380; “Integration Not Going As Planned,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 13, 1970, 1 and 41, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 14, 1970; John A. Gunn to Mrs. Crockford, October 14, 1970, Busing 1970-1972, Box 1, M283, (*Crockford Papers*); William G. Colby, Jr., to Mrs. W. Hamilton Crockford, November 18, 1970; Urchie B. Ellis to The Honorable Thomas J. Bliley, Jr., Mayor of Richmond, November 20, 1970; Johnie Lu Morgan to Mrs. W.H. Crockford, *Richmond News-Leader*, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, and WRVA Mailbag, November 20, 1970; and Recommendation From Henrico County Council Executive Committee, March 2, 1971, Consolidation, 1961-1972, Box 2, M283, (*Crockford Papers*).

worst treatment came from within the school system. One white parent described busing as "throwing white kids to the wolves." A black woman who attended George Wythe High School (in Southside) validated that analogy. She later said that, "During that first year, there was a fight everyday [between] blacks and whites." Schools across the city dealt with constant fighting and tremendous police presence. "I don't think much learning went on," another black George Wythe alumnus remembered. The early years of busing are often remembered by the white resistance outside of city schools. Scholars often forget the turmoil inside of the schools. The daily toil of integration lasted only a short time before many of the children transferred to county or private schools.[54]

John B. Cary Elementary School may have given Crockford some hope. The Near West End school was exempt from the federal busing order because it was designated as a Model School. This meant that admission was based on a citywide lottery where school board officials assured that the students and faculty reflected the city's demographics. Parents, teachers, and students came together and created a culture of racial tolerance and academic excellence. However, Cary could not keep Richmond's issues from seeping into the school. By the end of the decade white flight made it impossible for Cary to maintain a racial balance. As its student body became majority black and working class, the white middle-class parents removed their children from the school. "We are proud of our diversity in this school, but we don't want to have too much diversity," a white parent once said at a PTA meeting. Cary lost its Model status

[54] Corcoran, *Trustbuilding,* 124-31; Interview with Dr. Ed Peeples, June 24, 2019; Interview with Robert Corcoran, March 11, 2019; Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 12, 2019; and Testimonies of Valerie P. Perkins, Mark Person, Phillip H Brunson, III., and Yolanda Burrell Taylor, *Growing Up in Civil Rights Richmond: A Community Remembers*, (University of Richmond Museums, 2019), 52, 55, 64, and 86.

and became a regular neighborhood school in the 1980s. Still, its remaining white students often transitioned to private schools upon graduation.[55]

It became clear to all involved that the Henrico and Chesterfield suburbs made it difficult for Richmond to obey the busing order. Their jurisdictional independence made them safe havens for white parents, many of whom could not access private or model schools, to flee the busing order. A white Air Force major learned of this upon being transferred to Richmond in 1970. He later told Crockford that, "I refused to even talk to six Richmond realtors regarding Richmond area homes. By choice, I purchased a home in Henrico County because I felt that the educational system in this country would offer my children a better education." Crockford bypassed the city council and motioned the federal court to enjoin Chesterfield and Henrico into the desegregation case. On December 14, 1970, the federal courts obliged her request. Crockford wanted to file this motion in the summer of 1970. White suburban parents, the Richmond City Council, and even the black Northside elite refused to support her. They all feared that a move of that magnitude would have dissolved public schools entirely. By now, Crockford had ignored that fear. She realized that school segregation was a metropolitan problem, and it required a metropolitan solution.[56]

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[55] Elizabeth L. O'Leary, *The Carillon Neighborhood: A History*, (Richmond, Virginia: Carillon Civic Association, 2013), 32-5; Interview with Dr. Elizabeth O'Leary, June 26, 2019; Interview with Robert Corcoran, March 11, 2019; Interview with Susan Corcoran, May 7, 2019; Interview with Dr. Rutledge B. Dennis, July 26, 2019; and Corcoran, *Trustbuilding*, 125.

[56] Edward E. Fowler, Major USAF to Judge Robert Merhige, August 30, 1971, August 1970-December 1970, Box 4, (*Merhige Papers*); *Motion for Joinder*, Nov. 4, 1970, 90a-98a; *Amended Complaint*, December, 14, 1970; *Motion to Rescue*, *Bradley v. Richmond School Board*, Folder 9, Box 18, (*Merhige Papers*); Doherty, *Race and Educated*, 3-7; Bacigal, *May It Please the Court*, 61-6; *Bradley v. Richmond School Board*, 400, 840-50; Robert A. Pratt, "The Conscience of Virginia: Judge Robert R. Merhige, Jr., and the Politics of School Desegregation," 52 *University of Richmond Law Review*, Online 29 (2017), 4; *Bradley v. Richmond School Board*, 110; Richard D. Obenshain, Counsel West End Concerned Parent and Friends to Mrs. W.H. Crockford, November 15, 1970, Professor Isabel Rogers to Mrs. W. Hamilton Crockford, January 26, 1972; Bill Watts WLEE News to Mrs. Hamilton Crockford, III, March 17, 1972, Consolidation, 1961-1972; Sub-Division Boundary Descriptions, April 30, 1971, Desegregation, 1966-1971; and Ron Hill WLEE News to Mrs. W. Hamilton Crockford, March 24, 1972, Busing 1970-1972, Box 1 M283, (*Crockford Papers*).

After another busing order failed to integrate city schools in Fall 1971, federal Judge Robert Merhige consolidated Richmond, Chesterfield, and Henrico into one single school division. This would result in 80% of school-aged children in all three jurisdictions being bused to various schools throughout the city. The local media believed that the consolidation "will mean that Richmond, the Capital of the Confederacy, will also represent a milestone towards true equality." However, they would have to wait as Chesterfield and Henrico attorneys stalled the consolidation with two separate appeals. Residents from Chesterfield and Henrico also joined the annexed Southsiders in resisting the court order. They were "equally determined that their children shall not be hauled ridiculous distances across the metropolitan area," a Henrico man wrote Crockford. Some merely picketed the federal court building. Others mobilized anti-consolidation rallies that drew up to 4,000 people at a time. Social class divided white Richmonders in the early 1970s. Busing blurred those lines and unified the most unlikely of groups. As one parent told Crockford, "I don't believe you understand the depth of this sentiment, and I don't believe you understand how widespread it is."[57]

The consolidation order unlocked a chest of white vitriol. Public officials from Richmond regularly had their lives threatened because they were able to transition their children to private schools. "What is all this bull shit -- your decision to integrate was for the 'other people' -- not

[57] "Mr. Green's Jerry-Built Rig," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 22, 1971, 12; Mrs. Thomas C. Sanders, President of the Federation to The Richmond Area News Media, January 10, 1972; Vivian S. Easterling, Secretary of the Chesterfield Education Association to Mrs. W. H. Crockford, III, January 26, 1971; Harold M. Ratcliffe to Mrs. W. Hamilton Crockford, III, February 24, 1971; "To All State Association Presidents, Executive Secretaries and Urban Association Presidents," Hilda S. Morano, President Henrico Education Association, April 7, 1972, Consolidation, 1961-1972, Box 1, M283, (*Crockford Papers*); "Wilder, Duval, Gartlan Oppose Anti-Busing Bill," *Richmond Afro-American*, February 19, 1972, 1 and 24; "Massive Resistance Mood Pervades General Assembly," *Richmond Afro-American*, February 26, 1972, 1 and 24; "The Richmond Decision," WRICTV4 Editorial, January 26 & 27, 1972, January 28-March 7, 1972; Resolution of the Chesterfield County Council of PTAs, undated; Resolution of the Providence Junior High PTA, February 14, 1972, January 28-March 7, 1972; A.M Davis Elementary PTA to Judge Robert R. Merhige, January 21, 1972, January 21-27, 1972; Nathaniel W. Holland, Jr., to Judge Robert R. Merhige, August 12, 1970, August 1970-December 1970; Carlton Boyer to Judge Robert R. Merhige, January 19, 1972, January 1-20, 1972; and Andrew W. Coates, Jr., to Judge Robert Merhige, February 2, 1972, January 28-March 7, 1972, Box 4, (*Merhige Papers*).

your family," an angry parent wrote to the school board. Simply, "kiss my ass" entitled one of the nicer letters that is currently archived at the University of Richmond Law Library. The federal marshals kept most of the letters to help build cases against those who dared harm public officials. The letters that did make it to the archives were handwritten, sent without return addresses, and laced with heavy handed personal attacks and racist rhetoric. One of the most representative letters read:

> "You must have black relatives to do what you have attempted to do. Can't you see we whites want the blacks to stay away? Can't you see we do not want to live and socialize with them? None are so blind as those who will not see! We truly hope you have childen that will be bused to nigger areas -- we hope these children, or perhaps grandchildren, will be raped-molestedpp [*sic*] girls pawed in general can turn and thank you for there [*sic*] nigger babies. We lived among them blacks until we could afford to buy away from them -- now jackasses like you are forcing them on us. We do not want to be with them or near them -- what does it take to make this clear?"

These letters were often sent with newspaper clippings about integrated schools failing in northern and Midwestern cities, and reports about white Richmond students being assaulted in city schools.[58]

Over 3,261 white suburban parents traveled two hours north to Washington, D.C., to advocate for federal anti-busing legislation. "This is middle-class America speaking out. My 5-year-old cried when I left this morning, but I told Beth I had to go this morning because it means where you go to school," a white parent told the *Times-Dispatch*. Congress did not side with the suburbanite visitors to Capitol Hill. However, they greeted them with a warm reception, labeling their resistance as "democracy in action." The D.C. trip helped launched more motorcades and rallies in Richmond during the spring and summer months of 1972. By June, the U.S. Fourth

[58] Unnamed Letter to Judge Robert R. Merhige, January 11, 1972; Mr and Mrs. Johnson to Mr. Bullshit (So-called Judge Merhige), January 19, 1972, January 1-20 1972; Sickof Hypocrite Judges to Judge Robert Merhige, February 20, 1972, January 28-March 7, 1972; and Untitled Letter to Judge Robert Merhige, January 24, 1972, January 21-27, 1972, Box 4, (*Merhige Papers*).

Circuit Court of Appeals overruled the consolidation by a five-to-one vote. This was a part of a national consensus that court orders could not integrate public schools. The consolidation order suffered its final death a year later in the U.S. Supreme Court. Justice Lewis F. Powell, a Richmond resident and former school board head during Jim Crow, recused himself from the case. This resulted in a four-to-four vote, which upheld the Fourth Circuit Court's decision. With a similar defeat in Detroit a few years later, Richmond, as historians have thoroughly documented, laid a foundation for the federal judiciary's abandoning the promise of *Brown*.[59]

The busing crisis revealed the depths of racial hatred in Richmond. As local civil rights attorney and activist Oliver Hill stated, "Prior to the *Brown* decision, a majority of the leadership among the black population assumed that the white majority believed in law and order and the democratic process. The intervening years have taught us that the majority of…. Virginia and a large segment of such leadership in the nation is so steeped in racial bigotry that it is unable to accept the black man as a human being." Those who attended Richmond schools during the busing crisis also look back on it with sadness. "As we progressed through the system, the number of whites steadily dwindled. Each year another friend would transfer to a county or private school," a white mother said years later. Many of the white students who remained felt similar to a white woman who later published a record of her experiences. Upon visiting a local preparatory school, she "wanted to be at Collegiate more than anything. I wanted to look like

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[59] Interim Report by the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce Committee on Public Education, January 14, 1972, Desegregation 1966-1971, "Reversal of the Richmond Busing Decision," *Education Summary*, June 23, 1972, Box 1, M283, (*Crockford Papers*); "Protest Motorcade May Extend 50 Miles," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 17, 1972, 1-2; "3,261 Cars Make Trip to Washington," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February, 13, 1972, 1 and 5; "Protest Reactions is Varied in Area," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 19, 1972, 17; "1,000 Cheer Anti-Busing Talks; Rain Sends Rally Indoors," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 25, 1972, 17; Progress Report on Planning the Consolidation of the Richmond, Chesterfield, and Henrico School Divisions, April 7, 1972, Consolidation, 1961-1972; "Reversal of the Richmond Busing Decision," *Education Summary*, June 23, 1972, 1-3, Busing 1970-1972; *Bradley v. Richmond School Board*, 834-75; CEPS Newsletter, January 1972, Box 2, M283, (*Crockford Papers*); "In Richmond Politics: It's a New Ball Game," *Richmond Afro-American*, April 29, 1972, 1-2; and "De-Annex Decision Not 'The Last Word,'" *Richmond News Leader*, May 4, 1972, 1.

everyone else. I wanted to go out for the track team. I wanted the guidance counselor to tell me that if I kept up the good work, I could get into Harvard." She went on to admit that, "I hated myself for feeling this way." White flight from city schools created rifts between the few interracial friendships that developed in the midst of the turmoil. "I remember being confused a little bit by my friends from Tee Jay [Thomas Jefferson High School in Northside] who happened to be white, over the years disappearing. They were sad they had to go. But their parents were pulling them out," a former black student recalled. For others, the busing crisis was a chapter of their lives that will never be revisited. At John Marshall High School in Northside, only one white person has ever bothered to attend the 1970 class reunion. While many of them may be deceased or living outside of Richmond, the black alumni "really do believe that it's a racial thing."[60]

In the following decade, the Richmond School Board shifted its focus from school integration to school improvements. They began by filing a lawsuit against the state legislature for unjustly allocating more funds to suburban schools. The suit was dismissed, leaving Richmond schools largely underfunded to this very day. The federal courts also lifted the original busing order at the school board's request. They reasoned that it merely sent black children to majority black schools in other neighborhoods. The school board replaced busing with a zoning policy that allowed the city to retain its affluent white tax base in the Near and Far West End by protecting their schools from racial integration. To this day, there are few white

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[60] "Some Progress--But Virginia Continues to Resist," *Richmond Afro-American*, May 14-18, 1974, 5; *Bradley v. Richmond School Board*, 324 F. Supp. 1058, 1066 (4th Cir. 1973), 462; "Consolidation! NAACP Lauds Judge Merhige's School Decision," *Richmond Afro-American*, January 15, 1972, 12; "Council Denounces Carwile for Demagogic Remarks" and "Mixed Audience Cheers Merhige," *Richmond Afro-American*, February 19, 1972, 1 and 7; "City Blacks Moving Out to Henrico," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 30, 1973, 8; "Citizens Group Seeks Changes in Busing Plan," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 28, 1974, 252; Corcoran, *Turstbuilding*, 130; Testimony from Mark Person and Glennys E. Fleming, *Growing Up in Civil Rights Richmond: A Community Remembers*, (University of Richmond Museums, 2019), 55 and 97; Clara Silverstein, *White Girl: A Story of School Desegregation*, (University of Georgia Press, 2004), 123-6; and Interview with Reginald Gordon, June 27, 2019.

students in Richmond City Public Schools. The majority of them reside in the West End, and they will either attend model, private, or county schools after their elementary years.[61]

"Pressure on the Establishment," 1974-1977

While the U.S. Supreme Court saved Dogtown from school integration, the majority black working-class East End -- its largest neighborhood of Church Hill, the last of Richmond's four sectors -- remained underrepresented in the city's balance of power. Church Hill was arguably the most segregated, but undoubtedly the most economically depressed side of Richmond. The area's largest economic contribution was not retail, banking, or manufacturing. It was under-skilled black labor, which made up 99% of Church Hill residents. Many of them descended from farm hands who migrated to Richmond in search of work after World War II. Church Hill residents were domestics in Far West End and Northside homes, workers in Dogtown factories, clerks in downtown stores, and petit business owners in their very own East End. A majority of Church Hill residents rented shabby homes and apartments from white, and some black, slumlords. However, what this place lacked in economic clout, it made up for in community fortitude. A childhood resident of Church Hill remembered that, "People relied on each other. They bartered for services. So for instance, if my father needed a suit prepared, we called the neighbor who was a tailor. If he needed the porch fixed, he called my father who was a carpenter. So resources were able to stay in the community and be stretched." Church Hill was shaped by Richmond's rigid class segregation. However, its people corralled their meager resources to create a community within a community, a city within a city.[62]

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[61] Pratt, *Color of Their Skin*, 98-110; and Corcoran, *Trustbuilding*, 124-9.

[62] Interview with Viola Baskerville, June 28, 2019; and Church Hill Revitalization Plan Draft, 1-3, found in undated folder of Box 21, M293, (*Clarence L. Townes, Jr., Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University Special Collections, Richmond, Virginia). A copy of the revitalization draft is also in the possession of the author.

Church Hill was also the most insular section of Richmond. “We pretty much stayed within the community, except to go downtown,” a resident remembered. Blacks lived a mostly white-free existence in Church Hill. In downtown, however, Church Hill residents worked for whites, paid various bills and taxes to whites, went to be judged in court by whites, and purchased supplies from white-owned stores. Downtown was a place of oppression, a stark reminder that blackness was second-class citizenship in Richmond. This oppression did not create comradery between Church Hill and the black Northside. “The Northside crowd we would see if there were certain citywide events,” a black female once said. Voter drives were the primary ways that Church Hill residents interacted with Northsiders. Otherwise, the two sides rarely, if ever, interacted. “The bourgeoisie blacks were in their own social groups. They had their own churches that they went to. They stayed among themselves,” she went on to say. Another black resident was more candid, saying that “Northside had a lot of stuck up people.” Church Hill had a small professional class of tailors, undertakers, ministers, postal workers, and teachers. However, they were not generally accepted as equals among the highbrow Northside crowd.[63]

Church Hill’s social isolation was disrupted by urban renewal. Highways and interstates did not cut through the residential areas. However, the Establishment used the East End as a dumping ground for the city’s displaced residents. Church Hill quickly transitioned from a working class area to an underclass area between 1940 and 1970. Residents were not oblivious to the structural differences. “In the house I grew up in, I could see Creighton Court out of my front door. Basically out of the backdoor you could see where Fairfield Court Elementary School started,” a woman remembered. This structural change reflected the cultural clash that Church

[63] Interview with Viola Baskerville, June 28, 2019; and Interview with William Mason, July 22, 2019.

Hill residents had to accept. The community that was once filled with low-skilled laborers became home to the city's poorest residents, and "it put pressure on the community" that same woman remembered. Many residents shared their economic resources with the housing project residents. Others, by 1970, fled the area for affordable homes in Northside and Southside.[64]

For many former Church Hill residents, the housing projects symbolized the cultural death of their proud neighborhood. Current residents saw the concentration of poverty as a call to action that a black man named Curtis Holt, Sr., took up during Jim Crow's demise. Holt was born in 1920 to sharecroppers from Rocky Mount, North Carolina. After his father's untimely death, Holt's mother moved the family of nine (eight children and herself) to Church Hill in search of factory and domestic work. Holt soon dropped out of high school to help support his family. At the age of twenty-one, a construction-site accident almost paralyzed him. This injury eventually forced Holt, his wife Alto Mae, and their children to live in the Creighton Court Housing Projects along Church Hill's Nine Mile Road.[65]

Holt embraced being poor while fighting vigorously against poverty. He became an untrained minister and founder of the Creighton Court Civic Association (CCCA). This organization, run by single black mothers, represented the political interests of over 4,000 underclass blacks in the Church Hill housing projects. Their existence alone showed that the black Richmond poor desired to "feel human, instead of like victims" of the city's racist and classist political structure, Holt told the *Afro-American* in 1966. The Northside elite took little issue with the CCCA. They saw the organization and its leader as a vehicle to help increase the black vote. The CCCA often came under the Crusade umbrella during municipal elections. Yet,

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[64] Interview with Viola Baskerville, June 28, 2019; and Church Hill Revitalization Plan Draft, 4-10.

[65] Richmond City 1948 Directory, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995; Virginia, Marriage Records, 1936-2014, Roll: 101167677, Virginia Department of Health; U.S. WWII Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947, Records of the Selective Service System, 147, Box: 357, (*National Archives*, ancestry.com); and "Curtis Holt: Man Who Fought City Hall and Won," *Richmond Afro-American*, January 29, 1983, 2-3.

the Crusade refused to give the heavyset, legally disabled, poor, mildly literate, and unemployed Holt a leadership position. They instead labeled him their *Poor People's Coordinator.* As a representative for black Richmond's poor, Holt made a habit of irritating the Establishment. An example of this is a letter he wrote to the wealthiest white city council member about the lack of recreational resources in Church Hill. Holt stated that, "We have been asking and begging for your assistance, and now the time has come for us to not do anymore begging, asking or pleading with you peoples in City Government [*sic*]. We are not going to beg, plead or ask any longer, since we have not made steps forward ...from now on we are going to DEMAND [*sic*]."[66]

Holt's brashness, although ignored by black elites and popular with poor blacks, made him a target of the Establishment. They did not view him as a viable political threat. Rather, the Establishment saw Holt as a gnat, and his activism very troublesome to the norm of poor black political impotence. Their attacks against Holt started with the banning of *all* civic groups from organizing on city-owned property. This rule discouraged project residents from establishing political organizations because they would have to own or rent private property to meet. Holt defied the rule and operated the CCCA after several warnings that he would be evicted. He helped issue formal complaints about the arbitrary raising of rents, lack of recreational space for children, harassment from housing officials for participating in civic activities, and poor maintenance on broken appliances. Fed up with his antics, housing officials issued Holt an eviction notice in April 1966, just one month before Henry Marsh won his first term in the city council. Holt secured Marsh's legal counsel and got his eviction overturned in the local courts. After the case, the project minister became a household name in black Richmond. From getting

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[66] Lewis A. Randolph and Gayle T. Tate, *Rights For A Season: The Politics of Race, Class, and Gender in Richmond, Virginia*, (University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 194-7; and Curtis Holt, Sr., Co-Ordinator of the Grass Roots to Honorable Mayor, City Manager, and Councilmen and Mrs. Pusey, October 27, 1968, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (1 of 2), 40, (*James C. Wheat, Jr., Papers*).

traffic lights installed near black schools, to protecting black children from police violence, Holt became a fixture in black political circles. In 1970, Holt's popularity compelled the Crusade to endorse his candidacy for city council. "It is time this government waked up [*sic*] and got to work for the poor and underprivileged people in Richmond," Holt often said while campaigning. Unfortunately for Holt, he did not win a council seat because his popularity was mostly confined to the black ghetto, a place where political power was not.[67]

Holt's loss, and subsequent actions, created a permanent rift between him and the black political establishment. He believed that the 1970 annexation -- which added about 10,000 white voters to the rolls -- robbed him of a city council seat. Holt wanted to sue the city council, but not one black lawyer agreed to take his case. Even fellow Church Hill resident Henry Marsh, who was now ironically the face of the Crusade, brushed Holt aside. The project minister understood that the rejections were symptomatic of the larger black middle class animus against him. Holt was poor and uneducated in a city where the political elite were neither. Holt saw himself as a race leader. The Northside elite mostly saw him as well-meaning at best, and at worst a Sambo who reduced blackness to a caricature. Holt severed all ties with the Crusade after they rejected his annexation case. He later secured the legal services of a white attorney who helped him initiate three separate lawsuits arguing that the annexation violated the Voting Rights Act of 1965 on constitutional, statutory, and regulatory grounds. The black middle class refused to support Holt even after the cases were filed. This rejection ultimately killed one of the

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[67] "Creighton Court Tenant Curtis Holt Wins Housing Case," *Richmond Afro-American*, September 17, 1966, 1-2; *Richmond Afro-American*, January 29, 1983, 3; "Candidate for Council is Charge," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 4, 1970, 21; "Candidate is Convicted of Obstructing Police," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 7, 1970, 4; "Project Residents Organize To Fight 'Injustices," *Richmond Afro-American*, July 2, 1966, 1-2; "Mothers Fight Public Housing," *Richmond Afro-American*, January 7, 1967, 1; "Black, White Tenants Unite in Protest," *Richmond Afro-American*, May 4, 1968, 1-2; "Crusade Endorses 9 Candidates For Council," *Richmond Afro-American*, May 30, 1970, 1; and Curtis Holt, Sr., Co-Ordinator of the Grass Roots to Honorable Mayor, City Manager, and Councilmen and Mrs. Pusey, October 27, 1968, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (1 of 2), 40, (*James C, Wheat, Jr., Papers*).

annexation cases. The federal courts stripped it of class-action status when white anti-busing groups helped finance it. City attorneys reasoned, and the courts agreed, that Holt could not claim to represent black Richmond while receiving the majority of his donations and support from white suburbanites.[68]

The other two cases had better luck in the federal courts. One case ended up in the Washington, D.C., District Court at the behest of the U.S. Department of Justice. The other remained in the U.S. Eastern District Court of Virginia in Richmond. Both courts agreed to an indefinite injunction on city elections until the matter was resolved. However, they both sought a compromise that involved Richmond keeping the annexed suburbs and black Richmond regaining their voting majority. This decision allowed the Northside elite and Henry Marsh, who previously rejected Holt's case, to enter the case. They petitioned the courts that the Crusade better represented and "protect[ed] the interest of the total black community." Hence, they should be involved in shaping the outcome. "I'm not anti-Curtis Holt, but we've learned we can't put all our eggs in one basket," Marsh said after filing the petition. Both courts approved this measure. "The Crusade could help bring a decision in which black voters would obtain fair district representative on council while allowing the city to retain the rich tax base of the annexed areas to postpone city tax increase," said the *Afro-American*. However, their late entry into the case confirmed to Holt that they never truly rejected his case. They only rejected him.[69]

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[68] Moeser and Rutledge, *Politics of Annexation*, 144-71; De-Annexation Fund, paid advertisement in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 24, 1971, 11; "Quick De-Annexation is Forecast," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 19, 1974, 17; and Interview with Dr. Rutledge Dennis, July 26, 2019. Dennis, a Professor of Political Science at George Mason University and longtime Richmond resident, interviewed Curtis Holt in the 1980s. Many of Holt's motivations and goals comes from the interview that Dennis had with Holt.

[69] "Crusade to Enter Annexation Suit," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 17, 1972, 34; "Crusade Annexation Plea Filed," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 20, 1972, 23; "Crusade Undecided About Position As Intervener in Annexation Case," *Richmond Afro-American*, October, 28, 1972, 20; and "Crusade Leader Explains Goals in Effort to Enter Annex Suit," *Richmond Afro-American* November 11, 1972, 3.

Holt and the Northside elite despised each other. However, they both adhered to an unspoken code that blacks should never publicly criticize each other. The Poor People's Coordinator broke that code once the Crusade gained a foothold in his case. "Henry L. Marsh won his election, I was the man who was denied ...Henry Marsh has had six years to show that he does not intend to do anything for the people," Holt said in an editorial. To him, the Crusade had grown too powerful by capitulating to the Establishment. They were "hungry black people who only care about what they get for themselves." Holt later justified his sentiments with another editorial. After a gubernatorial election in which the Crusade was credited for getting poor blacks to the polls, Holt told the pro-Crusade *Afro-American* that, "This is unbelievable that you would give credit to the Crusade. You know deep down in your heart the Grass Roots [*sic*], first of all, put thousands of newly registered voters names on the books before Election Day." Furthermore, "it is time that credit is given to those who deserve it." To Holt, the Grass Roots were a collection of the, "slums, ghettos, and the Housing Projects within the city;" and he was their leader. This open criticism cost Holt the little standing he had among the political class. Later that year, the Crusade assured his removal from the city's Human Relations Board. Crusade leaders were not too shy about booting Holt, noting that they "viewed the formation of a new commission as getting rid of *some* people."[70]

Holt's belief that the Crusade was more interested in political gains than social change was justified by 1975, when the U.S. Supreme Court recommended that the annexation be

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[70] "Holt Raps Crusade Plan to Intervene," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 18, 1972, 1; "Curtis Holt, Sr., Faces Charges," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 16, 1972, 20; "Bail Bond Study Slated for Release in January," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 15, 1972, 15-16; "Blacks Have No Chance in City, State Courts" and "Reference to Crusade Hit By Another Reader," *Richmond Afro-American*, November 18, 1972, 5; "Conduct of Fans at Games Praised," and Credit Should be Given only Where it is Due," *Richmond Afro-American*, November 25, 1972, 5; "Marsh Welcomes Holt," *Richmond Afro-American*, April 16-20, 1974, 7; "Crusade Reacts to Annex Ruling," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 4-8, 1974, 5; and Curtis Holt, Sr., Co-Ordinator of the Grass Roots to Honorable Mayor, City Manager, and Councilmen and Mrs. Pusey, October 27, 1968, Mss1 W5603b FA2, Series 1, Racial Problems (1 of 2), 40, (*James C. Wheat, Jr., Papers*).

upheld if city leaders implemented a new voting system that "fairly recognizes the minority's political potential." This compelled the Establishment to divest from political affairs and prepare for the changing of the guard; an admission that, in the words of one black bureaucrat, the "pressure on the establishment" had finally taken its toll. First came the appointment of Richmond's first black Chief of The Department of Personnel. Next, the city council appointed its first black city manager, immediately followed by the appointment of the first black chairman of the Richmond School Board and black female city councilwoman. Later, more blacks were appointed to the welfare department, judgeships, housing authority, Chamber of Commerce, and school board. By summer 1976, Richmond was largely run and operated by Crusade supporters.[71]

On August 9, 1976, the federal courts lifted its injunction on local elections. The city council, by this time was composed of five white men, a black man (Henry Marsh) and a black woman, immediately passed a new ward-style voting system. The city was divided into nine voting districts -- four black, four white, and one mixed. The feeling within black circles was that "we could elect five blacks to the city council," Marsh told the *Afro-American*. The Crusade organized several symposiums and talks throughout the city, inviting civil rights leaders such as Julian Bond and John Lewis to help mobilize the black vote in their favor. Over fifty people ran for city council, and almost half were black non-Crusade members. These candidates must have

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[71] "Thornton Appointment Makes Job Outlook Brighter in City," *Richmond Afro-American*, March 4, 1972, 1 and 5; "Holt Case Before Supreme Court," *Richmond Afro-American*, May 13,1972, 1 and 26; "Intern In City Manager's office Sees Pressure As Key to Progress," *Richmond Afro-American*, May 27, 1972, 6; "Whites Keep Edge on School Board But Blacks Seen Becoming Its Head," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 10, 1972, 3; "Rev. Jones Heads Richmond Schools," *Richmond Afro-American*, July 29, 1972, 1-2; "Blacks In Running for 6 Top Positions," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 2, 1973, 1-2; "Mrs. Dell Continues to Gain Support," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 23, 1973, 6; "Richmond's First Chief of Welfare Bares Plans," *Richmond Afro-American*, January 5, 1974, 3; "Push for Full-Time Black Judge Sparks Political Moves," *Richmond Afro-American*, January 12, 1974, 7; "RRHA Has Another Chance To Pick Black for Position," *Richmond Afro-American*, January 26, 1974, 8; "Morris, Wilder Scored Big Triumph in The Making of First Black Judge," *Richmond Afro-American*, February 9, 1974, 1-2; "The Sheffield Appointment: A Significant Breakthrough," *Richmond Afro-American*, October 12, 1974, 1-2; and "New City School Chief Given a Big Sendoff," *Richmond Afro-American*, February 14, 1976, 12.

felt emboldened by Holt's efforts to break black Richmond's wedded bond to its Northside elite.[72]

Sensing the rising tide of black political diversity, the Crusade agreed to support any candidates that were handpicked by the most influential grassroots organizations. In the fifth district, where there were only anti-Crusade candidates, the Northside elite refused to make a formal endorsement. Some charged in the *Afro-American* that "the Crusade has persistently engaged in undesirable, unrepresentative, and undemocratic activities." This was especially true in district seven, where Marsh and Holt resided. The Crusade not only refused to endorse Holt, but they came to the grassroots meetings "in order to promote support for Mr. Marsh." A black organizer once said that "blacks in this town had the chance for political freedom" after the annexation cases. Yet, the rejection of black grassroots candidates assured some that "the Crusade [had] sold them out." Crusade candidates went on to secure victory in five of the nine districts on March 5, 1977. The man who initiated the annexation cases that made the victory possible was not among those elected. The Northside elite, the group that benefited the most from Holt's activism, paid Holt lip service in news reports and historical records in the years following the historic election.[73]

Conclusion

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[72] "Marsh Wants Fair Shot For City Hopefuls," *Richmond Afro-American*, October 16, 1976, 1-2; "Black Political Power is Appraised in Session at VCU," November 6, 1976, 11; and "Crusade Calls Meeting" and Political Tempo Picks Up in City," *Richmond Afro-American*, November 20, 1976, 1.

[73] "Afro Backs 6 Candidates" and "Crusade Action in 5th District Seen Aiding TOP-Backed Hopeful," *Richmond Afro-American*, February 26, 1 and 8; "Curtis Holt, Sr., District System Praised," *Richmond Afro-American*, March 12, 1977, 5; "Marsh Eyeing Mayorship, Befriends Richardson," *Richmond Afro-American*, March 5, 1977, 1 and 11; "Lawyer Hopeful on De-Annex," *Richmond News Leader*, May 4, 1971, 21; "Marsh Favors De-Annexation," *Richmond Afro-American*, January 24, 1976, 1-2; "Crusade Discusses Voter Registration," *Richmond Afro-American*, February 21, 1976, 13; "Ward System Would Produce New Black Faces," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 5, 1976, 9; "City's Black 5th District Really Has Toss-Up Status," *Richmond Afro-American*, January 8, 1977, 7; "New City Crusade President: Do Battle With The Vote," January 22, 1977, 7; "The Meaning of Our 5-4 Victory," *Richmond Afro-American*, March 5, 1977, 1; "Holt vs. Marsh: Political Battle Shaping Up," *Richmond Afro-American*, October 26-30, 1976, 7; "City Crusade Tells Endorsement Plans Under District System," *Richmond Afro-American*, December 4, 1976, 14; and Henry Marsh's Acceptance Speech, reprinted in the *Afro-American*, March 12, 1977, 8.

At the beginning of Modern Civil Rights Era, Richmond was a segregated city controlled by an entrenched white Establishment. By the era's ending, Richmond was a city redefined by black activism, scandal, white flight, political suppression. As black and white leadership sat unequally atop the ruins of Jim Crow, they stared at a deeply divided city. Richmond not only remained racially segregated, but the metropolitan area became a major extension of it. The end of Jim Crow left Richmond with more questions than answers. The only certainty was that black and white leaders were now tasked with running a city burdened with the corollaries of southern history. Once segregated by law, Richmond was now divided solely by a shared disdain between whites and blacks. Still, leaders embraced running a city where power was, for the first time ever, divided along racial lines. Their main weakness was not the city's abysmal race relations. It was a shared misunderstanding -- between black and white leaders -- of those race relations. The disdain between blacks and whites would later prove so strong that some questioned whether Jim Crow was ever necessary to keep the races apart. It was the ignorance of Richmond's racial separation, and not the efforts to overcome it, that later ruined attempts to create harmony and reconciliation.

CHAPTER 2

"A BRIDGE OF UNITY, 1977-1989"

In March 1977, black Richmonders finally understood what power was. As the city's racial majority, they held a controlling interest in the city council, mayor's office, school board, fire department, and housing authority. The Greek Revival City Hall building along East Broad Street was built exclusively by white labor in 1894 to symbolize Richmond's emerging Jim Crow regime. Eighty-three years later, City Hall no longer represented white supremacy. It was the foundation that black leaders sought to build a new Richmond where black empowerment equaled racial equality. Power was a precious tool that blacks, primarily those in leadership, wanted to protect and use with care. However, that tool came not through harmony, but the turmoil of white social, economic, and political divestment from the city. The whites who stayed in Richmond retreated to their insular communities in the Southside, Near and Far West End, and Northside, making racial segregation the defining issue in the city's near future. "We live in a divided city. Two very different points of view. Two very different experiences. Two very different attitudes. And these differences split most deeply along racial lines," a local white minister said after blacks gained power in City hall. He went on to say that regardless of the circumstances, "the solidarity of whites and that of blacks is not often breached."[1]

Richmond was founded, and long-thrived, on the rigid social division between blacks and whites. However, this way of life jeopardized black leadership upon entering City Hall. Black Richmonders, in general, may have believed that the ballot box would bring about social change.

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[1] Notes for Talk to Richmond First Club, February, 26, 1981, Race Relations in Richmond, 1980-1984, Box 11, M240, (*George Stevenson Kemp Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia).

However, black leaders knew that economics, a sector in which they held little control, was the true source of power in the city. The wealth disparity between black and white Richmond is best seen at the residential level. In the late 1970s, upwards to ninety percent of black Richmonders could not access mortgage loans from the white-owned Main Street banks. Even liberal whites were denied mortgages and rental properties if they were known to invite blacks to their homes. Certain areas, such as the majority black East End area, had no mortgage investment at all. Black judges, chemists, engineers, attorneys, and other high-level city employees had some access to home mortgages. However, the banks only approved their applications if they moved to certain neighborhoods in the Near West End and suburban counties. All-white neighborhoods in Richmond's Far West End and the surrounding suburbs received over 75% of the banking community's investment. This trend was crucial because the areas with the most mortgage loans had middle-class jobs, well-funded schools, and top-quality public services. Notwithstanding the removal of *whites only* signs, 1970s Richmond did not look much different than the decades prior. This was in-large part due to the Establishment, while losing City Hall, assuring that the city's racial caste system remained intact. The racist real estate market worked in tandem with the Establishment's control over the city's manufacturing and retail firms. Although political power was black, in Richmond, the money was still white. This meant that black leaders could not govern the city free of white control.[2]

[2] Investment Patterns in Richmond, 1979, May 9, 1981, and Source of Data of the Richmond Urban Institute, Home Mortgage Patterns in Richmond, 1979; Racial Steering by Real Estate Sales Agents in Metropolitan Richmond, Virginia, A Research Project Conducted by Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Richmond, Virginia, March 1980 Box 19 and 20, M258, (*Richmond Urban Institute Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia); Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 12, 2019; Housing Plan Summary and Technical Analysis, August 1986, Prepared by Harland Bartholomew & Associates, Incorporated; and The Neighborhood Revitalization Division of the Department of Planning and Community Development, *City of Richmond Neighborhood Statistics*, November 1985, Box 5, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance, Inc.*, *Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia).

The limitations of black voting power became more evident when the Establishment made little effort to work with black leadership. The Establishment was, as one resident remembered, "used to the old days of making decisions at the golf club." That golf club, like the Establishment itself, did not accept blacks within the ranks. Their ceding of political power to black leadership before the final annexation ruling was no goodwill gesture. It allowed some to divest from city affairs, and others to better control the city through its private sector economy. The Establishment had little-to-no interest in allowing blacks to control Richmond from City Hall. Hence, they treated public policy like zero-sum game where any gain for blacks was a net loss for whites. This game was predicated on the Establishment's belief that local government should operate like a holding company that allowed them to control Richmond's economic, social, and political life. As an Establishment member once said proudly, "the city is a business -- a big business" that belonged to them.[3]

In the face of white resistance, black leadership, led by Mayor Henry Marsh, III., governed from the sui generis of black Richmond life. This meant that they placed black Richmond at the center of fixing the city's past, shaping its present, and preparing for its future. The black council majority added blacks to the bureaucratic ranks to reverse the legacy of racist employment practices -- as briefly discussed in the previous chapter. They increased wages and retirement benefits for lower-middle class city employees to stem "the stresses created when middle class families abandon a city's schools and tax rolls for the more comfortable security of

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[3] John V. Moeser and Rutledge B. Dennis, *Politics of Annexation*: *Oligarchic Power In A Southern City*, (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1982), 181; W. Avon Drake and Robert D. Holsworth, *Affirmative Action and the Stalled Quest for Black Progress*, (University of Illinois Press, 1996), 56-7; Lewis A. Randolph and Gayle T. Tate, *Rights For a Season: The Politics of Race, Class, and Gender in Richmond, Virginia*, (University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 252; Julian Maxwell Hayter, *The Dream is Lost: Voting Rights and the Politics of Race in Richmond, Virginia*, (University of Kentucky Press 2017), 161; and "Taxpayers Group Proposals Seen Harmful," *Richmond News Leader*, October 16, 1981, article found in clipping form in Richmond Independent Taxpayers Association, Second Referendum, 1979-1981, Box 12, M240, (*George Stevenson Kemp Papers*). Any cited newspaper articles without page numbers were found in clipping form in various archival collections and private papers.

suburbs beyond deep boundaries," Marsh once said critically. Preparing for a racially harmonious future, however, became their most important and complicated task.[4]

Because black leaders opposed the Establishment, "whites perceive blacks to be anti-business [and] anti-compromise," an internal city government survey said. The survey further concluded that the Establishment felt that black leaders were unjustly "injecting [the] consciousness of race into everything." Black leaders did not disagree with the Establishment on this point. However, they were undoing policies and practices that made racial discrimination an everyday function of city government. Black leaders did not *inject* race into anything. They simply fixed how race operated within everything. The black and white city government divide perpetuated, as a local urban studies professor claimed in 1981, "the growing distrust between blacks and whites in the city of Richmond." He went on to accurately assess that, "What happens here generally reflects tension throughout the city and, at the same time, contributes to the racial division of the city."[5]

Just months after entering office, Marsh stated that, "For the world to take seriously the urgent need for a new civilization based on new men with new motives, a city may have to pioneer the new type of personalities and new type of policies needed. Maybe that is Richmond's destiny." Running Richmond effectively involved black and white leaders working towards a

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[4] Racial Tensions Workshops, Researching and Publishing Housing Patterns in Richmond 1979, Tensions in the Richmond Communities, Announcements 1982-1983; "Racism/Racial Polarization Program," Annual Meeting of the Richmond Urban Institute, January 25, 1982, Annual/Semi-Annual Meetings, 1980-83, 1985; Tensions in the Richmond Community, August 1980, Tensions in the Richmond Community, Drafts, Questionnaires, 1980-1981, Box 1 and 16, M258, (*Richmond Urban Institute Papers*); "Myth May Form Perception," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 20, 1981, A1 and A8; "Political Clout Seen As Start," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 21, 1981, A1 and A6; "Old Leadership Not Swayed," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 22, 1981, A1 and A6; and "Richmond: Former Confederate Capital Finally Falls to Blacks," *Ebony Magazine*, June 1980, 44-6.

[5] Tensions in the Richmond Community, August 1980, Tensions in the Richmond Community, Drafts, Questionnaires, 1980-1981, Box 1 and 16, M258, (*Richmond Urban Institute Papers*); "Council Shares Blame for Racial Strife, Panel Says," *Richmond News Leader*, April, 28, 1981, found in clipping form; and Notes for Talk to Richmond First Club, February, 26, 1981, Race Relations in Richmond, 1980-1984, Box 11, M240, (*George Stevenson Kemp Papers*).

similar agenda. However, that meant fixing the prime mover in city affairs: race relations. Henry Marsh understood that race relations could not improve if Richmonders remained comfortable living separate lives within the same city. The solution to this problem was a public/private architectural project to promote social integration. This integration plan came from one of the most popular urban policies in the post-Civil Rights Era: downtown revitalization.[6]

Between 1966 and 1980, black mayors around the country partnered with white businessmen, sometimes at the behest of their black constituents, to redevelop decaying downtown areas. These policies emerged from what a recent scholar deems *urban self-help* ideology. Because the federal government spent less money on urban areas after the 1960s, city power brokers worked among themselves to fix their downtown economies. New condos, shopping centers, and business parks inspired hope among black urbanites. Many felt that new infrastructure would reverse suburban flight and bring businesses, mainly middle-class whites, back to downtown areas. These projects also changed the relationship between city government and industry. Before white suburban flight, city governments accommodated the growth and flourishing of local industrial giants. Afterwards, city governments became quasi-real estate firms that diverted valuable tax dollars away from suffering city services and towards white developers. This relationship rarely benefited city residents. America's inner-cities fell further into poverty, highlighting the systemic issues of racial segregation.[7]

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[6] "Richmond-A Model City?," *New World News*, January 7, 1978, 1-7, Richmond 1977-1991, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*, Richmond, Virginia).

[7] Ed Grimsley, "Downtown Virginia," *The Commonwealth Magazine, The Magazine of Virginia, Virginia Chamber of Commerce*, Vol.XXXIV, No.5, May, 1967, (*James C. Wheat Papers*, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Richmond, Virginia), 23-9; Johnnie Dee Swain, Jr., "Black Mayors: Urban Decline and the Underclass," *Journal of Black Studies* 24, no. 1 (1993): 16-28; Arnold R. Hirsch, "Race and Politics in Modern New Orleans: The Mayoralty of Dutch Morial," 461-84; "Richmond-A Model City?," *New World News*, January 7, 1978, 1-7, Richmond 1977-1991, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*); Hirsch's "Harold Washington of Chicago and "Dutch" Morial of New Orleans" in *African-American Mayors: Race Politics, and the American City*, (University of Illinois Press, 2005), 109-14; June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013), 149-56; Joseph A. Rodriguez, *Bootstrap New Urbanism: Design,*

Downtown revitalization became more challenging in Richmond than elsewhere in the nation. Since Richmond's founding, downtown was marred by white supremacy. Downtown was the place where unfree black labor was bought and sold during slavery. The Civil War and subsequent freeing of black people did not make downtown any less oppressive. Whites maintained control of the factories, retail stores, entertainment centers, and the police that patrolled them. Whites also dominated the courts, State Capitol, and City Hall. It was not until the late twentieth century that downtown became a place that blacks wanted to visit. Yet, the once-bustling retail hub remained segregated because white businesses fled to suburban shopping centers and business parks. Revitalizing downtown Richmond was more than constructing new buildings. It promoted racial integration in a place that had never truly had it before.[8]

This chapter argues that Richmond leaders used urban revitalization to create social integration and racial harmony after the Modern Civil Rights Era. In the process, it contributes to the vibrant scholarship on urban revitalization by showing that these projects, while resulting in economic failure, had tremendous social value. In an era defined by post-Civil Rights backlash, black and white leaders reached across the aisle to fix inner cities through social integration and affirmative action programs. In the process, they broke down the social barriers that divided them. This was even more difficult in cities like Richmond where the legacy of Jim Crow was still fresh in residents' minds. The bonds they formed were not forged easily. It took years of

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Race, and Redevelopment in Milwaukee, (Lexington Books, 2014), 11-5; and Maurice J. Hobson, *The Legend of the Black Mecca: Politics and Class in the Making of Modern Atlanta*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 50-87.

[8] Marvin T. Chiles, "Down Where The South Begins: Black Richmond Activism Before the Modern Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of African American History*, Vol. 105, No. 1, (Winter 2020); Interview with Viola Baskerville, June 28, 2019; and Interview with William Mason, July 22, 2019.

dissent and infighting before black and white leaders accepted that social integration and the future of urban America began with them.[9]

"It Is People, Not Concrete and Steel That Makes a City Viable," 1977-1982

As a city councilman, Henry Marsh prided himself on "building people and not things." Yet, Henry Marsh the mayor was a very different person. Upon entering office, "bridging barriers between peoples," both white and black, became his new agenda. An Establishment member later agreed with Marsh's agenda, writing to him privately that "we needed to help more individuals in the white business community, the so-called Establishment, to get to know and trust responsible individuals in the black community." Although they respected him greatly, the Establishment did not particularly care for Marsh. They liked even less his fellow black council members -- a group of low-level bureaucrats and civic leaders whom they largely deemed unqualified for office. But, they shared with black leaders a kindred spirit and, as a white minister later once said, "A genuine care for Richmond as a place." The Establishment were mostly born, raised, and would later die in the city. They grew leery of watching white middle class flight ruin Richmond's economic, social, and political life. Their hometown was known for its racial harmony and economic strength prior to the 1960s. Now, Richmond was seen as a city where whites should work in, but never take up residence. "We too hold the conviction that Richmond can demonstrate to the nation and the world answers to racial division," a group of wealthy white women told Henry Marsh just days after his inauguration. Marsh agreed with this sentiment, telling a fellow public servant that, "We'd like Richmond to be an example to the rest of the world of how people can live like brothers."[10]

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[9] Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race,* 154-60.

[10] Joint Letter to the Honorable Henry L. Marsh, III., Mayor of the City of Richmond, Virginia, March 14, 1977; Randy Ruffin to Rob Corcoran, December 6, 1978; "Give Senators, Congressmen Time To Think," *New World*

Henry Marsh truly believed that "our city can be and ought to be a model for the nation." One white leader in particular volunteered to help Marsh make Richmond into that model. His name was Andrew J. Brent, Jr., who was the most prominent member of the Establishment. He came from an upper-class family in the Far West End, graduating from St. Christopher's Preparatory School and the University of Virginia's Law School by 1941, respectively. After a brief stint as a naval officer in World War II, Brent returned to Richmond and practiced with his father at the Christian, Barton, Epps, & Brent Law Firm, owners of the region's most circulated newspaper: *The Richmond Times-Dispatch*. Brent chaired many local organizations between 1946 and 1977, serving on the Chamber of Commerce, Board of Visitors at Virginia Commonwealth University, and the Greater Metropolitan Authority. Brent was also involved with urban renewal during the 1960s and the 1970 annexation. In 1975, Brent understood that the Establishment's days were numbered in City Hall. Thus, he started Downtown Development Unlimited (DDU), a non-profit organization designed to bring private investments and businesses back to downtown Richmond. Brent's lineage and accomplishments made him one of the most influential men in the city. His importance was only matched by his desire to see Richmond thrive as a city.[11]

Months following Marsh's inauguration, Brent worked with him on redeveloping downtown. The plan they agreed upon was Project One: the construction of new business buildings, convention center, and a hotel complex along East Broad Street, the retail center of downtown Richmond. Between 1976 and 1986, cities along the East Coast constructed nearly

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News, June 9, 1979, 3, Richmond 1977-1991, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*); Interview with Rob Corcoran, May 11, 2019; and Interview with Dr. John Moeser, May 10, 2019.

[11] "Richmond-A Model City?," *New World News*, January 7, 1978, 1-7, Richmond 1977-1991, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*); Richmond Expressway System Engineering Report by the Committee on Trafficways, October 1966; Planning Considerations Regarding Expressway System as Proposed by Richmond Metropolitan Authority, 1967, Richmond Expressway System Engineering Report, 1966, Box 9, M277, (*Eleanor P. Sheppard Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia); Interview with Rob Corcoran, March 11, 2019; and Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, May 12, 2019.

250 mixed-use development facilities. These included, but were not limited to, sporting arenas, convention centers, and office spaces. Combined, these projects cost upwards of $10 billion. They were supposed to symbolize the economic vitality of the American city. However, rapid suburbanization assured that even the most successful projects did not cover the economic and social deficits they created.[12]

Marsh and Brent cannot be credited with creating Project One. The DDU board, which was comprised of some of the wealthiest white men in Richmond, concocted the plan in 1975. Two years later the plan was at a virtual standstill. It was not until Brent reached across the aisle to work with Marsh that DDU put its money and support behind Project One. Before moving forward, DDU needed to know if Marsh and the other black council members were on-board with redeveloping Richmond. These men had a long memory, as Marsh gained his political clout by opposing redevelopment as a rookie councilman eleven years prior. He surprised DDU members when he attended their meetings as an honored guest and assured them and Brent that he would, in fact, play ball. Marsh's acceptance signaled a break from the past. This was the Establishment's first real effort to work *with*, and not around, black leadership.[13]

With Marsh backing the project, Brent generated hundreds of thousands of dollars from white investors and donors. Most of the donations came from the local tobacco, railroad, and investment firms. The largest donations came from Hilton Hotel Corporation, Thalhimers, and Miller & Rhoads department stores. They each gave $25,000 to underwrite the entire project. Brent worked with the housing authority to buy the properties needed to begin Project One

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[12] Howard Gillette, Jr., *Camden After the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Post-Industrial City*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 122-44.

[13] Annual Report To The State Corporation Commission of Virginia, January 1, 1977; and Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of Downtown Development Unlimited Held on April 22, 1977, Downtown Development Unlimited General and Correspondences 1977, Box 1:18, M281, (*A.J. Brent Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia*)*.

construction. Marsh, on the other hand, had to figure out how the city, which struggled to generate tax revenue, would pay for these properties. He made the controversial decision to transition Richmond from a city that encouraged the growth of industry to a city that attracted industry. This attraction came from the city becoming a *primary shareholder* in redevelopment projects. The black majority council agreed to bond the city's mounting debt and sell it to shareholders for cash. Brent followed this agenda by brokering a deal between DDU and Houston, Texas's Gerald D. Hines Interests to design the entire business park. At the time, cities across America bided for Hines's services. Richmond had a leg up because many of its competitors could not get their newly-elected black leadership and white establishments to work well together.[14]

In front of a packed city council meeting, Marsh and his fellow council members voted unanimously to bond the city's $32.2 million debt and sell it to shareholders. The racial divide on the city council -- four white and five black -- made unanimous votes extremely rare. This show of interracial solidarity was an accomplishment for its time. That accomplishment was short lived because of the opposition by the Richmond Independent Taxpayer Association (RITA). Led mostly by black and white middle class property/business owners, RITA vehemently opposed the city becoming a shareholder in redevelopment projects. Just days before Christmas 1977, they petitioned the local and state courts to make the bond sale a referendum vote. A local judge used a minor technicality to invalidate the petition. RITA then asked the Governor of Virginia to propose anti-bonding legislation in the state legislature. The governor, a supporter of

[14] Agreement Between DDU, A Virginia non-Stock Corporation, and Gerald D. Hines Interests, February 28, 1977; Informal Meeting of The Council of the City of Richmond, Project One, October 18, 1977, Downtown Development Unlimited General and Correspondences 1977; Office Memorandum, Downtown Development Unlimited Hotel Meeting on December 7, 1977; A.J. Brent to Mr. B.A. Soyars, Vice President of Philip Morris, Incorporated, November 28, 1977; and Lee F. Davis, Jr., to Mr. Benjamin A. Soyars, Vice President of Philip Morris, Incorporated, December 9, 1977, Box 1:18, M281, (*A.J. Brent Papers*).

urban revitalization, rejected the request. Individual members then filed lawsuits against the city for what they argued to be unlawful attempts to revitalize downtown. However, by spring 1978, all of their cases were thrown out of court.[15]

City leaders promoted RITA's resistance as an attempt to disrupt the racial harmony in City Hall. However, RITA sought to fix Richmond's racial issues by focusing more on people, and less on structures. RITA's membership was interracial, but mostly white. Its leaders, comprised of housewives, petit downtown business owners, and college professors, "have felt cut out of power for decades by the white Establishment," an investigative report concluded. RITA probably had the most genuine care for Richmond. In spite of the fact that over 3,000 residents per year fled Richmond for the surrounding suburbs, RITA's middle-class membership chose to remain city residents. Throughout the decade, RITA proposed several radical tax cuts and referendum voting laws. The goal was to make City Hall more beholden to taxpayers like themselves. Although these attempts were easily voted down by the city council, RITA represented a real problem for city leaders when they used the courts to help stall urban revitalization.[16]

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[15] "Project I Approved, But Cloud Remains,"*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 29, 1977; "Project Creates Some Unlikely Bedfellows Here," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, December 20, 1977, (*Valentine Museum Press Clippings*); "Bond Sale Referendum Petitions Are Presented," *Richmond News Leader*, December 27, 1977; "The Authority of Municipal Bonds, 1978," *The Daily Bond Buyer*, a culmination of news clippings from either the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* or *Richmond News Leader* found in Downtown Development Unlimited General and Correspondences 1978, Box 1:19, M281, (*A.J. Brent Papers*); "Competition Feared for Hotel Plan," *Richmond News Leader*, January 25, 1978; "Merhige Clears Way For Project In Suit Dismissal," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 4, 1978; and "Project One: The Selling of Richmond," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 23, 1978, (*Valentine Museum Press Clippings*). RITA did not leave behind any archival records. Much of the information about them in the subsequent pages come from other organizational and personal papers archived at Virginia Commonwealth University's Special Collections Library.

[16] Emerging Sources of Tension, Undated 1981, Tensions in the Richmond Community, Drafts, Questionnaires, 1980-1981, Box 16, M258, (*Richmond Urban Institute Papers*); Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, May 12, 2019; Interview with Dr. Ed Peeples, June 24, 2019; "Radical Tax Cuts Will Cost You Money," Ad Against RITA, November 2, 1981; Financial Executives of DDU to Executive Board and City Council, December 18, 1979; Public Hearing Comments on Richmond Independent Taxpayer Association, undated; A Report on Eight Propositions to Amend Richmond's City Charter Scheduled for Referendum on January 22, 1980; and Brochure of the History and Purpose of Richmond Urban Institute, Race Relations in Richmond, 1980-1984, Box 11 and 12,

Marsh and Brent knew that RITA was not just a group of dissenting rabble rousers. On more than one occasion, RITA sent both the mayor and DDU chairman packets of information that was "attempting to point out that Richmond's conventional wisdom is 30 years out of date," as one letter began. Attached to that letter was an article about Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Like Richmond, this city also faced tremendous tax debt from white suburban flight. But unlike Richmond, city leaders worked with grassroots organizations to redevelop residential areas and promote racial integration. "It is people not concrete and steel that makes a city viable," RITA added. They concluded the letter by asking city leaders to "immediately act to bring a stop to the waste of millions of taxpayer money for a project that will ultimately cost more millions and put us years behind other cities." Like other RITA requests, this plea was denied.[17]

RITA's fears of urban revitalization were justified. The city council had spent millions on building the Richmond Coliseum in the late 1960s. This new construction raised adjacent real estate values for a brief moment. But, it did not attract new industries or keep middle class residents in the area. Other cities experienced this fate as well. In Charleston, South Carolina, just 400 miles southeast of Richmond, city leaders overcame a taxpayer revolt of their own in 1978. The council demolished a historical black neighborhood to build a $40 million hotel/convention center. Taxpayers also lost the battle in Washington, D.C., where local leaders turned dilapidated neighborhoods into newer hotels and convention centers. "Cities of all sizes are turning hopefully to convention centers to bring in the tourists and jingle the cash registers," said the *Washington Post* in 1978. They continued that, "for many it would prove one of the biggest blunders economically and environmentally they'll ever make." City leaders around the

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M240, (*George Kemp Papers*). For more on the Richmond Urban Institute, see the Richmond Urban Institute Papers at Virginia Commonwealth University's Special Collections Library.

[17] "Downtown Procedure is Reversed," *Richmond Times-Dispatch* October 15, 1978, copy sent to Brent by RITA on October 23, 1978, found in Downtown Development Unlimited General and Correspondences 1978, Box 1:19, M281, (*A.J. Brent Papers*).

nation believed that shiny buildings and neatly-organized urban spaces would attract suburban residents back into the cities. However, a business magazine concluded that "there is very little data current enough to say that an urban revival is taking place."[18]

RITA representatives met with Marsh and Brent on several occasions. The discussions often ended with both sides refusing to concede. RITA could not persuade black and white leadership to end Project One. However, they received good news when Gerald D. Hines and the Hilton Hotel Corporation called Brent on Friday, November 10, 1978, and told him that they "would have to withdraw from participation in the project." Brent informed the media that the developer and hotel dropped out because the city council refused to underwrite the leases for vacant Project One office spaces. DDU's archival file reveals that, "The withdrawal was prompted because of the delay of more than a year resulting from the litigation instituted by the Richmond Independent Taxpayer Association." With the developer and hotel chain gone, and the city bonds unsold, "it seems to me that the Project is now in real jeopardy," Brent wrote to Marsh. The mayor never responded to Brent's letter. Instead, he told reporters that Project One was "strong enough to stand on its own" without a developer or hotel partnership. Fearing that these kinds of comments would scare off other investors, Brent told the mayor that, "If this is to be the method of operating, then we [DDU] do not want to be a partner or held responsible for the decisions in which we do not participate."[19]

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[18] "A Dim View of Convention Centers," *The Washington Post*, October 21, 1978, an article sent to Andrew Brent by RITA on October 23, 1978, found in Downtown Development Unlimited General and Correspondences 1978; and "A Towering Rise in Downtown Construction," *Business Week Magazine*, March 5, 1979, Clipping found in Downtown Development Unlimited General and Correspondences, 1979, Box 1:18 M281, (*A.J. Brent Papers*).

[19] "Project One Foes Are Handed Defeat," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 21, 1978; "Project One Foes' Vote Bid in Trouble," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 15, 1978; "Project One Foes Again Fall Short In a Bid to Stop it," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 24, 1978; "Project One Bond Sale On Again, *Richmond Times- Dispatch*, December 6, 1978; "Developer Sends Danger Signals on Project One," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, December 6, 1978; Personal Memorandum to Mr. Brent, November 10, 1978; Confidential Memorandum For File Project One, November 13, 1978, Downtown Development Unlimited (Hines) 1976-1978, 81-1804; Press Release Project One, January 26, 1979, Downtown Development Unlimited General and Correspondences, 1979; A.J. Brent to Honorable

Luckily for Marsh and Brent the courts gave them the final "green light for Project One," in the words of the *Times-Dispatch*, in January 1980. The Virginia Supreme Court not only allowed the city to sell its bonded debt, but they prevented RITA from using the courts to contest Project One any further. This meant that Marsh and Brent could begin construction; and begin it did in the spring and summer of 1981. Richmonders who made their way down East Broad Street heard the harmonious sounds of pile drivers, jackhammers, cranes, and moving trucks tearing through the downtown landscape. Those sounds however masked another tension that later boiled over between Marsh, DDU, and the white faction on the city council.[20]

Manuel Deese, January 11, 1979; Memo to Members of the Executive Committee Downtown Development Unlimited, January 18, 1979, Downtown Development Unlimited General and Correspondences, 1979, Box 1:18 M281, (*A.J. Brent Papers)*; "A Low Blow," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 4, 1979, (*Valentine Museum Press Clippings)*; "City Launches New Effort to Sell Bonds For Project I," *Richmond News Leader*, March 13, 1979; "Richmond Sues to Sell Bonds, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 14, 1979; Property Acquisition To Continue" *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 31, 1979; "Project One Bond Issue Validated by Circuit Judge, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 2, 1979; "Project I Foes Seeking to Block Land Acquisition," *Richmond News Leader*, August 7, 1979; A.J. Brent to Honorable Henry L. Marsh, III., April 18, 1979, Downtown Development Unlimited General and Correspondences, 1979, Box 1:18 M281, (*A.J. Brent Papers*); and Emerging Sources of Tension, Undated 1981, "Tensions in the Richmond Community, Drafts, Questionnaires, 1980-1981," Box 16, M258, (*Richmond Urban Institute Papers*).

[20] "Green Light For Project One Given By State Supreme Court," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 12, 1980; "On Their Way Out," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 16, 1980; "Some Still Seek New Store Sites," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 24, 1980; "City Council Sets First Bond Sales In Over Two Years," *Richmond News Leader*, March 4, 1980; "Gloom Hangs Heavy Over Merchants in Project I Area," *Richmond News Leader*, March 15, 1980; "Racial Tensions in Richmond," *Richmond First Club Bulletin*, February 26, 1981, Race Relations in Richmond, 1980-1984, Box 11, M240, (*George Kemp Papers*).

Figure 2: Henry Marsh during a Project One press conference. Courtesy of Virginia Commonwealth University Special Collections.

After Hilton Hotel Corporation removed itself from Project One, Brent and Marsh both negotiated with Marriott Hotel. Brent spoke to the representatives privately and learned that they wanted to come to Richmond, but they were "not interested in Project One." Brent wanted to entertain other offers to lure Marriott into a favorable deal. Marsh, on the other hand, did not. He felt that his mayoral legacy, and the reputation of black leadership in general, depended on the success of Project One. Thus, Marsh brokered a fifty-year lease agreement with Marriott that included a 400-room hotel, 89,000 person capacity convention center, and an 80,000 square-foot exhibition hall. Marsh also promised that the city would allocate up to $9 million to cover Marriott's debt if they could not turn a profit after nine years in operation. When the news broke,

Brent was disappointed but surprisingly tightlipped about the deal, stating that "I think Henry Marsh is an ambitious rascal."[21]

Marsh and Brent spoke less often after the Marriott deal. However, the mayor encountered tremendous resistance from the four white city council members. It was not about the hotel itself, but its proposed location. Marsh and the black councilmembers wanted the hotel north of Broad Street while the white councilmen wanted it south of Broad Street. Broad Street was, as a local non-profit organization later described, "A dividing line separating whites and blacks" in Richmond. North of Broad Street was the city's well-known black enclaves such as Jackson Ward, Navy Hill, Battery Park, Barton Heights, and others. South of Broad was the city's banking and shopping districts, controlled by the Establishment. The majority of whites and black frequented the opposing sides of town, especially in the 1980s. The city's racial climate, which had not significantly improved since Jim Crow, corroded the fragments of cooperation between city leaders. Hence, the hotel's location became a political chess game that dictated to the divided city whether black leadership or the Establishment controlled Richmond.[22]

Marsh made it clear that as long as he was mayor, the Marriott would be constructed north of East Broad Street. His stance confirmed to the Establishment that, "The black majority on the city council is incompetent, and that the mayor is arrogant," an internal survey said. This

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[21] "Razing Continues on Broad Street," *Richmond News Leader*, February 6, 1981; "New Beginning For Richmond," *Richmond News Leader*, February 18, 1981; "Project One Hotel Site Cleared," *Richmond News Leader*, April, 14, 1982; "Downtown Demolition Continues," *Richmond News Leader*, April 20, 1981; "Downtown Addition," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 30, 1982; "They're Working on The Project," *Richmond News Leader*, June 23, 1981; "Girding For Project One," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 24, 1981; "Marsh's Position a Point of Contention," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, A1-A5; Memorandum For Mr. Brent from Lee F. Davis, Jr., July 28, 1980, Downtown Development Unlimited: General and Correspondences, 1980; and Memorandum For File from Lee F. Davis, Jr., Downtown Development Unlimited Project One Hotel, March 1, 1982, Downtown Development Unlimited: General and Correspondences, 1982, (*A.J. Brent Papers)*.

[22] Organizational History of the Richmond Renaissance, Inc., Sixth Street Marketplace Project, undated, A New Cooperative Spirit, Notes and Revisions, Box 21, M293, (*Clarence L. Townes, Jr., Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University Special Collections, Richmond, Virginia).

supposed incompetence and arrogance had already revealed itself in the first full year of Marsh's term. The black council members broke custom by hiring assistants (all-black) and occupying office space in City Hall. The Establishment did not feel the need to use offices because the Far West End golf courses and country clubs were their offices. The black council members also made important personnel decisions before consulting with the Establishment, the most notable of which was firing the white city manager. Marsh cemented his arrogant reputation -- which he gained as an activist politician in the 1960s -- when he coldly told the Establishment of the decision just days before he was set to vacation in Italy. The Marriott decision was just the latest reminder that the black council members intended to control Richmond from City Hall. "No respectable white person would dare sleep north of Broad Street," a political scientist once heard a local say aloud. So, the Establishment threatened to freeze the city budget, halt Project One construction, and remove their businesses from downtown.[23]

In the midst of this disagreement, the Hilton Corporation, which had previously backed out of Project One, purchased a plot of land directly across the street from the Marriott hotel site. There was speculation that the Establishment facilitated the purchase to ruin Project One. However, there is little evidence to support it. Marsh found out about the land deal just days before the official announcement in August 1981. He reached out to the Hilton Corporation developer and reminded him that the city council had not yet approved the placement of new sewer lines to that area. Without sewage pipes, there would be no hotel. Marsh's letter was seen as a tyrannical threat, and that threat was later reprinted in the local papers. The white Hilton representative later invited the mayor to the hotel's public announcement. Marsh did not attend,

[23] Randolph and Tate, *Rights For a Season*, 254; Tensions in the Richmond Community, August 1980, Tensions in the Richmond Community, Drafts, Questionnaires, 1980-1981, Box 1 and 16, M258, (*Richmond Urban Institute Papers*); Interview with Dr. John Moeser, March 11, 2019; Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 12, 2019; and Hayter, *Dream is Lost*, 170-4.

nor did he formally respond to the invitation "for reasons which I am sure you will understand," he told the white representative. Marsh later contacted a local consulting firm to see if Project One's hotel could survive with another hotel in the same vicinity. They told the mayor that there was no feasible way to assure that the city would recoup its hotel investment if white visitors had the option to stay in an equally priced hotel in a perceived nicer side of the city.[24]

With Project One's centerpiece falling apart, Marsh used the only tool available at his disposal: political power. On November 9, 1981, Hilton representatives visited City Hall and pleaded with him not to support Resolution 81-R132-125, a law that would force the Hilton Corporation to pay the city for operating near the Project One site. With Marsh's support, the resolution passed with the black majority vote on the city council. The black council members continually bypassed the Establishment and crafted more legislation to prevent Hilton from operating near Project One. Hilton proceeded to sue the city for damages. The case lasted a few years before the city council and Hilton settled out of court. Taxpayers ended up footing a $5 million restitution bill to Hilton. The Marriott and Hilton hotels were built right across from each other along East Broad Street, and they both remain there to this very day. Locals have largely forgotten the history behind the two downtown hotels. However, those who do remember, like those in the 1980s, see them and Project One as emblematic of Richmond's failed attempt at racial harmony. City leaders learned that although they shared similar goals, they would have to assure that both sides had an equal stake in the desired results. If not, city leaders would infuse

[24] "Marsh Fears New Hotel is Peril to Project One," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 1, 1981; and Honorable Henry L. Marsh, III to James C. Barstow, reprinted in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 1, 1981.

the political and physical landscape with racial division; more specifically, planning to build one hotel but eventually building two.[25]

"A Bridge of Unity," 1982-1989

Project One continued the cycle of disdain and distrust between white and black Richmond. However, the controversy surrounding it generated discussions about creating stronger networks between white and black leadership. "The movers and shakers, the people with power, tend to isolate themselves with their own kind," a white socialite once told her black and white friends. Although leaders reached across racial lines to revitalize downtown, many believed that the failure of Project One was rooted in the "few opportunities for forming friendships between blacks and whites." Richmond's social scene was, like neighborhoods, schools, churches, and most other things, divided by race. However, well-to-do white and black women, through charitable works, formed closer relationships than most Richmonders. During the twilight of Project One negotiations, these women hosted secret meetings where white and black leaders discussed race relations unencumbered by politics or media. "[Mayor Henry] Marsh has not kept avenues open between races," a white CEO said. A black chemist retorted that Marsh refused to do so because "blacks [as a whole just] don't trust whites." These meetings confirmed to the socialites that black and white leaders needed to create a unified social class. If not, future revitalization projects, city governance, and race relations would remain contentious.[26]

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[25] "Marsh Drops Developer of Hotel for Project I," *Richmond News Leader*, August 26, 1981; "Resolution 81-R132-125," November 9, 1981, (*Minutes of The City Council of The City of Richmond, Virginia*, October 8, 1979 to June 3, 1982, *City Hall Archives*, Richmond, Virginia), 452; and Hayter, *Dream is Lost*, 173.

[26] Undated and Untitled Meeting Notes of the Richmond Black and White Club, February 18, 1981; Opening Remarks, First Richmond Urban Forum, September 29, 1981, Richmond Urban Forum, 1981-1982, Box 37, M302, (*Mary Tyler Cheek McClenahan Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia).

These white and black socialites held their future meetings at St. Paul Episcopal Church, a few blocks south of Project One. They later agreed to organize "gatherings of members of the black and white power structure for a series of dinners and lectures." These events were designed to put white and black leadership in the same non-work-related spaces. By doing so, they would see each other as equals and not rivals. The wife of a black doctor suggested that this social engineering plan should "be launched quietly, without publicity." Unbeknown to the rest of the city, the wives of the city's most powerful leaders formed lists and invitations for local lawyers, academics, doctors, businessmen, ministers, politicians, high-level city employees, and nationally renowned speakers. Those who sought entry, but were not initially invited, sent formal applications proving that they were important enough for admission to the secret gatherings. Members of the Establishment were surprisingly eager to take part in these events. However, "some [black] people don't want it to succeed," a black member told the socialites. Black distrust of white leadership ran rampant in Richmond, and for good reason. Yet, many were optimistic that "black people will come if it is handled right." This was a new beginning in Richmond's racial history, a time when black and white leadership sought to create interpersonal bonds as equals within private spaces. The black invitees understood this. Hence, they told other blacks "don't come if you don't believe in it or want to tear it down."[27]

Black skepticism lessened after the first few events. Leaders enjoyed stimulating lectures, high-priced champagne, seafood hors d'oeuvres, and steak dinners at Richmond's Downtown Club. These secret gatherings helped create a collective identity among the city leadership. For many of them, these were the first non-professional encounters they had with equals of the

[27] Forum Committee Meeting, April 2, 1981; Suggested Names for Forum Members, undated; Resume for Melvin D. Law Application for Admission to the Richmond Urban Forum, undated; T.S. Ellis, III to Benjamin Campbell, April 23, 1981; Meeting of Richmond Urban Forum, May 14, 1981; and Edgar J. Diermeier to A.C. Epps, June 26, 1981, Richmond Urban Forum, 1981-1982, Box 37, M302, (*McClenahan Papers*).

opposite race. Many of them realized that they shared similar concerns for Richmond's long term vitality. These concerns, along with deliciously expensive meals, etched these gatherings into the fabric of high Richmond society throughout the 1980s. "Only a Richmonder could fully appreciate the unique quality of the evening in a city where people tend to revolve in their own social circles," a white establishment member once wrote to the planning committee. At one of these meetings, Mayor Henry Marsh began pitching his new idea for a second revitalization project. This one, however, would bridge the physical and psychological gap between black and white Richmond; something that these gatherings did, and that Project One had failed to do.[28]

Within the private social meetings, Marsh found enough supporters to create two advisory committees staffed by thirty black and thirty white leaders. He tasked them with devising a new redevelopment strategy that would avoid the political pitfalls of Project One. They recommended that the mayor support another non-profit development group. This one, they suggested, should mimic the advisory committees' interracial makeup to assure that blacks and whites were equally "securing Richmond's future." The result was Richmond Renaissance Incorporated. Although white leaders held economic power, and black leaders held political power, Richmond Renaissance became the leveling field for both groups. The executive board was intentionally comprised of an equal number of white and black leaders. "These people over time, while having a different public persona, committed to each other that they would meet every week; even if there was nothing to talk about," a local museum director remembered about them. This was done to create great familiarity, friendships, and trust between the leaders of both

[28] Additions to Forum Dinner List, undated, Richmond Urban Forum, 1982-1983, Box 37, M302, (*McClenahan Papers*); and Untitled and Unauthored Letter to Rob Corcoran, November 26, 1984, Richmond 1977-1991, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*).

races. That agenda symbolized, as a promotional brochure once said, "a new beginning for Richmond."[29]

Richmond Renaissance pledged to raise over $2 million to help construct a new downtown shopping center called the Sixth Street Marketplace, which would sit next to the Project One hotel site. The marketplace's centerpiece would be a "glass covered pedestrian bridge across Broad Street," called the *Bridge of Unity*. This bridge would "link a black populated area of the city to the [white] downtown business, commercial, and shopping center," an outside news outlet later reported. More importantly, the bridge was to be an architectural handshake between the city's black and white communities, representing a major step towards interracial harmony. They hoped that this handshake would usher in a new era of race relations where white and black residents improved the city's reputation and image.[30]

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[29] "City Renaissance Plan Unveiled," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 25, 1982; "Office of the City Manager to Mr. Clarence Townes," September 25, 1981, Richmond Renaissance: Capital City Government Commission, 1981, Box 16; Richmond Renaissance Organizational History, Folder entitled "A New Cooperative Spirit," Box 21, M283, (*Clarence Townes Papers*); "The Renaissance Story," Richmond Renaissance Festival Marketplace, undated brochure, HT, 168. R5 R55 1900z, (*Virginia Museum of History and Culture*); and Interview with Bill Martin, July 23, 2019.

[30] "Rouse Plan Links Downtown," *Richmond Afro-American,* April 16, 1983; and "Richmond Conference for Unity in Diversity," *New World News*, December 22, 1984, Richmond 1977-1991, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*).

Figure 3: Photo of the Bridge of Unity (under construction) and the Marriott Hotel from Project One. Courtesy of Virginia Commonwealth University Special Collections.

Urban shopping malls were not a product of the 1980s. Progressive city planners in the early twentieth century used these structures to help organize urban spaces. It was not until the 1950s, however, that urban malls became epicenters of city planning. Politicians, capitalists, and architects reconfigured urban spaces around malls such as Upper Darby in Philadelphia, Highland Park in Dallas, J.C. Nichols Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, Park Forest in Illinois, and the most famous Levittown on Long Island, New York. Less than 1,000 planned shopping malls decorated America's urban landscape before World War II. By the 1980s, more than 22,000 of them defined cities along the East Coast and Midwest.[31]

The increased construction of urban malls ironically came from suburbanization. As cities turned into metropolitan areas after World War II, city planners deprioritized downtowns as economic, cultural, and social spaces. They saw the growing suburbs as a new frontier, and

[31] Howard Gillette, Jr., *Civitas by Design, Building Better Communities, from the Garden City to the New Urbanism*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 78-84.

the inner city as a major highway to them. The earliest suburban malls were designed to face the outer rim of cities, and their internal layout mimicked inner city shopping districts. These designs proved to a skeptical city planner that, "[suburban] people do not want to abandon their urban life -- even in the suburbs." However, suburbanites would later disprove that assumption. Whereas urban malls were located near public transportation, suburban malls were not. Suburban malls also lacked open recreational spaces and close proximity to working class neighborhoods. Suburban malls were antithetical to their urban predecessors, allowing its mostly middle-and-upper class patrons to practice racial and class segregation. Henry Marsh and Richmond Renaissance knew the Richmond area's most frequented malls operated within the suburban mall paradigm. They must have figured that if shopping malls could be used to perpetuate racial segregation, then they could also be used to promote social integration.[32]

[32] Gillette, Jr., *Civitas by Design*, 80-90.

Figure 4: Photo of a youthful Clarence L. Townes, Jr. Courtesy of Virginia Commonwealth University

One of the men who agreed to help the mayor bring about the Sixth Street Marketplace was Clarence L. Townes, Jr. He was born in 1928 to a middle-class black Jackson Ward family. Townes later graduated from the all-black Armstrong High School, and he earned a bachelor's of science in commerce from Virginia Union University in 1944. After serving in the U.S. Army, Townes returned home to a plush job as the assistant manager of the Virginia Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company, a black-owned company that his father helped found. He later served on the Richmond City Republican Committee and the majority-white Richmond Forward voting club between 1958 and 1961. Three years later, Townes became the first black Virginia delegate to the Republican National Convention in the twentieth century. He ran for office, but failed to win a congressional seat in 1966. However, Townes served on several Republican committees in Washington D.C. to help the Party of Lincoln retain and recruit black voters during their rush towards the Democratic Party.[33]

The second person was a white man named T. Justin Moore, Jr. He was born to an upper-middle-class white family in Richmond's white Northside. The baseball and basketball standout graduated from the all-white John Marshall High School, and later Princeton University. Moore went on to earn a law degree from the University of Virginia in 1950. Shortly after leaving Charlottesville, he joined the family business and practiced law with his father in Richmond. Moore specialized in business law, cultivating an interesting relationship with Henry Marsh. The two often faced each other in the courtroom during the 1960s. Marsh represented black clients while Moore protected the Establishment's interests. By 1981, however, Moore and Marsh were no longer fighting each other in court. Marsh was the mayor, and Moore drew a hefty salary as

[33] "Townes Gets New GOP Post, Gives Formula," *Richmond Afro-American*, March 5, 1966, 1; "Proud To Be Black," Editorial in the *Richmond Afro-American*, March 12, 1966, 8; and "There's Good News," *Richmond Afro-American*, October 19-23, 1976, 3.

the chief executive officer of the Virginia Electric and Power Company (VEPCO but now Dominion Energy).[34]

Mayor Marsh asked Moore to represent the white business community on Richmond Renaissance. Moore accepted Marsh's request and got several wealthy white donors on board. Moore later sent Townes a warm letter asking him to meet "for a drink and a brief discussion ...Unfortunately, it is not appropriate to try to describe our discussion topic in this notice." But Moore had "hope[d] very much that you will be able to join us." It is unclear what kind of relationship Townes and Moore had prior to the request. However, Townes joined Moore for the drink and agreed to join Richmond Renaissance. Marsh later held a city-wide press conference to announce the city's partnership with Richmond Renaissance, and its interracial leadership of T. Justin Moore and Clarence Townes. The timing was key because after June 1982, Marsh lost the mayorship in a tightly contested city council race. However, he left Townes and Moore at the helm of the ambitious project.[35]

Townes and Moore brought the wider black and white leadership communities into the Richmond Renaissance fold over the next few months. They first poached a prominent civic group whose members were bank managers, corporate representatives, and other high-ranking city officials. In April 1982, over 750 people filled the VEPCO auditorium and heard Moore pitch the prospects of joining or donating to Richmond Renaissance. Although he advertised Richmond Renaissance as a sensible organization designed to spur economic development,

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[34] "Memorial Thomas Justin Moore, Jr., '46," *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, Undated, https://paw.princeton.edu/memorial/thomas-justin-moore-jr-%E2%80%9946; and "T. Justin Moore, Jr., 74, Ex-Chief of the Virginia Power Company," *The New York Times*, May 3, 1999, https://www.nytimes.com/1999/05/03/business/t-justin-moore-jr-74-ex-chief-of-the-virginia-power-company.html.

[35] T. Justin Moore to The Honorable Henry L. Marsh, III, March 16, 1982; T. Justin Moore to Clarence L. Townes, March 19, 1982; "Issues Involved in Establishment of "Renaissance" A Public Private Partnership;" T. Justin Moore to Frederick Deane Jr., March 24, 1982; Xerox Customer Credit Information Form, Issue Date April 1, 1982; and Undated Typed Memo from the Offices of Randy Evans; Summary Description All Requests Community Development Block Grant, *1982-83*, Richmond Renaissance, Inc., Correspondences, Notes, Misc, March to April 1982, Box 17, M283 (*Clarence Townes Papers*).

Moore assured listeners that its structure and leadership would be like nothing ever seen before in Richmond. Anchored by retail giants, the Sixth Street Marketplace's "biracial and bipartisan" coalition would, more than any amount of capital investment, restore the metropolitan area's faith back into downtown Richmond.[36]

The presentation had a lasting impact on the men who attended. Establishment members threw their economic weight behind the project. Black leaders, namely Virginia Union University President Dr. David T. Shannon, Urban League Director Randolph Kendall, Richmond City School Superintendent Dr. Richard C. Hunter, longtime state delegate and attorney Ronald 'Duke' Ealey, Fifth Street Baptist Church's Reverend Roscoe Cooper, Crusade for Voters founder William Thornton, and *Richmond Afro-American* editor John Templeton all agreed to join the venture. Other black leaders, such as the eventual first black Governor of Virginia L. Douglas Wilder, joined Richmond Renaissance much later. Richmond Renaissance was a skeleton organization by spring 1982. However, its commitment to biracialism assured that it would fare better than its predecessor, Downtown Development Unlimited.[37]

The city council called another press conference two days after Moore's recruitment pitch. They assured residents that Richmond Renaissance would capitalize on the "economic progress of Project One," while not perpetuating the same distrust and tension between white and black leadership. Richmond sought to join large cities, such as Boston and Philadelphia, as well as regional cities such as St. Louis, Birmingham, and Norfolk, by using urban malls (or marketplaces) to create thousands of jobs, stem middle-class flight, and generate millions of tax dollars and retail revenue. However, the council never strayed from its idealistic goal of healing

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[36] Memorandum: Potential Board Members, April 5, 1982; Remarks of T. Justin Moore, Jr., Chairman of the Board, Virginia Electric and Power Company Before The Richmond First Club, April 8, 1982, *Richmond Renaissance Correspondences, Notes, and Misc., March-April of 1982*, Box 17, M283, (*Clarence Townes Papers*).

[37] Mayor Henry Marsh, III to T. Justin Moore, April 9, 1982, Richmond Renaissance Correspondences, Notes, and Misc., March-April of 1982, Box 17, M283, (*Clarence Townes Papers*).

race relations. As Townes once told a potential investor, "Richmond public officials, business and civic leaders perceive this project as a Bridge of Unity that will bring widely differing sectors of the community together ... [and] affect how blacks and whites live and interact with one another."[38]

Selling downtown revitalization to a city like Richmond -- broken with economic flight and racial division -- relied on success stories. Most of them came from James Rouse, a socially-conscious urban planner who has not generated enough scholarly attention. Rouse grew up in a well-to-do white Baltimore family. Sadly, the sudden death of his parents plunged him into working-class status by the time he was a teenager. Rouse secured admission to the University of Hawaii, and later the University of Virginia. Money problems forced him to withdraw from both schools by 1933. Two years later, he secured admission to the University of Maryland Law School with only two years of college credits, thanks in part to his job as a clerk with the Federal Housing Authority.[39]

After finishing his law degree in 1937, Rouse founded a development firm in Baltimore. It was here where Rouse made his name as a housing specialist, co-founding the concept of *urban revitalization*. He believed that physical spaces had profound impacts on people's actions and behaviors. Because of this, Rouse saw urban planners as social engineers. Rouse worked with private and public entities to construct affordable housing and green spaces in Baltimore and Washington D.C., over the next two decades. He hoped that these efforts would help offset issues with crime and segregation. Although his agenda did little to prevent them both, city

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[38] 6th Street Festival Community Interests: Impacts on Black Community Interests, March 15, 1984, Affirmative Action and Minority Business Tenant Opportunity, 1984, Box 13, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*); Richmond Renaissance Newsletter to Potential Tenants, April 11, 1982; Richmond Renaissance Remarks of the Honorable Henry L. Marsh III, Mayor of Richmond, Virginia, Draft of Speech, April 14, 1982, Richmond Renaissance Correspondences, Notes, and Misc., March-April of 1982, Box 17, M283, (*Clarence Townes Papers*).
[39] Gillette, *Civitas by Design*, 91-113.

governments along the East Coast hired his firm to place new highways, housing, and shopping malls in previously blighted spaces.[40]

In 1958, Rouse completed his first mall development named Harundale, located in the Baltimore suburbs. Its economic vitality made Rouse the most sought after urban developer in the East Coast. His colleagues built exclusively upscale and residential suburban areas. Rouse on the other hand refocused his energy on inner cities, garnering a reputation as a socially conscious developer. In the 1960s and 1970s, Rouse's firm focused less on housing and more on downtown shopping malls (also called marketplaces) to help integrate and revitalize urban communities. These spaces were more inclusive than regular malls. Marketplaces were mixed-use spaces with retail giants, small storefronts, kiosks, corporate office space, entertainment venues, and restaurants. His firm managed these properties for the struggling cities at a discounted rate. Rouse's firm then used a portion of their revenue to help construct affordable housing for the urban poor. Between 1976 and 1982, Rouse began and completed marketplaces in cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, St. Louis, Portland, New Orleans, Norfolk, San Antonio, Flint, and Toledo.[41]

Rouse was the most important urban planner of the mid-century. His influence mostly came from the ability to convince cities, limited by financial constraints and a fiscally conservative federal government, to spend millions on downtown revitalization. Many city leaders and concerned taxpayers saw Rouse as a silver tongued used-car salesman who preyed on the hopes of desperate cities. This came from the fact that the overwhelming majority of Rouse

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[40] Joshua Olsen, *Better Places, Better Lives: A Biography of James Rouse*, (Urban Land Institute, 2003); and "James W. Rouse, 81, Dies, Socially Conscious Developer Built New Townsand Malls," *New York Times*, April, 10, 1996, (https://www.nytimes.com/1996/04/10/us/james-w-rouse-81-dies-socially-conscious-developer-built-new-townsand-malls.html).

[41] "James W. Rouse, 81, Dies: Socially Conscious Developer Built New Townsand Malls," *New York Times*, April, 10, 1996, (https://www.nytimes.com/1996/04/10/us/james-w-rouse-81-dies-socially-conscious-developer-built-new-townsand-malls.html).

developments, particularly in smaller regional cities, rarely broke even. The Richmond Establishment focused less on the critics and more on the potential gains of having Rouse on board. Almost immediately after agreeing to join Richmond Renaissance, members of the Establishment put Rouse into contact with T. Justin Moore and Clarence Townes. "The project should be first rate," one of them wrote to Moore, if the *socially conscious developer* chose to head the project and advise it every step of the way.[42]

Once Rouse agreed to developing and managing the Sixth Street Marketplace, white-owned businesses and corporations around the city flooded the Richmond Renaissance bank account. Many of the larger industrial, banking, and manufacturing entities (VEPCO, Bank of Virginia, and Phillip Morris) donated up to $200,000 at a time. Smaller black civic organizations, such as the Church Hill Association and parents of Richmond City Public Schools, also contributed to the project as well. As the checks rolled in, Moore and Townes, feeling confident that they could reach their financial goal, presented the city with a "check" for $2 million in July 1982.[43]

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[42] "Wonderful Things Seen for Richmond," *Richmond News-Leader* April 16, 1982; "Rouse: Richmond's Urban Moses," *Richmond News Leader*, April 19, 1982; T. Justin Moore to Mr. James Rouse, April 19, 1982, Box 17, Richmond Renaissance Correspondences, Notes, and Misc., March-April of 1982, Box 17, M283, (*Townes Papers*); The Rise and Fall of The Greater Baltimore Committee: The Elite Organization That Started Solving Baltimore's Problems In the '50s Seems to Have Few Answers For Them Today, *Baltimore Magazine,* May 1982, 85-9; "Marketplace Bet is $23 Million," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, undated press-clipping found in (*City Planning 6th Street Market File, Valentine Museum*, Richmond, Virginia); T. Justin Moore to Frederick Dean, Jr., and Clarence L. Townes, May 5, 1982, Richmond Renaissance Correspondences, Memo From Moore to Deane and Townes Regarding Jim Rouse's Ideas on Richmond Renaissance's Executive Director, 1982; and Charles Robb to William B. Thalhimers, Jr. and Philip H. Hawley, undated letter found in Richmond Renaissance Correspondences Memo From Moore to Deane and Townes Regarding Jim Rouse's Ideas on Richmond Renaissance's Executive Director, 1982, Box 17, M283, (*Clarence Townes Papers*).

[43] Richmond Renaissance Inc., Minutes of the Executive Committee, May 3 through October 15, 1982; Elizabeth C. Rothberg to Clarence L. Townes, Jr., September 2, 1982; Louis Harrison Jones to Mr. Clarence L. Townes, Jr., September 7, 1982; Roland Turpin to Mr. Clarence L. Townes, September 23, 1982; Richmond Renaissance Inc., Financial Statement As of June 15, 1982 Box 16; G. Timothy Oksman to T. Justin Moore, undated, found in the Richmond Renaissance: Correspondences, Notes, Misc, May-December, 1982, Box 17; Memo from the Forty-Ninth Assembly For Bank Directors, Wailea Beach Hotel, Maui, Hawaii, May 4-7, 1982; Clarence L. Townes to The Board of Directors of Consolidated Bank and Trust Company, March 16, 1982, and Notes Taken by Clarence L. Townes At 49th Assembly for Bank Directors in Maui, Hawaii, 4-7 March 1982, Richmond Renaissance Correspondences, Notes, and Misc., March-April of 1982, Box 17, M283, (*Clarence Townes Papers).*

Rouse met with Townes and Moore in fall 1982 to discuss the current state of race relations in Richmond. He learned that while black and white leaders worked to create a cohesive environment among themselves, the city as a whole remained segregated. Blacks and whites interacted well in workplaces. However, they generally lived, worshiped, and communed in segregated communities. This segregation was more exacerbated by the development of Henrico and Chesterfield suburbs. Before the 1960s, white Richmonders dominated downtown Richmond. As federal laws repealed Jim Crow laws, whites saw downtown as a black area. Richmond whites did not frequent any area where blacks were they perceived to be the majority. This was troubling to Richmond Renaissance because the Sixth Street Marketplace's vitality relied heavily on white consumers spending their money and time downtown. So, Rouse, Townes, and Moore had surveys done to identify some of the other issues whites had with downtown. The surveys mostly concluded that whites disliked the physical decay and high crime rates in black dominated areas. This reality compelled the three to begin rehabilitating a majority black area surrounding the marketplace site. That area was Jackson Ward, Townes's old stomping ground.[44]

Located one block north of the Project One site is Richmond's oldest black enclave of Jackson Ward. This eight-block wide downtown community was founded in the late eighteenth century by freed mulatto and black barbers, artisans, and craftsmen. A century later, Jackson Ward's business community on Second Street gained national prominence as home to America's oldest black-owned banks, insurance companies, fraternal organizations, and self-help enterprises. This economic and physical vitality diminished in the early twentieth century. White city leaders used segregation ordinances, red-lining, and poor public services to prevent Jackson

[44] Southeastern Institute of Research, Inc., Market and Opinion Research, "City-wide Survey of Attitudes and Opinions Regarding Downtown, May 31, 1983, Research Prepared for Richmond Renaissance, Richmond, Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University.

Ward from growing prosperous along with other white neighborhoods. Jackson Ward also suffered from the development and expansion of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike (North), Richmond Coliseum and Medical College of Virginia expansion (East), West Broad Street (West), and the downtown shopping district (South). This physical confinement led to black middle-class flight between World War II and the 1980s.[45]

With the black middle class mostly gone, Jackson Ward experienced significant economic decline. The area was around ninety-seven percent black and impoverished by 1982. Once black-owned insurance firms, law offices, and banks on First, Second, and Third Streets were supplanted by low-end barbershops, beauty parlors, night clubs, and corner stores. Most Jackson Ward households, filled with residents who were born and raised there, grossed less than $5,000 per year. This yearly household income was less than half of the city's median income for a single person. Over forty-three percent of its residents had never attended high school. Less than a quarter of them finished high school, and less than six percent attended and finished college. Forty-two percent of Jackson Ward worked menial service jobs in downtown and the Far West End. Almost all of them relied on public assistance of some kind. The housing situation reflected the economy. Around 622 of its 860 Greek Revival and Italianate housing units were built prior to 1930. None of its homes were built after 1978, and only 7 were built between 1975 and 1978. This reflected a larger neglect of this area, as more than half of the 300 structures and 421 parcels of land needed substantial repairs and renovation according to local realtors. The beacon of black freedom during slavery and the economic fortress against Jim Crow was now defined by its economically disadvantaged renter class.[46]

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[45] "Jackson Ward," Paper Presented at the Liaison Committee of Richmond Renaissance, Box 16, M283, (*Clarence Townes Papers*).

[46] Jackson Ward, Summary Tape File 3G, The Neighborhood Revitalization Division of the Department of Planning and Community Development, *City of Richmond Neighborhood Statistics*, November 1985; and Economic and

Jackson Ward's economic and infrastructural decay reflected the moral bankruptcy of this historic district. Inside of many homes were unmarried mothers with multiple bastard children. Outside of the homes were street corners filled with "pool halls, beer taverns, massage parlors, adult book stores, night clubs, and prostitution," residents once complained in a survey. Cancerous vice gangs brazenly set up open-air drug and prostitution markets on several blocks throughout the ward. City police often looked no further than this eight block radius to catch Richmond's most wanted black fugitives. By this time, cops, and those looking to buy drugs and or sex, were the only white people visiting Jackson Ward. They, along with the black residents, probably could not imagine that this area was the first neighborhood to earn a place on the National Register. "The official statistics understate the extent of the crime problem on Second Street," a white investment firm noted. They went on to suggest that, "In any event, the widely held view that there is a significant crime problem in the area must be recognized as a major deterrent to investment."[47]

Jackson Ward was uncomfortably squeezed between Project One to the south and Interstate-95 to the north. This made the neighborhood a natural gateway to the revitalization area. The Marsh administration had overseen the renovation and resale of thirty-five housing units in Jackson Ward. The buyers were "younger and more affluent than average for the community." This gentrification plan did not solve the area's long-term divestment problems. Most Richmonders, both black and white, felt that Jackson Ward was too afflicted with crime

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Market Analysis: Second Street Commercial Revitalization Study, Richmond, Virginia, by John E. Scott and Associates, January 19, 1981, 2nd Street Commercial Revitalization, 1981, Box 4 and 5, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*).

[47] Application for Jackson Ward to be Admitted to the National Register of Historic Places, July 30, 1976; Jackson Ward, Summary Tape File 3G, The Neighborhood Revitalization Division of the Department of Planning and Community Development, *City of Richmond Neighborhood Statistics*, November 1985, Box 5, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*). For more on crime and perceptions of crime in Jackson Ward, see Table 1, Reported Offenses: 1976-1980, Second Street Study Area Richmond, Virginia, 1980, Economic and Market Analysis, 1-10; and A Commercial Revitalization Plan for the Second Street Commercial Area, 3-7, 2nd Street Commercial Revitalization, 1981, Box 4, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*).

and poverty. Thus, it was not worth fixing. "As long as these attitudes and images exist, it is unlikely that the area's potential as a neighborhood...can be realized," a private survey once noted.[48]

Jackson Ward was the ultimate eyesore. It was identifiably black and poor in a city that cared little for either. "Little old ladies see [black] street people waiting for lunch and think all those street people are lustful criminals," Townes once told a local news reporter. This was the perception that he, James Rouse, and T. Justin Moore had to change. They successfully pitched a Jackson Ward redevelopment plan to the Richmond Renaissance executive board. It is unclear how, but some residents got wind of the proposed plan. A black Jackson Ward businessman, representing one of the area's eighteen industries and thirty-five businesses, told his colleagues that change was coming, and that change would be the economic and ethnic cleansing of poor blacks from the Ward. "It is clear that even as middle-class blacks, we do not have the necessary financial clout to build a three million dollar development individually," he said. However, they banded together and promised to keep their property for as long as they could.[49]

Jackson Ward business owners did not know it at the time, but they had little to fear. Richmond Renaissance donors and board members supported Second Street revitalization in name only. The code name given to the Jackson Ward project was *Spillover*. Instead of sinking

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[48] Economic and Market Analysis, 1-10; and A Commercial Revitalization Plan for the Second Street Commercial Area, 3-7, 2nd Street Commercial Revitalization, 1981, Box 4, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*).

[49] S. Buford Scott to Clarence L. Townes, Jr., January 13, 1983, Richmond Renaissance: Correspondences, Notes, Misc, January, 1983, Box 16, M283 (*Clarence Townes Papers*); Economic and Market Analysis: Second Street Commercial Revitalization Study, Richmond, Virginia, by John E. Scott and Associates, January 19, 1981; A Commercial Revitalization Plan for the Second Street Commercial Area, Richmond, Virginia, Urban Services, March 1981, 2nd Street Commercial Revitalization, 1981; Diane P. Hayes, Third Street Project: Developing Our Own Feature, January 1982, 48, Third Street Project, 1982; A Revitalization Plan For The Second Street Business District Area, Richmond, Virginia, Prepared by Albert G. Dobbins, III, December 1983, Second Street Business District Revitalization, 1983, Box 4, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*); "Image is Key to Successful Tourism Marketing Plan," *Newsline* Vol 8 No. 6, June 1982; and Manuel Deese to Clarence L. Townes, Jr., June 16, 1982, Richmond Renaissance: Correspondences, Notes, Misc, May-December, 1982, Box 17, M283, (*Clarence Townes Papers*).

monetary resources into this area, the board wanted to renovate its existing buildings and important streets between I-95 and the marketplace. The board hoped that other areas in Jackson Ward would be renovated by private industries, banks, and investment firms that could not acquire affordable space in the marketplace. "New or improved space will typically be more expensive than the existing supply," an older survey concluded. Townes, Rouses, and Moore disagreed with this agenda. They even reported that the "expected 'spillover' benefits associated with Project [One] and the Sixth Street Festival Marketplace development" would not fix the image of the community. However, they failed to convince the board to change their plans.[50]

One agenda that Rouse, Townes, and Moore did not waver on was the inclusion of black businesses into the marketplace. "Black businesses need to be formed, supported, nourished, into healthy development," Rouse once told the *Baltimore Magazine*. Rouse spoke to both Moore and Townes about mobilizing the black Richmond Renaissance members into the Liaison Committee. They would focus exclusively on bringing black businesses into the Sixth Street Marketplace. This committee worked meticulously to create events such as the Martin Luther King Day celebration along Second Street. This day-long series of workshops in January 1983 was one of many programs they ran to familiarize black residents and business owners with Richmond Renaissance members.[51]

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[50] Economic and Market Analysis: Second Street Commercial Revitalization Study, Richmond, Virginia, by John E. Scott and Associates, January 19, 1981, 2nd Street Commercial Revitalization, 1981, Box 4, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*); A Revitalization Plan For The Second Street Business District Area, Richmond, Virginia, Prepared by Albert G. Dobbins, III, December 1983, Second Street Business District Revitalization, 1983, Box 4, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*); *Baltimore Magazine*, May 1982, clipping found in Clarence L. Townes to Laurie Naismith, June 25, 1982, Richmond Renaissance: Correspondences, Notes, Misc, May-December, 1982; Minutes of the Liaison Committee Meeting January 26, 1983; Richmond Renaissance Incorporated Minutes of the Executive Committee, January 7, 1983; Executive Committee Agenda Meeting, January 21, 1983; and Richmond Renaissance Incorporate Minutes of the Executive Committee, January 21, 1983, Richmond Renaissance: Board of Directors, Executive Committee, Liaison Committee, Minutes and Agenda, 1983, Box 16 and 17, M283, (*Clarence Townes Papers*).

[51] *Baltimore Magazine*, May 1982, Clipping found in Clarence L. Townes to Laurie Naismith, June 25, 1982; "Marketplace Realities," November 28, 1983, untitled clipping found in City Planning 6th Street Market, Valentine

Townes and the Liaison Committee worked mightily to include Jackson Ward into downtown revitalization plans. They assured that over 51% of the parking lots for the marketplace would be black owned and in Jackson Ward. This, Townes believed, would "attract a growing secondary office market among small service and professional firms who wish to locate outside of the high cost downtown financial district." Townes also solicited local white banks to provide Second Street businesses with low-interest loans to help them renovate their properties. This agreement came with several local attorneys promising to provide pro bono legal services to black business owners before, during, and after the marketplace opened.[52]

Some of Jackson Ward business owners were approached by Richmond Renaissance members about selling their properties and entering the marketplace. Most of them were willing to sell their buildings and relocate. However, the offers were not as tempting as they had hoped. At least five unnamed business and property owners felt personally insulted by Richmond Renaissance's offers. They knew that property near redevelopment zones typically increased in value due. This was even truer with Jackson Ward being located between I-95 and East Broad Street. Instead of negotiating with the black property owners, the Liaison Committee was instructed to look for "alternative sites." The biracial committee felt that the black property owners were unjustified in "assign[ing] values to their property greatly in excess of the appraised value."[53]

Museum; Executive Director's Report Board Meeting April 8, 1983; Richmond Renaissance Inc., Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, September 12, 1983; Box 16, (*Clarence Townes Papers*).

[52] Roland R. Wesley, Esquire to Mr. Manuel Deese, City Manager, April 9, 1984, Affirmative Action and Minority Business Tenant Opportunity, 1984, Box 10, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*) Report to the Executive Committee, February through May of 1984; Richmond Renaissance Inc., Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, September 12, 1983; and RR Inc., Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, September 27, 1984, Richmond Renaissance: Board of Directors, Executive Committee Minutes and Agendas, 1984, Box 16, M283, (*Clarence Townes Papers*).

[53] "Marketplace Details Are Released," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 17, 1984; Richmond Renaissance Inc., Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, September 27, 1984; and Richmond Renaissance Minutes of the Executive Committee, April 20 and May 4, 1984, Box 16, M283, (*Clarence Townes Papers*).

The *alternative site* solution went unexplored. Any hope of redeveloping Second Street and making Jackson Ward an actual part of the downtown revitalization ended with the failed negotiations. Less than a month after construction began on Sixth Street, Jackson Ward residents noticed that their neighborhood was being physically cut out of the marketplace. On the majority white Clay Street side of the construction zone, visitors saw well-groomed trees and bushes, glass entrances to the marketplace, welcome signs, and no traffic congestion. On the Jackson Ward side, visitors saw a brick wall, heavy traffic being diverted through, and trash and delivery trucks making their daily rounds. These construction plans irritated several residents enough that they demanded an explanation. Townes took these complaints to heart and worked with Richmond Renaissance to consider redesigning their Jackson Ward portion. In the end, the executive committee redirected some of the traffic out of the neighborhood, camouflaged the delivery routes, and opened up the wall to the marketplace. "I don't think we're going to be totally satisfied. But I think it is something that we're going to have to accept rather than fight further," said one Jackson Ward resident.[54]

Richmond Renaissance lost out on a critical opportunity to make Jackson Ward a vital part of downtown revitalization. However, Townes and the Liaison Committee made significant inroads elsewhere. In spring 1984, they unveiled the Affirmative Action and Minority Tenant Opportunity Program. The plan involved Rouse's management firm recruiting black vendors for the marketplace. Approved vendors would be assigned advisors from business school faculty at Virginia Union University (black) and the University of Richmond (white). The advisors would help the new vendors conduct analysis, projections, and recommendations for improvements,

[54] "New Side Design Gets Mixed Reviews," *Richmond News Leader*, June 19, 1984; "Council Authorizes 6th Street Marketplace Pact," *Richmond News-Leader*, June 12, 1984; and "Redesign Settles Dispute over Marketplace Access," *Richmond News-Leader,* July 31, 1984, (*Valentine Museum Press Clippings*).

inventory, and advertisement for their businesses. Local white bank managers even set aside a $1.25 million Loan Fund to provide insurance for the black vendors.[55]

The opportunities did not end with helping to start black businesses. Richmond Renaissance reserved at least 15% of rental space, 30% of construction, 30% of administrative, and 50% of clerical jobs for qualified black applicants. Every business that operated within the marketplace was required to reserve at least 35% of its employment opportunities for qualified black applicants. Vendors of all races had to agree to these terms before entering the marketplace. Any business caught violating the minority agreement would be removed by Rouse's management firm. "I am extremely pleased with the support that I have been able to obtain from local bankers, universities and law firms assisting in the development of minority business opportunities in the City of Richmond," said the Richmond City Manager. He went on to say that, "To my knowledge, this is the first time that a city government and the private sector have developed a program which will afford an opportunity for minorities to enter the mainstream of economic development." While this was not the first public/private economic step towards racial harmony, it was the most impactful to date. Downtown was once a hegemonic pillar of racial division. Richmond Renaissance, however, used revitalization and affirmative action to write racial reconciliation into downtown's DNA. [56]

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[55] Minority Entrepreneur Training Proposal, June 1, 1984, Affirmative Action and Minority Business Tenant Opportunity, 1984, Box 10 and 13, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*).

[56] Minority Entrepreneur Training Proposal, June 1, 1984, Affirmative Action and Minority Business Tenant Opportunity, 1984; City of Richmond Minority Business and Tenant Opportunity Program 6th Street Marketplace, undated; Manny Deese, City Manager for the City of Richmond to Jim Rouse, November 11, 1983; Manuel Deese, City Manager of the City of Richmond to Mr. T. Justin Moore, Jr., Chairman of the Board Richmond Renaissance, April 9, 1984, Box 10 and 13, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*); Hobson, *Legend of the Black Mecca*, 74-6; "Plan to Assist Minority Businesses Which May Be Interested in Operating Businesses in The Sixth Street Festival Marketplace Upon Its Commencement," Resolution 83-R269 December 5, 1983; 6th Street Market Minority Tenant Program; 6th Street Festival Community Interests: Impacts on Black Community Interests, March 15, 1984; Minority Entrepreneur Training Proposal, June 1, 1984, Affirmative Action and Minority Business Tenant Opportunity, 1984, Box 10, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*); Hirsch, "Race and Politics in Modern New Orleans," 461–84; "More Police to Patrol Downtown," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, September 12, 1984; "We Can

Figure 5: Sixth Street Marketplace Grand Opening. Courtesy of Virginia Commonwealth University Special Collections

"It Has Become a Symbol of Failure and It Must Come Down," Conclusion

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Dig It," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 8, 1985; "Bridgework," *Richmond News Leader,* February 18, 1985; "Sprouting Beams," *Richmond News Leader*, March 3, 1985; and "Project To Improve Facades on Broad," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 8, 1985, (*Valentine Museum Press Clippings*).

There was tremendous fanfare surrounding the ribbon cutting ceremony on September 18, 1985. Over 20,000 people witnessed Richmond Renaissance unveil its marketplace, and its highly advertised Bridge of Unity. Months after the grand opening, a journalist from *Minorities and Women in Business Magazine* interviewed Clarence Townes about the Sixth Street project. Townes spent most of the interview delving into the political benefits of interracial cooperation. However, when he was asked "will it work," referring to the Sixth Street Marketplace, Townes responded frankly and not-so-confidently that, "I think it will." He admitted that "the jury is still out, and ultimately only time will tell if the Sixth Street Marketplace will be more than just a symbol."[57]

Less than a year later, journalists from *The Urban Reporter* magazine conducted a follow-up report on the marketplace. They were expecting to see a thriving downtown mall that city leaders advertised before, during, and after its construction. What the reporters found, however, mimicked many other urban revitalization projects around the country. The storefronts were empty. The food courts were also empty. Even the parking decks, which were used to park at the marketplace and downtown in general, were empty. In search for answers, the journalists interviewed several black and white marketplace vendors. They informed the journalists that the marketplace had never gotten off to the start that many had hoped. Even on holiday weekends, the vendors had trouble attracting large crowds. One of them provided keen insight into the marketplace's troubles. White women between the ages of eighteen and forty, the marketplace's intended clientele base, mostly refused to shop there. "They think they'll get mugged or raped," the black business owner sadly told one of the reporters.[58]

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[57] "Black Business in Richmond Get Major Piece of Downtown Rebuilding Action," *Minorities and Women In Business*, January-December, 1985, Box 21, M283, (*Clarence Townes Papers*).
[58] "A Tale of Two Marketplaces," *The Urban Reporter*, June 15-27, 1986, Box 21, M283, (*Clarence Townes Papers*).

Figure 6: Photo of the empty Sixth Street Marketplace food court. Courtesy of Virginia Commonwealth University Special Collections.

White fears of visiting the marketplace were racially motivated. However, that does not negate the fact that Richmond suffered from an unusual spike in mostly black drug and violent activity. Underscoring urban revitalization in the 1980s was Virginia's transition from a petty-crime to tough-on-crime state. Virginia had one of America's highest incarceration rates in the 1980s. However, eighty-nine percent of Virginia's jails and prisons were filled with non-violent misdemeanor offenders in 1984. Two years later, the state expanded its jails and prisons for an anticipated influx of over 11,000 new inmates by 1990, and later 64,000 by the year 2000. In 1988, the legislature strengthened its growing prison pipeline by increasing police powers and

limiting the rights of felons convicted of violent and drug crimes. By the end of the decade, Virginia was a tough on crime state. As a 1989 gubernatorial candidate would later brag to a coalition of police officers, "The statistics speak for themselves, as Virginia has one of the lowest crime rates in the nation. At the same time, however, we also have one of the highest incarceration rates."[59]

This statewide transition began with the crime problems in Richmond. Between 1984 and 1990, Richmond was not Virginia's largest city; however, it was Virginia's capital in drug and violent crimes. A black police major once told the *Times-Dispatch* that, "downtown's crime problem was more of perception than reality ...We don't think we have a problem, many people think we do." While putting the city's best foot forward, he greatly embellished Richmond's crime issues. Black neighborhoods around the city became known as illicit vice dens filled with drug dealing, gambling, and prostitution. One visiting minister once said candidly that the:

[59] A Report of The Pre and Post-Incarceration Services: An Evaluation Report to The Governor and The General Assembly of Virginia, House Document No.7, 1984; Report of the Joint Subcommittee Studying The Corrections System, House Document No.36, 1984; Report of the Committee on District Courts, Assessing the Needs for Services for Virginia's General District Courts," House Document No.15., 1985; Joint Report of the Joint Subcommittees Studying Virginia's Public Defender Program and Alternative Indigent Defense, House Document no. 15 and Senate Document No. 11, 1985; *Senate Bills*, Vol. 1, Digest Index, Virginia 1984, 126-90; *Acts of Assembly*, Vol. 1, Virginia 1984, 877; *House and Senate Documents*, Vol I and II, Virginia 1985 Session, 185-189; Report of the Department of Corrections: Studying the Use of Wiretaps in the Virginia Correctional System, Senate Document No. 10, 1987; Report of The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission on Correctional Issues in Virginia: Final Summary Report, House Document No.18, 1987; Report of The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission on Local·Jail Capacity And Population Forecast, House Document No.16, 1987; Report of The Secretary of Transportation And Public Safety on Privatization In Corrections, House Document No.7, 1987; Study of Correctional Privatization, *House Document 7*, 1-93; Reports of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission on Local Jail Capacity and Population Forecast, *House Document 16*, *House and Senate Documents*, Vol. I, Virginia 1987 Session; Requesting The Crime Commission To Study Drug Testing Arrestees and Defendants Awaiting Trial, 2124-25; An Act to Amend the Code of Virginia by Adding in Title 19.2 a Chapter Numbered 1.1, Consisting of a Section Numbered 19.2-11.1, Relating to Standards for Crime Victim and Witness Assistance Programs, 676-77; An Act and Reenact of 53.1-151 of the Code of Virginia, Relating to Eligibility for Parole, 1802-3; An Act to Amend and Reenact 19.2-56 of the Code of Virginia, Relating to Issuance of Search Warrants, 58, *House and Senate Documents*, Vol. I-III, Virginia 1988 Session, (*Virginia General Assembly Archives*, Richmond, Virginia); Crime and Drug Prevention, Box 15, Series XI; Excerpts From Remarks Made From Harrisonburg Police Memorial Day Dinner, May 31, 1989, Folder 187; and Excerpts From Remarks Made to the NCLG Task Force on Drug Trafficking, April 8, 1989, Folder 196, (*L. Douglas Wilder Papers*, Virginia Union University, Richmond, Virginia).

"Great new highways and expressways drive many of you around sections where black and other colored masses live. Even in Richmond it would be interesting if some of you who live in this city, if you have not done it already, would take a ride through the inner city of Richmond. You would be shocked and amazed by what you see. The human deprivation being caused by poor education, deepening poverty and still racial discrimination defies comprehension. Many of these communities have become dumping grounds for drugs, alcohol, and every conceivable crime."

Even Clarence Townes acknowledged this issue when a local news station constantly reported on Richmond's black crime problem during marketplace construction. "We're breaking our backs at Richmond Renaissance in efforts to dispel negative images of downtown and we'd like it very much if you'd give us a fair shake on that," he said in a confidential letter. Richmond's growing crime problems not only became citywide news, but a stigma that earned the city the infamous statewide nickname of *Crime City*.[60]

Black residents took unprecedented steps to combat their growing crime issues. Between 1984 and 1989, black Richmond delegates went to the Virginia legislature and asked for financial assistance to form neighborhood watch groups in the city's most violent neighborhoods. They also asked the city council to construct police precincts in the most dangerous black neighborhoods. In 1989, Church Hill, the city's second most violent area, received its first police station. The continual advocacy also netted several pieces of anti-crime legislation. Between 1983 and 1990, the city council and the state legislature stiffened penalties against drug and violent crimes, while increasing its police spending to enforce them.[61]

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[60] Richmond Renaissance: City of Richmond First Year Comprehensive Plan Mid-1970s, Box 16, M293, (*Clarence Townes Papers*); "Center Urged For Church Hill to Break Poverty Cycle," *Richmond Afro-American*, May 30, 1970, 15; "More Police to Patrol Downtown," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 12, 1984; Minutes of the City Council, June 14, 1982-December 17, 1984, 624-50; Dr. Leon Sullivan, Opening Speech at the Moral Re-Armament Conference Unity in Diversity, November 16-18, 1984, Folder 1984, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiative of Change Archives*); State of City Report, Richmond, Virginia, Department of Community Development Division of Comprehensive Planning, 1989, Second Street Business District Revitalization, 1983, Box 4; and Clarence L. Townes to Mr. Jeff Nowakowski, November 13, 1984, Media-Negative TV Reporting, 1984, Box 13, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*).

[61] Report from the Secretary of Public Safety to the General Assembly on the Status of Neighborhood Watch in Virginia, House Joint Resolution No.50, *House and Senate Documents in the Virginia 1984 Session, vol.1 House 1-15*, H-10; *Acts of Assembly*, Vol. 1, Virginia 1984, 877, (*General Assembly Archives*); *House and Senate*

Black politicians went further than residents by supporting local and state measures for "longer sentences without parole, less plea bargaining, and expanding the type of crimes for which the death penalty may be given." Roy A. West, Richmond's mayor and stern tough-on-crime advocate, summed up his support for the punitive anti-crime measures by saying, "We cannot rationalize or explain it away. The issue is not capital punishment. It is black-on-black genocide." His crusade created a whirlwind of conservative black anti-crime advocacy within city government. In 1986, newly-hired City Manager Robert C. Bobb introduced the Select Neighborhood Action Patrol Division, Blacks Mobilizing Against Crime, and Drugs and Firearms Strike Force. These measures partnered city government and black residents in efforts to deter increasing drug and violent crime. These task forces produced thousands of arrests, compelling the state legislature to promote black Richmond leaders to the state crime commission in the late 1980s.[62]

Documents, Vol I and II, Virginia 1985 Session, 185-189; An Act To Amend and Reenact 18.2-248 and 18.2-249 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Penalties for Illegal Drug Transactions; Seizure and Forfeiture of Property Used In Connection With or Derived From Illegal Drug Transactions, House Bill 127; An Act To Amend and Reenact 18.2-31 of the Code of Virginia, Relating to Capital Murder; Penalty, House Bill 1525; and An Act To Amend and Reenact 18.2-90 of the Code of Virginia, Relating to Entering A Dwelling House or Other Building With Intent To Commit Murder, Rape, or Robbery, House Bill 1745, *Acts of Assembly*, Vol. I and II, Virginia 1985, 1057, 597, and 136; An Act to Amend and Reenact 18.2-308.2 of the Code of Virginia, Relating to a Prohibition against The Possession or Transportation of Firearms or Concealed Weapons by Convicted Felons; Penalty; An Act to Amend and Reenact 18.2-249 of the Code of Virginia, Relating to the Seizure and Forfeiture of Property used in Connection with or Derived from Illegal Drug Transactions; An Act to Amend the Code of Virginia by Adding Sections Numbered 18.2-308.2.2 and 52-4.4, relating to the Purchase and Sale of Certain Firearms; Duties of the Department of State Police; Penalties, *Acts of Assembly, Vol. I and II, Virginia 1989 Regular and Special Session*; *House and Senate Documents, Vol. I, Virginia 1989 Session*, 782 and 1029; and Interim Report of the Virginia State Crime Commission: Task Force Study of Drug Trafficking, Abuse, and Related Crime, *Senate Document* No. 10, 1990, (*General Assembly Archives*).

[62] "Issues Forcing Community Action," *Richmond Afro-American*, April 6, 1985; "Mayor West Wants More Use of Electric Chair," *Richmond Afro-American*, August 3, 1985; Jerome Gorman, "Objects to West as Witness," editorial in the *Richmond Afro-American*, April 27, 1985; "*Crime in Virginia 1985,"* Compiled by Uniform Crime Reporting Section, Department of Police, Richmond, Virginia, 54; "West Carries Crime Message to Crusade," *Richmond Afro-American*, August 31, 1985; "Violent Crime Total for Virginia, 1985," Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics, *U.S. Department of Justice Online Database*, (https://www.bjs.gov/ucrdata/Search/Crime/Local/RunCrimeTrendsInOneVar.cfm). Hereafter cited as *Uniform Crime Stats*; An Act to Amend and Reenact 18.2-308.2 of The Code of Virginia, Relating to Possession of Firearms by Certain Convicted Felons; An Act to Amend an Reenact 18.2-248 of the Code of Virginia, Relating to Penalties For Manufacturing, Selling, Giving, Distributing or Possessing A Controlled Substance With Intent to Manufacture, Sell, Give, or Distribute; An Act to Amend and Reenact 53.1-165 of the Code of Virginia, Relating to Revocation of

Black Richmond's anti-crime efforts led to a clash between the Richmond Police Department and City Hall. Richmond's overwhelmingly white police force resisted the changing of the guard that City Hall experienced in the previous decades. Its ranks and hierarchy remained majority white and conservative deep into the 1980s. However, the increased black participation in anti-crime measures led to a series of public discussions about the prevalence of police brutality and the lack of blacks on the police force. In 1988, Robert Bobb ordered white Police Chief Frank S. Duling to recruit more black officers. The chief simply refused the order, graduating only four of the around fifty black candidates from the police academy. This insubordination led Bobb to force Duling into retirement while he hired Marty Tapscott to be Richmond's first black police chief in 1989.[63]

Parole; and An Act to Amend and Reenact 14.1-79 and 14.1-84.4 of the Code of Virginia, Relating to Law Enforcement Expenditures, *Acts of Assembly, Vol I and II, Virginia 1986 Session*, 690, 756, 733, 435; "New City manager Aggressive Type Who Can Get Things Done," *Richmond Afro-American*, August 2, 1986, 1-2; "Richmond Gets A New City Manager," *Richmond Afro-American*, July 7, 1986; *Minutes of the City Council of the City of Richmond, January 14, 1985-June 22, 1987*, 399, (*Richmond City Hall Archives*); Report of the Department of Corrections: Studying the Use of Wiretaps in the Virginia Correctional System, Senate Document No. 10, 1987; Report of The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission on Correctional Issues in Virginia: Final Summary Report, House Document No.18, 1987; Report of The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission on Local·Jail Capacity And Population Forecast, House Document No.16, 1987; Report of The Secretary of Transportation And Public Safety on Privatization In Corrections, House Document No.7, 1987; Study of Correctional Privatization, House Document 7, 1-93; Reports of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission on Local Jail Capacity and Population Forecast, House Document 16, *House and Senate Documents*, Vol. I, Virginia 1987 Session; Requesting The Crime Commission To Study Drug Testing Arrestees and Defendants Awaiting Trial, 2124-25; An Act to Amend the Code of Virginia by Adding in Title 19.2 a Chapter Numbered 1.1, Consisting of a Section Numbered 19.2-11.1, Relating to Standards for Crime Victim and Witness Assistance Programs, 676-77; An Act and Reenact of 53.1-151 of the Code of Virginia, Relating to Eligibility for Parole, 1802-3; An Act to Amend and Reenact 19.2-56 of the Code of Virginia, Relating to Issuance of Search Warrants, 58, *House and Senate Documents*, Vol. I-III, Virginia 1988 Session, (*General Assembly Archives*); and "Drug War: Bobb Plans All-Out Fight," *Richmond Afro-American*, April 8, 1989, 1.

[63] *Minutes of the City Council of the City of Richmond, Virginia, 1985-1987*, 471 and 475; Ibid, *July 13, 1987 to June 13, 1988*, 113 and 122, (*City Hall Archives*); "Mainly Black Areas File More Complaints of Police Brutality, According to Report," *Richmond Afro-American*, August 1, 1987, 1; "Few Black Policemen Hired in Richmond, Area," *Richmond Afro-American*, September 26, 1987, 1; "Efforts Made to Organize City's Black Policemen," *Richmond Afro-American*, May 30, 1970, 15; "Police Chief's Boss Said Shocked About Why Black Cops Not Promoted," *Richmond Afro-American*, March 18, 1972, 1 and 20; "Black Officers Who Went to Court on List for Promotion To Sergeant," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 2, 1973, 5; "Cop Cheating Case Gets Hotter as Wilder Attacks City Attorney," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 16, 1973, 7; "Police Promotions Expected This Week," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 30, 1973, 8; "Police Cheating Common Practice on Examinations," *Richmond Afro-American* January 5, 1974, 6; "Promotions Follow Ruling By Court," *Richmond Afro-American*, January 12, 1974, 1-2; "Criticism Continues to Build Against The City Police Bureau," *Richmond Afro-American*, January 26, 1974, 8;

The politicization of Richmond's crime problems even made its way into the contested 1989 gubernatorial election. The Republican candidate, J. Marshall Coleman, was a longtime bureaucrat and current attorney general who was tough on crime before it became a coined term. His Democratic opponent was the Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, L. Douglas Wilder. He was the first black state senator from Richmond, lieutenant governor, and gubernatorial candidate with a major party's backing. Wilder was also the first candidate to capitalize on the strength of black Richmond's anticrime movement, calling for his own "all-out war on crime" early on the campaign trail. Coleman traveled behind Wilder and used his voting record in the legislature to prove that he "will say anything to be elected governor." While that statement was a classic example of hyperbole, it was quite valid. The eventual governor used punitive anti-crime rhetoric to win over a state that had become familiar with Richmond's crime problems. Wilder later worked to de-mobilize Virginia's war on crime after becoming governor. A major impetus for this was several governor's and legislative reports that the "overcrowding in Virginia's local jails and state institutions is, in large part, a result of policy choices made over the past fifteen years, which reflect public sentiment toward the punishment of criminals."[64]

The Sixth Street Marketplace was erected in a city struggling to lower its crime. Richmond Renaissance went out of its way to include anti-crime policies in the marketplace planning. "Walking beat patrols, the canine corps, horse troops, plainclothesmen, and cruise cars

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"Few Black Policemen Hired in Richmond Area," *Richmond Afro-American*, September 26, 1987, 1; Louis Bernard Cei, "Law Enforcement in Richmond: A History of Police-Community Relations, 1737-1974," (PhD. diss at Florida State University, 1975), 233-52; "More Blacks Needed on Police Force; Only Four of 23 Last Graduation," *Richmond Afro-American*, March 5, 1988, 1; "Richmond Gets First Black Police Chief," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 8, 1989, 1; and Crime in Virginia 1985-89, *Compiled by Uniform Crime Reporting Section, Department of Police, Richmond, Virginia*, 54-102, (a copy of the statistics is in the possession of the author).

[64] "Wilder Calls For All-Out War On Crime," *Richmond Afro-American*, November 21, 1987, 1; Freedom Fund Banquet, Virginia State NAACP Conference October 31, 1987, Tape 078; Wilder Opposition To Anti-Drug Proposals Sets Stage for November Referendum, August 29, 1989; Blast Wilder's Record, Speech by J. Marshall Coleman to Bipartisan Law Enforcement Leaders, September 13, 1989; Excerpts from Remarks Made to the Metro Richmond Coalition Against Drugs, September 28, 1990, Folder 380, (*Wilder Papers*); and Final Report of the 1989 Commission on Prison and Jail Overcrowding, House Document No. 46, 1990, (*General Assembly Archives*).

in large numbers" were in the marketplace "before any other section of the city," Townes once touted. His efforts, and that of black residents, went largely ignored by the white middle class. They saw and treated Richmond as *Crime City*. "At that point, [white] people were still leaving Richmond," a longtime resident recently remembered about the 1980s. That memory was substantiated by city and state reports that the surrounding suburbs, while having smaller populations than Richmond, outpaced the city's economic and population growth throughout the 1980s. Richmond went from providing almost half of the metropolitan area's jobs to just over one-third. In the next two decades, the city lost 50,000 more jobs (mostly clerical and retail). The economic sprawl towards Chesterfield and Henrico related directly to the failure of the Sixth Street Marketplace and white perceptions about downtown. As a later assessment concluded, "Despite the efforts to bridge the black and white communities, the effects of racial segregation were still evident…. [And] the magnitude of change generated by the marketplace was simply not enough to make a difference."[65]

Crime issues aside, most urban planners at the time could have foreseen the failure of Sixth Street Marketplace. The project was, as one scholar suggests, "[too] captured by the idea of building a bridge between the black and white communities." This idealism caused city leaders to be overconfident in their market analysis and demographic testing. No amount of numbers, questionnaires, or surveys could quantify the efforts needed to overcome the hurdles of racial division in 1980s Richmond. One key problem lay with "the city's emphasis on recruiting

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[65] Gillette, *Camden After the Fall*, 140-5; Clarence L. Townes to Mr. Jeff Nowakowski, November 13, 1984, Media-Negative TV Reporting, 1984, Box 13, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*); Ronald Wilson, "Richmond's 6th Street Marketplace Assessment of A Failed Festival Market," MA Thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, September 1989, RR 6th Street Marketplace Assessment, September 1989, Box 37, M308, (*McClenahan Papers*); Interview with Robert Corcoran, May, 11, 2019; State of the City Report, Richmond, Virginia, Department of Community Development Division of Comprehensive Planning, 1989, found in Second Street Business District Revitalization, 1983, Box 4, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*); Unpacking the Census Powerpoint Presentation Part 3, 2010, (https://www.slideshare.net/jzur/unpacking-the-2010-census-part-3?next_slideshow=1)

minority businesses," a report later surmised. This reconciliatory action gave whites "the impression of this being a black shopping center." The report continued that "Broad Street had essentially become the black shopping district for Jackson Ward. This presented a psychological barrier to both shoppers and merchants." Racial segregation was foundational to the city's identity and function. Hence, one member of the Establishment lamented that since "black people have literally taken over Broad Street shopping, white people [have gone] to the suburban centers and drift[ed] away from the city's center."[66]

With the white clientele either scared away by crime, or the presence of black people, the Sixth Street Marketplace also failed internally. "At that time, I don't think the business leadership had the vision to make that thing work," a resident believes. When white shoppers refused to patronize the businesses, marketplace management began cutting corners. The air conditioning units, which were mostly second hand, often broke down in the summer. The heating systems in the marketplace and bridge rarely, if ever, worked during the winter. Maintenance and pest control were routinely ignored. The majority black clientele and vendors coexisted in facilities that were newly built but shoddily maintenanced. The majority black city council regularly allocated tax dollars to help manage the mall. Local white-owned banks also increased their debt spending to help the vendors eventually see a profit. These measures failed to mitigate the lack of revenue. James Rouse's management firm had to charge many original black vendors higher rents to help make the budget. Newer black vendors were also routinely

[66] Wilson, "Richmond's 6th Street Marketplace Assessment of A Failed Festival Market," 22-33; Interview with John Moeser, March 10, 2019; Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 12, 2019; Thomas C, Boushall to Mr. Andrew J. Brent, May 4, 1981, Box 1:18, M281, (*A.J. Brent Papers*); Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race*, 149-60; and Rodriguez, *Bootstrap New Urbanism*, 11-21.

lied to about the services they would receive. Eight of them sued Rouse's firm and collectively won a $1 million settlement.[67]

Over the next decade, Richmond, a city known for tobacco and aluminum manufacturing, shifted towards a "knowledge-based technology economy," according to a local university president. City government diverted its focus away from reviving downtown retail in favor of expanding medical research and biotechnology centers. These ventures helped the city secure over $1.1 billion in capital downtown investments by 1993. Motorola, Siemens, and Capital One took advantage of economic incentives and opened distribution and research centers in Richmond. Thousands of out-of-time scientists, engineers, researchers, and money managers now called the Richmond area home. Richmond was not Silicon Valley. However, it was one of the emerging technology hubs in America, ranking just behind Atlanta, Raleigh-Durham, Phoenix, and Austin, Texas. Racial harmony no longer depended on beautiful shopping districts frequented by black residents and white suburbanites. It now resided with a multicultural downtown filled with high-paying, technologically-based jobs. This economic shift represented the dawn of a new age for city leadership and residents. As the STEM jobs moves in, the inner-city, and more-so its retail district, was no longer imagined to be the city's saving grace. People finally saw East Broad Street for what it was: a desolate concrete jungle that reflected the city's insolently shallow responses to its race problems.[68]

Just days after the marketplace's seventeenth anniversary, the Richmond City Council unanimously agreed to buy the entire marketplace for $3.1 million. This purchase was not a first

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[67] Wilson, "Richmond's 6th Street Marketplace Assessment of A Failed Festival Market," 22-45; Interview with Robert Corcoran, March 11, 2019; and Interview with Terry Drumheller, July 23, 2019.

[68] Dr. Eugene P. Trani, "Richmond at the Crossroads: The Greater Richmond Metropolitan Area and the Knowledge Based Technology Economy of the 21st Century," Report delivered at St. John's College, Cambridge, England, Easter Term, 1998, (*Eugene P. Trani Papers,* Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia); Virginia Biotechnology Research Park Project Overview & Current Status, June 1993, Virginia Technology Research Park, 1992-1994, Box 108, M302, (*McClenahan Papers*). A copy of the report is in the possession of the author.

step to renovate the rapidly decaying structure. It was the final phase in the marketplace's existence. Many of the marketplace's rentable spaces had been vacant for over a decade. The outer walls of the bridge was covered in graffiti. The inner walls were filled with loose debris and vagrants. Conditions had gotten so bad in the marketplace that locals often referred to it the "Glorified Smoking Lounge."[69]

The remaining twenty-six marketplace vendors (all minorities) were less than enthusiastic about their pending evictions. The city council agreed to set-aside a relocation fund for them. They even gave the vendors first pick of newly-renovated spaces in the same area once they were completed. This offer was a token gesture because the petit black, Latino, and Asian businesses could not afford the increased rental prices. "This is my life here...That's a total investment. You can't put a price tag on that," a black businessman told the *Times-Dispatch*. He was wrong because a $70 million price tag was, in fact, placed on his lifetime investment. This would be the cost of fully ridding Richmond of the marketplace and its architectural handshake. The city council promoted the obvious slum-clearance project as the beginning of a series of downtown renovations. But Richmonders knew better. Areas in Richmond were then, and are now, judged by the color of its inhabitants. Because blacks were its most business owners and patrons, the marketplace never had a chance to succeed. This demolition was more than an economic failure. It was city government's acknowledgement that they, alone, could not fix Richmond's racial issues. That is why, in the words of a white Richmond Renaissance executive, "It has become a symbol of failure and it must come down." A black marketplace vendor perfectly encapsulated

[69] "Council Endorses Downtown Hotel Project," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 25, 2001; and "Remaking Downtown: Farewell to Marketplace," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 26, 2001, (*Valentine Museum Press Clippings*).

local race relations and the city's motivation to rid the landscape of the marketplace when she said: "Who shops here? It's not white people. It's black people."[70]

Although the Bridge of Unity was removed from Richmond's physical landscape, its planning created a symbolic *Bridge of Unity* between white and black leaders. Project One and the Sixth Street Marketplace helped cultivate equitable interracial networks between leaders in a city where interracialism had previously been shrouded in white supremacy. From here, black and white leaders focused less on its racial differences and more on fixing the city's many issues. They were not always united. However, when issues arose, leaders did not see race as a point of division, but as foundation for reconciliation and healing. If this decade illustrated nothing else, it showed that Richmond leaders were well-ahead of the populace in acknowledging and working through racial issues. The legacy of this accomplishment would not be seen in the 1980s, but a decade later when city residents used their divisive history to help redeem Richmond's, and eventually the nation's, mortal soul.

[70] "Marketplace Plan Saddens Tenants," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 27, 2001; and "City Offers $30,000 to Stores: Hopes They Would Remain Downtown," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 18, 2002, (*Valentine Museum Press Clippings*).

CHAPTER 3

"RICHMOND'S UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATION," 1990-1998

On the northwest banks of the James River lies Oregon Hill, one of Richmond's oldest white residential communities. This mixed-income neighborhood was torn in half by suburban flight after World War II. The rift grew wider during the Civil Rights Era when local banks divested from the area. Oregon Hill was still a majority white neighborhood in the 1980s. However, divestment and middle-class flight left the neighborhood deeply impoverished. Around ninety percent of the homes were built before 1939. The majority of occupants were adults between the ages of eighteen and sixty-four, and they earned, on average, less than $14,000 annually. Over seventy percent of its occupants were renters who worked in the lowest rungs of Richmond's manufacturing and service industry. Almost half of the residents never attended high school. Less than a quarter of them finished high school, and even less earned college degrees. By the end of the twentieth century, Oregon Hill, for all intents and purposes, was the quintessential definition of a dying inner-city community.[1]

Oregon Hill received an unexpected stimulus package in the late 1980s. White liberal activists and black politicians, inspired by the revitalization fever in City Hall, promoted "community-based-efforts for neighborhood housing development through rehabilitation and purchase." This project was a part of several plans in the 1980s to reverse white suburban flight. Yet, its largest impact was felt among Richmond's working class. Regardless of color, working-class people were routinely denied mortgage loans in this decade. This assured that the majority

[1] Oregon Hill Summary Tape File 1G, The Neighborhood Revitalization Division of the Department of Planning and Community Development, *City of Richmond Neighborhood Statistics*, November 1985, Box 5, M303, (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia).

of Oregon Hill occupants remained renters, and not property owners. This all changed when the housing rehabilitation program used grants and donations to purchase, renovate, and resell dilapidated properties without profit. The housing plan provided many Richmonders the ability to purchase stake in their city for the first time ever. The largest beneficiaries were upwardly-mobile blacks, as they were disproportionately denied quality housing within the city as a whole, and Oregon Hill in particular.[2]

In spite of the housing rehabilitation program, Oregon Hill, by the 1990s, was still "mostly white and middle-to-low-income. Its fabric has been woven by generations of families whose roots remain there," the *Times-Dispatch* once said in 1990. The reason for this was simple. A current high-level black bureaucrat remembered that as a youth, "I was told to stay away from Oregon Hill. There is a part of town that is not safe for black kids; because you know, they're racist." Oregon Hill relished in being known as the most outwardly racist neighborhood in Richmond. In the 1990s, Confederate flags flew in front of homes and the South Pine Street entrance. A black police detective remembered a white Oregon Hill man telling his partner to "get these niggers away from me" when he tried to help with a gunshot wound. A black professor remembered that his friend, a black bus driver, was ordered to never drive through Oregon Hill. This order came not from Oregon Hill residents, but his employer. Residents had allegedly sent several letters to the bus company urging the driver to reconsider stopping in the

[2] Richmond's Vacant Housing Catalog: A Partial Listing of Vacant Houses Available for Purchase in Richmond, VA., Winter/Spring 1989; RBHC Abandoned Property Project, undated memo, "RBHC, Abandoned Property Project, 1989-1990," Box 18 M302, (*Mary Tyler Cheek McClenahan Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia); Proposal to Establish a Richmond Non-Profit Housing Corporation, March 1982; Julia Seward to Mr. Rayford Harris, March 14, 1983; Contributors, March 1983-December 1985; Home Base Proposal 1986, Home Base, 1984-1986, Box 19, (*Richmond Urban Institute Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia);"Local Housing Group Shows How its Done," *Richmond Afro-American*, April 13, 1985; "Banks to Start Low Income Housing Programs," *Richmond Times Dispatch June 2, 1985*, E1; "Look Before You Weld a Mallet," *Richmond News Leader*, September 7, 1984, A12 "Richmond Housing Program Approved for State Tax credits," *Richmond News Leader*, August 7, 1985, A26; and "Housing Counseling Office Opens," *Richmond African American*, August 10, 1985, 1.

neighborhood because *they* feared for his safety. All of Richmond knew that Oregon Hill was an anti-black area. Yet, a black grandmother named Celestine Edmonds jumped at the chance to own her first home in the summer of 1990. Its location was along South Pine Street in Oregon Hill. Edmonds's neighbors did not welcome her with baked goods or help moving in. Rather, she received smashed windows and notes on the front door telling her to "go home." Edmonds later told the *Richmond Afro-American* that "she had heard about Oregon Hill's reputation." Still, she insisted on becoming a homeowner where she could; and that place was Oregon Hill.[3]

Weeks after Edmonds settled into her home, a black teenager from Southside entered the neighborhood to steal someone's jeep. White residents jumped on the back of the vehicle to stop him, but their attempts were unsuccessful. This car theft intensified the community's hatred towards Edmonds. Her black house guests were often greeted with racial epithets upon entering and exiting her home. Edmonds's home was also heavily vandalized. A barrage of "smashed windows, verbal threats, racial epithets, [and] spray-painted KKK letters" graced her gate and front door one August morning. Edmonds later told the *Afro-American* that she "didn't realize things would get this bad." The local media and police directed a flurry of negative attention towards Oregon Hill and its history. Edmonds's white neighbors later covered the graffiti on the doorway and repaired the broken windows free of charge. "I've talked to a number of them and I'm certain black and white citizens can co-exist in Oregon Hill," a black councilman told the *Times-Dispatch*. When asked why they fixed Edmonds's home, an unnamed resident claimed

[3] "Oregon Hill Resident Believe Vandalism Had No Racial Bias," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 22, 1990, B-4; Phillip H. Brunson, III., Testimony in Growing Up in Civil Rights Richmond: A Community Remembers, (University of Richmond Museums, 2019), 64; Interview with Reginald Gordon, June 27, 2019; Interview with Dr. Rutledge Dennis, July 26, 2019; and "Terrorism Hits Blacks in Oregon Hill," *Richmond Afro-American*, August 25, 1990, 1.

that the hatred directed at Edmonds needed to end. After all, "we all got to live together [*sic*]," he said.[4]

"1103 Sunset Avenue," 1990-1993

Oregon Hill proved that almost three decades after the Modern Civil Rights Movement, Richmond remained a segregated city in body and spirit. Shortly after the incident, the biracial city council removed Confederate symbols from the city flag. This decision did not address why Richmond's racial issues revealed itself the most at the neighborhood level. Maybe City Hall should have looked towards the Carillon neighborhood, a mixed-race community located just two miles from Oregon Hill, on the dividing line between the middle-class Near West End and affluent Far West End. Carillon did not have to repair vandalized homes, or remove any Confederate flags from its entrance. It did not go through periods of divestment, decay, and physical rebirth; nor was it integrated by a special housing program. Carillon's history paralleled Richmond's transition "from a colonial frontier, to antebellum country estates; Gilded Age streetcar suburb to upscale Jazz Age development; site of a post-war housing boom to a hub for civil rights activism," a historian later documented.[5]

Carillon forged its own path in the 1960s and 1970s. When middle-class blacks began moving into the smaller, more affordable homes in the neighborhood, many white liberal residents resisted suburban flight and formed biracial civic organizations. This move insured that Richmond's race problems did not infiltrate Carillon. It was not easy, and their efforts were not

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[4] "Oregon Hill Resident Believe Vandalism Had No Racial Bias," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 22, 1990, B-4; "Terrorism Hits Blacks in Oregon Hill" and "Rebel Flag Flies Defiantly: Not All In Neighborhood Are Racists," *Richmond Afro-American*, August 25, 1990, 1.

[5] "City Nears Adoption of New Rebeless Flag," *Richmond Afro-American*, September 22, 1990, 1; "Creation of a New City Flag," Resolution 91-R183-170, July 22, 1991, (*Richmond City Hall Archives*); "Designating an Official Flag for the City of Richmond," Ordinance 1993-048-29, February 22, 1993, (*Richmond City Hall Archives*); and "Unfurling the History of The Flag," *RVA News*, February 24, 2014; and Elizabeth L. O'Leary, *The Carillon Neighborhood: A History*, (Richmond, Virginia: Carillon Civic Association, 2013), 1-29.

always successful. Some whites still opted to move out of the neighborhood. The majority of them stayed however, making Carillon the first neighborhood in America to be promoted by its residents, and later the National Historic Registry, as a haven of racial integration. Few outside of Richmond can image the former Confederate capital having such a community nestled just two miles away from the likes of Oregon Hill. Carillon residents entered each other's homes, dined, and communed on an interpersonal level. This was the only neighborhood in the city where whites and blacks openly hosted members of the opposite race. Whites and blacks felt so comfortable with each other that they often housed each other's out-of-town guests. A black Carillon resident once marveled at her neighborhood, telling a white neighbor that before she moved to Carillon, "nobody had ever asked if their white friends could stay in my house before."[6]

The centerpiece of this harmonious community was 1103 Sunset Avenue, a colonial-style home occupied by white liberals named Robert and Susan Corcoran. Robert was the son of an English dock worker. Susan was the daughter of a former Oxford professor who sent her to a black public school in Atlanta during the 1950s. The unlikely couple met while working for Moral Re-Armament, a non-profit, multi-faith organization designed to promote peaceful dialog between racial, ethnic, and national groups. The couple decided to bring Moral Re-Armament to Richmond after its historic 1977 election. However, they found trouble looking for a place to live. Richmond was residentially segregated, and the Corcorans were not going to perpetuate that cycle. The choice to live in Carillon came after they toured the neighborhood and some black residents invited them over for dinner. The Corcorans, who were neither Richmonders nor Virginians, understood that the races did not mingle in each other's homes. This event impressed

[6] Interview with Robert L. Corcoran, March 11, 2019; Interview with Susan Corcoran, May 7, 2019; Interview with Dr. Elizabeth L. O'Leary, June 26, 2019; and Carillon Neighborhood Historic District, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, National Park Service, (https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/15001045.pdf).

them enough to live in Carillon and "purchase a home that could function as a community center as well as a home" for Moral Re-Armament, Robert later said in an interview.[7]

The Corcorans settled into Carillon and hosted several interracial potlucks, barbeques, and block parties. Here, the most contentious issue was not race, but rather Susan's insistence that someone "please bring a vegetable, salad, or desert." When the Corcorans left the neighborhood to shop or pay bills, they were reminded of the drastic differences between Carillon and the rest of the city. Richmonders did not particularly care for Carillon's racial liberalism. A friend once told Robert and Susan that "white folks will not come into your house" because they lived in Carillon. This statement made more sense when the couple struggled to find interracially-ran civic groups outside of the neighborhood. The Corcorans asked local leaders about the shortage of biracial civic groups. Neither blacks nor whites cared to inform them that racial division touched almost every facet of city life. When the Corcorans asked Carillon residents about this, however, they were told that Carillon was truly an outlier in a city that had, as Robert called it, a *polite silence* about its race issues.[8]

This polite silence was as pervasive as it was complex. Most whites did not interpret Richmond's racial divide as a problem. Even blacks had grown accustomed to de facto segregation. Although less oppressive, it was quite similar to the days of Jim Crow. This dual quietude complicated the Corcorans' recruiting pitch for Moral Re-Armament. Yet, there were "enough people, within the community, who had a different vision for Richmond," Robert later said. That vision was a city where blacks and whites intentionally worked towards social

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[7] Every ordinance and resolution henceforth comes from the *Richmond City Hall Archives*; "Richmond-A Model City?," *New World News*, January 7, 1978, 1-7; Dialog at City Hall, June 9, 1989; Notes from the Monthly Meeting & Potluck Supper, January 5, April 6, May 4, June 1, July 6, September 15, 1990, "Richmond, 1977-1991," (*Initiative of Change Archives*, Richmond, Virginia); Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 12, 2019; Interview with Rob Corcoran, March 11, 2019; and Interview with Susan Corcoran, May 7, 2019.

[8] "Monthly Meeting & Potluck Supper, September 15, 1990, Richmond 1977-1991, File Cabinet #1, *(Initiatives of Change Archives*); and Interview with Rob Corcoran, March 11, 2019.

integration in every facet of life. Through reaching out to churches and the few responsive civic groups, the Corcorans found about fifteen whites and blacks to become the first members of Moral Re-Armament in Richmond. Most of them were college students, housewives, teachers, social workers, and community organizers; and one was the assistant city manager.[9]

In the mid-1980s, 1103 Sunset Avenue became the nucleus for a growing body of race healers. Robert and Susan built this body with food. "Those potluck dinners were an important foundational piece of building the network," Robert believes. The long discussions over fried chicken and deviled eggs exposed the Corcorans to the depths of Richmond's insular society. City residents had mastered workplace integration while churches, schools, and homes remained fortresses against any form of interracial communion. Yet, the Corcorans entered the city during "the most positive seasons racially in Richmond. I found white and black people very hopeful, and I had not seen that before I left," a black female reverend once said about Richmond in the late 1980s. Many of the earliest Moral Re-Armament members were interested in creating a racially harmonious city. The Corcorans felt that this was impossible because they were too blinkered by the city's racial culture. Many within the group harbored racial prejudices against one another. The Corcorans believed that this came from the members never creating meaningful life experiences across racial lines. Thus, they secured enough funding to help the Richmond members travel abroad together between 1983 and 1985.[10]

The overseas experiences helped the Corcorans see that the first Richmond delegation was "not the best pick from a recruiting point of view," Robert said reflectively. The blacks were young, lower-to-middle-class residents with very little citywide influence. The whites were just

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[9] Interview with Rob Corcoran, March 11, 2019; and Richmond Group To Caux and Liverpool 1983, Richmond 1977-1991, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*).

[10] Interview with Rob Corcoran, March 11, 2019; Interview with Susan Corcoran, May 7, 2019; and Interview with Dr. Paige Chargois, May 17, 2019.

the opposite. They were upper class, "predominantly elderly and predominantly conservative," Robert remembered. "They were happy to talk about reconciliation, they weren't so happy to talk about racism," he also said. This rather motley crew traveled to Europe, Africa, and Asia to participate in interracial seminars and meetings with foreign leaders. They made news headlines both at home and abroad. However, they grew frustrated with each other. "I had misgivings about the group. Some of us had been antagonists for years," a black member later said. These tensions reflected the cultural differences created by racial separation, and a collective frustration with the international mission. The Richmond members could not figure out how traveling overseas helped them fix racial division back home. Over time, they understood the Corcorans' plan. "We learned that when we talk about problems, what we must have is a spirit of sharing and a willingness to hear the other person," one white member later recalled. The delegation learned to resolve issues together, across racial lines, while they were outside of their comfort zones. This experience would serve them well in the future, as they would have to stick together to help heal a city that was quite comfortable with being broken. Even forty years later Robert still claims, "I don't think we could have done it if we did not have the international experience."[11]

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[11] Interview with Rob Corcoran, March 11, 2019; "Are We Free Enough to Care," *New World News*, March 13, 1982, 18; "Robert and Susan Corcoran," *New World News*, March 17, 1983, 3; To Mr. and Mrs. C. Burton and the Citizens of Richmond, Virginia, U.S.A., 1983; "Richmonders To Deliver Message to English City," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 30, 1983, A-9; "Fact Finding American Arrive in City," *Daily Post*, August 22, 1983;"Caux 1983," *News of Moral Re-Armament*, September 1983; "Richmond in Liverpool," *New World News*, September 17, 1983, 20; "A New Concept of Leadership," *News of Moral Re-Armament*, October 1983; "A New Leadership," Speech delivered in Liverpool, November 1983"US Conference, Who Leads The Leaders," *New World News*, December 24, 1983, 1-20; Unpublished Internal Memo, Susan Corcoran, January 9, 1984; Unpublished Internal Memo, R.L. Corcoran, February 13, 1984; "Unity in Diversity, Will Richmond Lead the Way," October 1984; "Unity in Diversity, Will Richmond Lead the Way," October 1984; Dr. Leon Sullivan, Opening Speech at the Moral Re-Armament Conference Unity in Diversity, November 16-18, 1984; Conference Program for Moral Re-Armament Conference Unity in Diversity, November 16-18, 1984; Untitled and Unauthored letter to Rob Corcoran, November 26, 1984; "Richmond Conference for Unity in Diversity," *New World News*, December 22, 1984, Richmond 1977-1991, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*); Zimbabwe 1984, folder in the *Initiatives of Change Archives*; and The Courage to Change Documentary, 1987, 15:53-18:07, *Initiatives of Change Film Archives*, (https://vimeo.com/196807122).

Before the overseas trip, Corcoran complained that "there needs to be a greater awareness of M[oral] R[e-]A[armament] as a force in the city." When the Richmond delegation returned, their work mushroomed and "so many white organizations, churches, as well as individual leaders in the Richmond area wanted to be a part of what we were doing," a black member recalled. The support from leaders -- who were also mending their own racial divides -- was, as another black member said, "a second punch." Public officials began attending the Corcoran's monthly potlucks. On a few occasions, Moral Re-Armament members from Europe and Africa visited 1103 Sunset Avenue. At one such potluck, which included both city officials and foreign visitors, the Corcorans showed the documentary entitled, "The Courage to Change." This twenty-seven minute film documented the transformational experience that Richmond delegation had while traveling overseas. The message was so powerful that the visitors disseminated copies to civic and political leaders around the city, state, nation, and Europe. It was not long before several organizations requested Moral Re-Armament's help to organize interracial dialogs around the country and in Europe. They encouraged grassroots organizations to mainstream interracial dialog. By doing this, Moral Re-Armament set the foundation for interpersonal relationships being an intentionally crucial step towards creating an interracial society. It was not long before Richmond became known to grassroots organizations in America and Europe as a city on the cusp of racial reconciliation.[12]

[12] Letter to Friends, March 4, 1986; Rob and Susan Corcoran to Ben Trotter, Virginia Brinton, Collie Burton, Terry Blair, and Betty Clarke, April 11, 1986; Operating Expenses for Richmond Center for Year of 1985; Rob and Susan Corcoran to Friends, July 10, 1986; "Richmond Launches Out," *MRA Newsletter*, December 1986; Brochure for "Open House To Meet A Multi-racial group from Richmond," October 11, 1987; Richmonders Visit Program, October 9-14, 1987; Brochure for The Courage to Change, October 25, 1987; Unpublished Letter from Rob Corcoran, October 26, 1987; Invitation to Lunch Dialogue with European Visitors, May 10, 1989; Dialog at City Hall, June 9, 1989, "Richmond 1977-1991," File Cabinet #1; City-Wide Workshop/Dialog, March 27, 1990, "Reports, 92-94," File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*); 1103 Sunset Avenue Guest Book, found in the Richmond home of Rob and Susan Corcoran, May 7, 2019; and Interview with Dr. Paige Chargois, May 17, 2019.

Moral Re-Armament's work paralleled other reconciliation efforts throughout the city. Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) created several programs to help improve its relationship with black residents in the early 1990s. The most impactful were the Adopt-a-School Program, VCU Mentoring Program, and Varieties of Undergraduate Experience Project. These efforts helped strengthen the pipeline between talented black students and the growing university. Seeing that "race will remain the most important issue in the area," the white staff from the Valentine Museum and the Virginia Historical Society also began including Richmond's racial history into their educational programs. "Particularly in the [19]90s, there was a greater push for diversity of audience," a local narrator remembered. Moral Re-Armament, while not having an official hand in creating these programs, had several members and supporters within these organizations.[13]

It was the height of Moral Re-Armament's influence that a black Church Hill reverend name Sylvester Turner became involved. He was born just three years before the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, a time where, as he stated, "you sort of knew your place in Richmond. Certain places were off-limits, primarily because of color." The United States Air Force took him away from the political turmoil of the 1970s. Turner returned to a more progressive Richmond in 1987. However, the removal of *colored only* signs did not mean the end of a racially divided city.

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[13] Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Visitors of Virginia Commonwealth University, January 1990-November 1995, (*Virginia Commonwealth University Online Archives*). Hereafter cited as *VCU Archives*; Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Visitors of Virginia Commonwealth University, May 18th and July 19th 1990, January 17th, July 18th, and November 1st 1991, May 15, 1992, May 21st and November 18th 1993, March 17th and September 22nd 1994, (*VCU Archives*); Valentine Museum Strategic Plan for the 1990s, December 17, 1990, (*Valentine Museum Archives*, Richmond, Virginia); "Wilder Statue Proposed," *Richmond Afro-American*, April 27, 1991; "Officials Reaffirm Commitment to Jackson Ward," *Richmond Afro-American*, May 11, 1991; "Civil Rights Heroes: Monuments Proposed," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 8, 1991; "African American Heritage Development Plan," September 3, 1991, African American Heritage Development Plan Pact, M303 Box 1 (*Richmond Renaissance Papers*); "Chamber Fights Its White Image," *Richmond Afro-America*n, September 7, 1991; "Virginia Museum of Fine Arts: Charges of Racism Accelerate," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 8, 1991; "Events Will Commemorate Walker," *Richmond Afro American*, June 27, 1992; "Museum Omits Black Artifacts" and "Valentine Museum Presents Free Film," *Richmond Afro-American*, July 11, 1992; Melvin L. Urofsky, "The Virginia Historical Society: The First 175 Years, 1831, 2006," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol.114, No.1, (Winter 2006), 185-200; Interview with Christy Coleman, June 25, 2019; and Interview with Bill Martin, July 23, 2019.

"Some of the [white] attitudes and mindsets were not in step with the law," Turner later said in a reflective and austere manner. These attitudes pushed Turner, by now an ordained minister, away from working with whites. He chose instead to head the Peter Paul Development Center, a non-profit organization that provided a safe space for after-school activities in the black Church Hill area. Turner took pride in developing Richmond's black youth. However, he realized that his refusal to work across racial lines limited the impact of his outreach efforts. "I was not engaging with people who were making decisions about these young people," he said regrettably. Turner did not initially make plans to join any interracial organizations. But he knew that he "needed to be at a table with individuals making decisions about the people in the community I loved," he said.[14]

Turner's desire to better serve black people led him to Moral Re-Armament. Peter Paul held its staff meetings at Richmond Hill, a Christian-based retreat center located in gentrified section of Church Hill. Richmond Hill was one of the only middle grounds in the city where leaders and reformers of both races met with one another. After a Peter Paul staff meeting concluded in spring 1990, Turner's associate told him that, "there is a group meeting around the corner that you might want to sit in on." That meeting was a Moral Re-Armament workshop on interracial dialog. Turner curiously joined the discussion. He admittedly cared little about the organization's mission. Turner, like other black reformers, saw the white do-gooders as a means to an end. "Around that table were individuals who were making decisions about the community that I cared the most about," he recalled. Turner knew that allying with Moral Re-Armament placed him in contact with prominent locals who could help him better serve his own

[14] Interview with Sylvester Turner, March 13, 2019.

community. Although he was more dedicated to interracial healing in later years, Turner honestly admitted forty-years later, "That's what drove me to do this work."[15]

Turner's background and authoritative tone about urban outreach created tensions between him and Moral Re-Armament. "I knew some things that they didn't know," he said confidently. Turner understood that dialog alone could not heal race relations. The other members valued his opinions. However, Turner failed to change their minds about the organizational agenda. For now, Moral Re-Armament would continue operating within Richmond geographically, but above it socially. They felt that placing whites and blacks together in interpersonal spaces was enough to help fix race relations. Turner's disagreement with this agenda left him on the outside looking in, both figuratively and literally. As the leadership was selecting a Richmond delegation to attend the Moral Re-Armament annual retreat in Caux, Switzerland in July 1990, Turner was not chosen. The very detailed and robust Moral Re-Armament archives are quite silent about the 1990 Caux retreat. However, Turner remembers that Moral Re-Armament's leadership was more willing to heed his advice once they returned from Europe. That change of heart came not from within the Richmond delegation, but from a group they encountered named the Black Teens for Advancement (BTA).[16]

BTA was nothing like the other seventy-three interracial delegations at the conference. They were not well-funded, interracially organized, or headquartered in a suburb like 1103 Sunset Avenue. They were a black inner-city organization located on Atlanta's Ponce De Leon Avenue, a highway connecting black underclass neighborhoods in DeKalb and Fulton Counties.

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Rob Corcoran to Board, June 1, 1990, "Reports 92-94, File Cabinet #1; Monthly Meeting & Potluck Supper, July 6, 1990; Monthly Meeting & Potluck Supper, September 15, 1990; Monthly Meeting & Potluck Supper, October 5, 1990; Monthly Meeting & Potluck Supper, November 9, 1990; Monthly Meeting & Potluck Supper, December 14, 1990, "Richmond 1977-1991," File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*)*;* and Interview with Reverend Sylvester Turner, March 13, 2019.

This corridor was a hub for violent street crimes that all-too-often spilled into the public schools. Black teenage males were the most impacted. Their dropout, suspension, and expulsion rates grew along with the city's crime rate. Twelve black male teachers formed BTA in 1989 with the mission to break the culture of violence that had run amok among black youth. Within a year, BTA's workshops, seminars, and extracurricular activities helped grow its membership to about 2,000 throughout the metro-Atlanta area. High schools with BTA members recorded a 40% decrease in violent crime. Even jails and juvenile detention centers invited BTA to hold anti-violence workshops and seminars. Their success generated notoriety and praise from the Atlanta NAACP, mayor's office, Morehouse College, and religious community. Recalibrating the attitudes and actions of inner-city youth was "rough, tiring, trying, taxing, and demanding," its founder once said in a news interview. However, he took solace knowing that, "it's easier than going to funerals, trials, and hospitals."[17]

After hearing about BTA from some friends in Atlanta, the Corcorans grew quite fond of them. Robert personally convinced the Moral Re-Armament international board to help sponsor their trip to Caux in 1990. "In positive ways, they turned the place out," a black Richmond member recalled. That same member continued that, "I don't remember a single complaint, except some of the [white] parents were scared out of their wits that their white girls would run off with one of them. That was the talk!" In spite of their urban dress and unpolished bravado, BTA mixed well within the refined social scene in Caux. Their message to the conference was

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[17] Rob Corcoran to MRA Board, October 29, 1990; A Brief History of BTA, undated; From The Black Teens for Advancement to Dr. W. Foster, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Department, Atlanta Public schools, undated letter; "There For The Young Black Male," *For a Change*, October, 1991, 12-13; "Black Teens Who Fight Violence," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 3, 1992; "Brothers with An Attitude," *Urban Family*, Fall 1993; "Anti-Hate Message Taken Abroad," *Atlanta Journal/The Atlanta Constitution*, September 24, 1993; Thomas E. Ager, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education in Atlanta Public Schools to Mr. Edward Johnson, January 18, 1994; and BTA Leadership Conference, February 19, 1994, BTA Folder, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Changes Archives*).

simple: "Move towards action, and not just talk." Until this point, Moral Re-Armament in Richmond and elsewhere focused most of its attention on dialog. However, BTA believed that activist programs were the key racial reconciliation. Their youthful vigor and powerful message pushed Moral Re-Armament to listen and learn from its activist members upon returning to Richmond.[18]

BTA challenged Moral Re-Armament to change its direction. "When they came back [to Richmond], they took on that challenge. And the good thing for me was that I was in the room, on the ground floor of that new challenge," Turner remembered. He and other black members helped transition the Moral Re-Armament branch into a subsidiary group called *Hope in the Cities*. This organization worked within Richmond's social paradigm to promote racial healing. They hosted a series of weekend forums, retreats and brown-bag meetings at Richmond Hill in 1991 and 1992. These retreats became the laboratories for white and black civic groups to openly discuss agendas and future projects. What became apparent to the 114 attendees was that there was a collective shift in the mindset of black and white reformers. They mostly agreed that newer programs and initiatives needed to promote, as a white member recalled, "the black leadership of white people."[19]

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[18] "Black Teens Visit in Hope of Healing," *News-Press*, March 27, 1994; "Believers Take Action" Memo from MRA Hope in Atlanta, undated; Dr. Ed and Harmon Johnson to Mayor Bill Campbell of Atlanta, Georgia, July 9, 1994, for more on the BTA, see the BTA Atlanta, File Cabinet #1; Interview with Reverend Sylvester Turner, March 13, 2019; and Private Letter to Board, April 26, 1990, HIC National 1990, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*).

[19] Meeting with Ben Campbell and Al Smith, Fall 1990; Monthly Meeting & Potluck Supper, October 5, November 9, and December 14, 1990; Rob Corcoran to Board, January 10, 1991; Internal Memo, January 28, 1991; Invitation to St. Paul's Episcopal Church Parish Hall, May 1, 1991; Notes from the National Urban Ministers Meeting in Chicago, January 14, 1991, HIC National 1990; To Participants in Hope in the Cities Forums, June 6, 1991; Rob Corcoran to HIC Board, June 21, 1991; Hope in the Cities-A Citizens' Initiative, undated; Proposal for Conferences/Retreats for Community Leaders, Undated; Minutes of Hope in the Cities Working Group, November 20, 1991, Reports 92-94, File Cabinet #4; Interview with Reverend Sylvester Turner, March 13, 2019; Notes from the National Urban Ministers Meeting in Chicago, January 14, 1991; and Hope in the Cities, A Discussion Paper, Leesburg, October 1991, HIC National 1991, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*).

That understanding of leadership came with more struggle than Hope in the Cities had planned for. Reverend Dr. Paige Chargois, a black female minister, knew personally how difficult it was to lead white people in Richmond. The Southampton County native, and longtime Richmond resident, was, by 1991, the national assistant director of Hope in the Cities, second only to Robert Corcoran. She watched the white Establishment and white residents shirk black leadership in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. That culture of resistance infiltrated civic organizations, and Hope in the Cities was not immune. She remembered being initially refused a leadership title after helping the organization gain legitimacy among black Richmonders. Chargois also recalled incidents where her authority was challenged by white staff members who were undoubtedly under her direction. From these experiences, those within Hope in the Cities learned that racial healing involved ideological reforms both inside and outside the organization.[20]

Chargois mentioned in an interview that "even then and sometimes now, when we'd say Hope in the Cities, they say 'oh oh you with Hope for the Cities?" This simple misnomer was quite intentional for some black Richmonders. "These [black] citizens cannot say *hope in*. The preposition is so important. They changed it to *hope for the cities* because they don't have a real sense that there is *hope in the city*," she believes. Chargois often told that story far and wide to many who would listen in the early 1990s. "That was one of the things that told me, too, that a lot of people had given up on Richmond," she said. The minister's own experiences made her feel that many Richmonders saw the organization, like the rest of the city, as incapable of real interracial leadership.[21]

[20] Interview with Dr. Paige Chargois, May 17, 2019.
[21] Ibid.

"The only way to have hope for the city is to stir up the hope in the city," she said. That was her mission when she hosted workshops and community dialogs between summer 1991 and winter 1992. Chargois remembered one meeting that was held between white and black female professionals at the Museum of the Confederacy. With the Lost Cause symbolism surrounding them, the women sat side-by-side and discussed their need to become active agents in racial healing efforts. Chargois was struck by one unnamed white woman saying that black and white women can only work together when whites acknowledged that blacks loved Richmond more than they did. This was a controversial comment given that white women's groups preserved much of Richmond's cultural heritage. The white woman explained that black Richmond's history of human rights activism reflected that they cared more for Richmond as a place. From that perspective, the black leadership of white people should be more accepted. The woman finished her monologue by saying that Hope in the Cities inspired her family to move back into Richmond from Henrico County. "When she started talking, I started crying," Chargois remembered. For the white woman, the move was a small way of correcting the generational damage of white flight. For Chargois and the other black attendees, this was proof that the racial healing movement was, indeed, alive and well. "There were white people who had not given up on Richmond. There were white people who did not just want to call it a chocolate city anymore," she said emotionally after recounting that story. Most black people at the time could only say that there was hope for the city. However, Chargois knew personally that "the attitudes of most white people had changed," and that there was in fact hope in the city.[22]

[22] Interview with Dr. Paige Chargois, May 17, 2019; "Community Activists Aims to Curb Exodus From Inner City Areas," *Richmond News Leader*, March 13, 1992, 8; Hope in Cities Lunch Forum, March 12, 1992, Richmond 1977-1991, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*). W. Asbury Christian, *Richmond: Her Past and Present*, (Richmond, Virginia: L.H. Jenkins Press, 1912), 206-10 and 416-33; and Virginius Dabney, *Richmond: The Story of a City*, (University of Virginia Press, 1990), 267-333.

That dynamic, where whites were more accepting of black leadership, evolved into the Healing the Hearts of America Conference in June 1993. Hope in the Cities sought to "begin the process of healing for the nation, through acts of repentance and forgiveness in the setting of the former capital of the Confederacy." Richmond Mayor Walter T. Kenney, who happened to be one of the city's first black city councilmen in the twentieth century, became the face of this conference. He assured that blacks and whites worked together as equals under his leadership. The mayor tapped into the informal interracial networks created by Project One and Sixth Street Marketplace -- both detailed in the previous chapter -- to secure biracial sponsors. White business, museums, and academic leaders backed him. Richmond's black grassroots organizations, on the other hand, needed more convincing. They had a natural distrust of white leadership and the blacks who worked with them. "We went to a number of places engaging individuals that had some notoriety…. [And] made sure that they could sit at the fifty-dollar meal table without having fifty dollars," Sylvester Turner said jokingly. With some coaxing, black grassroots organizations accepted the invitation and provided speakers, workshops, entertainment, and equipment for the conference.[23]

The conference's pièce de résistance was a walking history tour through Richmond's *untold* history. Its place in the conference reads as if it was divinely inspired. During a Richmond Hill forum, a group of black high school teens, accompanied by a black female teacher, were walking down East Grace Street. Reverend Dr. Benjamin L. Campbell, a minister at St. Paul's Episcopal Church and white liberal founder of Richmond Hill, left the forum and caught up with the group. "This was a really important moment in my life," he emotionally said in an interview.

[23] Reverend Sylvester Turner, March 13, 2019; Mayor Walter T. Kenney to Moral Re-Armament, July 20, 1992; Mayor Walter T. Kenney to Mr. Harry Jacobs of the Martin Agency and Ms. Grace Harris VCU Provost, February 24, 1993; Conference Update, May 17, 1993; and Agenda for Healing the Heart of America: An Honest Conversation on Race, Reconciliation, and Responsibility, Conference, for June 16-20, 1993, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Papers*).

Campbell approached the teacher and asked her what they were doing. She turned to Campbell, smiled and said "I am showing these students the unmarked historic sites in the East End of Richmond." Campbell, a decade longtime resident in the majority black Church Hill, said he "didn't know there were any unmarked sites." The teacher and students invited Campbell to participate in the tour. As he walked with them, Campbell realized that this was not an ordinary tour; she was not an ordinary history teacher, and that this was not an ordinary history.[24]

The group headed southeast from Richmond Hill towards 28th Street, where Chief Powhatan and his Indian federation lost control over the land that would later become the City of Richmond. The tour deviated south towards the Manchester Slave Docks where over 300,000 black Africans entered lifelong servitude in the same city where an American founding father once uttered the famous phrase, *Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death*. These were the same docks where a slave named Gabriel Prosser searched for his liberty, but ultimately found death. The tour proceeded less than five blocks northwest towards the dilapidated Lumpkin Slave Jail (also known as the Devil's Half Acre), where black men and women were routinely sentenced to capital punishment for resisting their inhumane bondage. As the tour concluded, Campbell quickly developed a more nuanced understanding of race relations in Richmond. The fight to heal the city was often stalled by the internalization of divided history that was hidden from plain sight. It was here where Campbell thought that Richmond's racial history needed to be on full display for the city and the world. This history, he believed, needed to help locals see racial

[24] Healing the Heart of America: An Honest Conversation on Race, Reconciliation, and Responsibility, Conference Flyer, June, 1993; Hope in the Cities Special Report from Richmond, Virginia, June 1993; 1993 PreConference, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*); Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 14, 2019; and Richmond Sponsoring Committee and Corporate Sponsors, found in a bound book of miscellaneous conference materials, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiative of Change Archives*).

separation as a systemic problem rooted in the nation's original sin of slavery, its successor Jim Crow, and the corollary of mythmaking disguised as public history.[25]

From here, the acknowledgement and public display of a painful history became Richmond's new path towards racial healing. Nancy Jo Taylor was the name of the teacher who assured that black Richmond students never forgot that. And because of this, Campbell stressed that he had "never forgotten her." She was an amateur historian who, like other black elders, preserved and passed down a counter narrative to Richmond's history as the founding settlement of a great nation and the former capital of an inspiring one. Campbell went out of his way to meet with Taylor at Richmond Hill throughout spring 1993. Together they unearthed over twenty unmarked historic sites around Richmond. Campbell then met with other Hope in the Cities members and asked if they could create "a walk through Richmond's history" at the conference, later named the *Unity Walk*. Campbell believed that the physical act of walking together through a painful history would hammer home the goals of the conference. Few members favored the idea. The rest thought that it would be a logistical nightmare to organize such an event. However, Campbell took the dissenting members to the unmarked sites and convinced them of the unity walk's importance. He remembered telling them that, "Racism had started in its worst form here, on this ground ...This was the place where the beginning of the end should take place."[26]

Before organizing what became the first ever Unity Walk, Campbell, the Corcorans, and other Hope in the Cities members met with the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* editorial team. The staff of mostly white men from the Far West End controlled the most polarized media outlet in

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[25] Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 14, 2019; and The Route Taken by The Richmond Unity Walk, June 1993, Unity Walk 1993, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*).

[26] Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 14, 2019; Interview with Robert Corcoran, March 11, 2019; and Healing the Hearts of America Conference Documentary, 3:50-3:54 and 4:25-4:40 (*Initiatives of Change Video Archives*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QJZRjPnw0I).

the city. Many residents, both white and black, saw the *Times-Dispatch* as the voice of the white West End Establishment --as detailed in chapters one and two. This history troubled the younger *Times-Dispatch* writers. After visiting numerous Moral Re-Armament and Hope in the Cities workshops and seminars, they wanted the *Times-Dispatch* to get behind the reconciliation movement. They contacted Hope in the Cities to help facilitate a dialog between themselves and their bosses. Instead of meeting in Richmond Hill or the *Times-Dispatch* headquarters, Campbell and the Corcorans tested the Unity Walk's affect. To their surprise, many of the older *Times-Dispatch* staff had never been to Church Hill, or any of the other historic non-white areas of the city. The tour generated a discussion about the newspaper's responsibility to the community. The older staff agreed that now was the time for them to become a more active partner in the progressive movements in Richmond. This meant that they would report on, and give front page privileges to, the events that Hope in the Cities hosted.[27]

[27] Interview with Robert Corcoran, March 11, 2019; Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 14, 2019; Corcoran, *Trustbuilding*, 209-12; "International Panel to Target Racism in Richmond," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 23, 1993, B6; "Conference Call, Richmonders Invite the World Here To Try To Heal the Hurt of Racism," *Style Weekly*, June 1, 1993, 14; "City's History All But Dictated That It Be Conference Site," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, May 30, 1993, B1 and B6; "Honest Conversation Can Heal a City," Editorial by Rob Corcoran, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 12, 1993, F7; "Unity Walk to Take Positive Steps," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 14, 1993, B1 and B7; "Unity Walk Was Emotional, Spiritual, Dramatic for Many," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 19, 1993, A1 and A3; "Walk for Unite" *Richmond Free Press*, June 14-26, 1993, 1; "Ability to Compete Globally Linked to Solving Racism," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 17, 1993; and "Healing of American Cities Can Start in Richmond" *Richmond Times Dispatch*, June 13, 1993, F7.

Healing the Heart of America

Mike Brown takes part in a bold attempt to face the racism in the soul of America.

On a sweltering August afternoon 15 years ago, a black postal worker and three colleagues were called to a closed door meeting in an office on Richmond's Main Street to face the city's leading bankers, lawyers and businessmen (whose net worth was estimated at $50 million).

Led by a civil rights lawyer, Henry Marsh, the four represented the new black majority on the recently-elected City Council. Marsh was Richmond's first black mayor; and that week had quietly told his white city manager to resign because of crippling policy differences.

The white power-brokers of this proud Virginian city told Marsh to back down or face the economic ruin of his city. If he fired the city manager, one of them warned, 'blood would run in the streets'.

The city manager did go. Richmond,

Figure 7: Front page of the 1993 Conference Newsletter. Courtesy of Robert L. Corcoran.

With whites, blacks, and the local media on-board, the Healing Hearts of America Conference commenced without a hiccup. Between June 16th and 20th, over 1,500 people from all over the world, fifty-six being mayors of American cities, flooded Richmond to hear from speakers, attend seminars, see talent shows, and participate in workshops. These events helped establish Richmond as the "gateway to the spirit of healing and partnership that America needs," the mayor said to conclude the first half of the conference. The second half began with the Unity Walk, an event that ended up being "such a Richmond occasion," Campbell said reflectively. For five hours in the blistering ninety-five-degree heat, whites and blacks walked side-by-side to absorb the emotional reenactments of slavery in Richmond. "The process of healing for the

nation, through acts of repentance and forgiveness in the setting of the former Capital of the Confederacy, [meant] laying the legacy of slavery to rest," the Richmond mayor said. Campbell remembered saying to another black attendee at the Unity Walk that "we shouldn't be able to do this" in Richmond. In previous years, getting Richmonders to honestly discuss race relations was akin to pulling teeth without anesthesia. Now, blacks and whites walked together and discussed how past racism informed the city's current racial divide. The Unity Walk was a synergizing moment that allowed blacks and whites to, at least temporarily, cultivate a singular identity. Along the historic paths of East End and downtown, they were not black or white Richmonders. They were just Richmonders. Paige Chargois candidly remembered walking with a white clergywoman from a Far West End church and thinking that for once, "I am capable as a person of commemorating my historic enemy."[28]

To Chargois, the Unity Walk "legitimized the experience that….we had the capacity and the capability of moving beyond just being the former capital of the Confederacy." The Richmond City Council later turned the Unity Walk's trail into an official slave trail with the help of "a city-wide commission, foundation money, and the involvement of major institutions such as VCU, and the museums," a Hope in the Cities internal memo stated. This effort further riveted the spirit of reconciliation into Richmond's landscape, public history, and eternal soul. Robert Corcoran remembers that before the Unity Walk, "generally speaking people were not talking about race, and certainly there was no discussion about Richmond's racial history; none!" However, Campbell remembered that after the Unity Walk, "nearly everybody in town was

[28] Rob Corcoran to Ben Campbell and Janine Bell, June 1993; "Richmond Unity Walk" Program June 1993, 1-4; Healing the Hearts of America Conference Brochure and Conference Program found in a bound book of miscellaneous conference materials, File Cabinet #1; and Hope in the Cities Special Report from Richmond, Virginia, June 1993; National Hope in the Cities Coalition, December 1993, "Newsletters and Releases" Scrapbook, File Cabinet #4, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*). For the positive responses about the conference, see folder entitled, 1993 Conference in File Cabinet #1, (*Hope in Cities Archives*). For more on the conference, see the bound book of miscellaneous conference materials in File Cabinet #1 of the *Initiatives of Change Papers*.

asking themselves whether they were racially prejudiced or not." Local civic groups began using Richmond's history of slavery to facilitate talks about current race relations. They found that talking systemic racism to conservative whites became easier when the discussion was shrouded in a distant and undeniable history. Campbell stated it best by saying, "talking about the history of the 1600s and 1700s enabled me to say things that I could not say if I were talking about the 1900s or the twentieth century."[29]

From this experience, Chargois learned that, "on the other side of complexity is simplicity." Before Hope in the Cities, Richmond was a city struggling with the complexities of its racial problems. Separation and silence was so deeply-ingrained in the city's social fabric that very few people could imagine a day where blacks and whites would have honest conversations about race. Hope in the City moved them past those complexities and helped them realize that, as a local professor said, "Painful history can become a source for healing." With Hope in the Cities opening up discussions about race, there was hope that the city could tackle the other issues affected by it. Prior to the group from 1103 Sunset Avenue, in the words of Paige Chargois, "there was no other entity that offered that possibility, not even the church."[30]

"Do We Put a Black Man on Monument Avenue?" 1993-1995

Robert Corcoran once said that "using history as a catalyst to break the cycle of guilt and anger, and to connect communities long divided, could be Richmond's unique contribution to the nation." He was correct. Richmond's Unity Walk used the painful history of slavery to begin a citywide investigation into the roots of its race problem. Even more impactful was its effect on

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[29] Notes From Breakfast Meeting with Sponsoring Committee, September 16, 1993; Some Ideas for Future Directions, Undated 1993, Reports '92-94, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiative of Change Archives*); Interview with Robert Corcoran, March 11, 2019; and Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 12, 2019.

[30] Working Committee Memo for the Richmond Unity Walk, May 14, 1997, Unity Walk/Slave Walk, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Changes Archives*); and Interview with Dr. Paige Chargois, May 17, 2019.

other cities struggling with racial division. “This example of walking through history has brought national attention to Richmond. Cities around the country are adapting this model to their own needs,” Corcoran happily wrote in an organizational memo. Unity walks began sprouting up in cities all over the country. However, Richmond still struggled to deal with its own. Using history to acknowledge a race problem was one thing. Understanding how to use history to correct a past injustice and change the collective identity was another issue entirely. Most Richmonders did not know it at the time, but their racial reconciliation movement began at 1103 Sunset Avenue in the Carillon neighborhood. By the early 1990s, this area helped define Richmond’s West End as a place leading the city in race relations.[31]

One should ask a white man named Thomas Chewning about the West End. The now retired CEO of Dominion Energy, and avid booster of the University of North Carolina athletics, grew up adjacent to the area in the 1950s. Chewning's earliest memories of the West End revolves around Byrd Park. It was, and is, located across the street from the storied Carillon neighborhood. The Chewnings spent many summers on its three man-made lakes, jogging paths, and enormous lawns. The park also had sixteen tennis courts where the young Chewning earned his stripes as one of the city’s best tennis players. For people in Carillon, the West End was home. For the young Chewning, the West End was a place of enjoyment, competition, and eventually, revelation.[32]

After years of dominating Richmond’s amateur tennis circuit, the fourteen-year-old was invited to a mid-Atlantic tennis tournament in Wheeling, West Virginia. Chewning remembered the day when he told a fellow competitor that his white friend from Richmond would win the

[31] Working Committee Memo for the Richmond Unity Walk, May 14, 1997, Unity Walk/Slave Walk; Internal Memo, Undated, Unity Walk/Slave Walk, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*).
[32] Interview with Tom Chewning, May 10, 2019.

entire event. The young man responded, "No I think Arthur Ashe is going to win the tournament." Chewning then looked up at the leaderboards and saw "Arthur Ashe from Richmond, Virginia" ranked number one in the tournament. Chewning had spent years maneuvering through Richmond's amateur tennis circuit, and he had never heard of Arthur Ashe. Chewning then asked those around him to help locate the number one ranked player so that they could meet. One person obliged his request. Chewning remembered following the other tennis player into the sparsely populated cafeteria where Ashe was the only person sitting at a table. Once Chewning saw him, he knew immediately that Ashe's race had prevented them from meeting each other. "I was further embarrassed to think that I didn't know who he was and he knew who I was," Chewning later said. Before Chewning greeted him, Ashe said that he followed Chewning's career in the *Times-Dispatch*, and that his father had done odd jobs for affluent whites in Chewning's neighborhood. The former Dominion CEO often reflects back on that day as if it were yesterday. "For the first time in my life, I had a real connection to the system of segregation."[33]

The West End was Richmond's cultural center during Jim Crow. However, blacks did not go there, that is "unless you were a maid, gardener, or a service worker" a black resident not-so fondly remembered. The perfectly manicured grass, tall oak trees, and colonial/gothic-style homes were staples of society to Chewning. To Ashe, and black children like him, the West End was a reminder of the decadent life that was denied to them in Richmond. After meeting Ashe, the West End was no longer just a place of enjoyment and competition to Chewning. It was now a barrier between him and the wider world. The two tennis stars had lunch together in the cafeteria. They spoke little about the West End, but a tremendous amount about Richmond as a

[33] Ibid.

whole. They learned that had it not been for segregation, the two would have undoubtedly known each other. Chewning and Ashe both played multiple sports, listened to the same music, and liked the same movies. Their conversations evolved from one subject to another, eliminating the walls that segregation had placed between them. For the first time, Arthur was communing with a white child from Richmond, and Chewning was communing with a black child from Richmond. "From there on we became close friends," Chewning remembered.[34]

Ashe and Chewning stayed in contact after returning home. More than anything, they wanted to play tennis, the sport that had brought them together. However, these teens returned to Richmond in 1959. Not only were the schools resisting the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, but public accommodations remained separate and unequal. For Chewning, that meant playing tennis at the all-white Byrd Park while Ashe trained at the all-black Brook Field Park. Chewning had enough courage to ask his father, a well-known physician, to allow him and Ashe to secretly play tennis together. His father understood the social stigma attached to consorting with blacks at any level that suggested racial equality. However, the elder Chewning approved his son's request. The only stipulation was that he would have to go to Brook Field to avoid being seen by other whites. "I integrated the black side of town," Chewning said jokingly while recounting the experience. He and Ashe trained weekly at Brook Field under the watchful eye of Ashe's father, a man who had garnered much respect among the city's white elite. These training sessions ended when Ashe was continually barred from West End tennis tournaments. Ashe later complained in his memoir, "In Richmond ...the most powerful local tennis officials had tried to

[34] Eric Allen Hall, *Arthur Ashe: Tennis and Justice in The Civil Rights Era*, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 6; and Interview with Tom Chewning, May 10, 2019.

kill my game by shutting me out of any competition." Hence, the prodigy left the city the following year.[35]

After Ashe's departure, he and Chewning embarked on separate life courses. "Arthur's tennis got better, mine didn't," Chewning accurately assessed. He stayed in Richmond and starred on the tennis team at Thomas Jefferson High School. Chewning later accepted a position on the tennis team at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Upon graduation, he got married and later earned a coveted Masters in Business Administration from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. Between 1976 and 1987, Chewning became a father and corporate executive in Charlotte and Seattle. In 1988, he returned to Richmond and became an important member of the Establishment by heading the Virginia Electric and Power Company (now Dominion Energy).[36]

Ashe attended an integrated high school in St. Louis, Missouri for his senior year. He earned athletic scholarships from universities across the nation; namely Harvard, Yale, the University of Virginia, and the University of North Carolina. Ashe turned them all down to attend the University of California at Los Angeles. After leaving Westwood, Ashe became the first black person selected to the U.S. Davis Cup team, as well as the only black person to win a Grand Slam title at Wimbledon. This path to stardom changed Ashe's attitude towards racial activism. "Blacks did not publicly protest much in Virginia when I was growing up; and they protested even less in my father's household," he later said in an interview. The genteel, soft-spoken tennis star became a social activist in the 1970s. Ashe's public protest against apartheid South Africa landed him in jail twice over the course of his career. "I was then, and I am now, no

[35] Interview with Tom Chewning, May 10, 2019; Hall, *Arthur Ashe,* 1-33; Arthur Ashe and Arnold Rampersad, *Days of Grace, A Memoir*, (Knopf, 1993), 61; and Interview with William Mason, July 22, 2019.
[36] Interview with Tom Chewning, May 10, 2019.

radical, but many people in the tennis leadership, as in other sports, are terrified of taking a stand on political affairs," he once told *Jet Magazine*. This was a response to losing his captaincy of the U.S. Davis Cup Team in 1968 after criticizing the White House's refusal to help advance the rights of blacks at home and abroad.[37]

Although life took Ashe and Chewning in separate directions, they kept in contact through mail and telephone. The two of them often met for lunch and dinner whenever they were in the same city on business. By the late 1980s, Ashe had become less estranged from his hometown. While mainly residing in New York City, he opened a tennis shop in Henrico County's Regency Square Mall, became a columnist for the *Times-Dispatch*, supported the city's erection of the Arthur Ashe Center in the decaying Northside, and received numerous honors and appointed positions throughout the city. Ashe returned to the West End in the next decade to help liberal whites start Virginia Heroes Incorporated. This biracial group focused on mentoring at-risk black youth, vowing to "inundate these children with positive role models," Ashe said in its mission statement. Three years later, the group secured state and private grants to enlist over forty Virginia-born celebrities to mentor about 600 black inner city children.[38]

Ashe's urban outreach came to a screeching halt when pneumonia -- which he obtained from a decade-long battle with HIV -- took his life on February 6, 1993. State and city leaders

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[37] Ibid; Ashe and Rampersad, *Days of Grace*, 100-12; and Hall, *Arthur Ashe*, 262.

[38] "Schools Want $84.4 Million," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, January 6, 1982, 18; "Ashe Center Will End Crackerbox Rivalries," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, February 12, 1982, F1 and F4; "Hometown Favorite," Ad for *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 22, 1982, 39; "Arthur R. Ashe, Sr., Succumbs: Father of Ex-Tennis Star Was 68," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 21, 1989, B-3; "Ashe to Get VCU Honor," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 29, 1989, B3; "Ashe Aims for U.S. With Inner-City Service," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 29, 1989, C1; "City Expects to Score Big Profits from Sporting Events," Richmond Times-Dispatch, February 22, 1991, 1; "Heroes To Help Richmond Pupils," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 15, 1991, B3; Plan for Follow-Through? Mentoring Phase, Virginia Heroes, Inc., undated; Proposal Continued Support of the Virginia Heroes, Inc., Project: An Anti-Drug and Drop-Out Prevention Program Relating to High Risk, Inner-City Youth, 1992-1993, "Virginia Heroes 1992-1996," Box 108, M302, (*McClenahan Papers*); "Heroes Will Foster Staying in School," *Richmond News Leader*, April 18, 1991, 15; "Sixth Graders to head Heroes Success Stories," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, November 12, 1991, B3; Hall, *Arthur Ashe*, 72 and 117; and Ashe and Rampersad, *Days of Grace*, 11.

assured that Ashe had a public funeral. They also issued an official "appreciation for the life of Arthur Robert Ashe, Jr., and sorrow at his passing" on behalf of Richmond. The city council proposed to rename streets and parkways after Ashe. For reasons unknown to those outside of the council, none of the proposals were approved. Virginia Heroes suggested the city council help erect a statue in his honor. They were not too eager at first. However, the council finally caved after a series of private meetings. In April 1993, they helped fund the $400,000 statue and created a nine-member site selection committee to "study an appropriate memorial [site] for the life of Arthur Ashe, Jr."[39]

In December, one of Ashe's white friends, who was also a member of Virginia Heroes, completed the twelve-foot bronze statue in his honor. However, there was no consensus on its final resting place. Virginia Heroes wanted the statue in the West End, just outside of Byrd Park. This site would help rectify the city's history of excluding Ashe and other black athletes from that area. It would have also reinforced the area's new reputation as the hub of reconciliation in Richmond. This plan had tremendous support within the site committee. However, some black city council members were more ambitious. They wanted to place the statue on Monument Avenue; the West End's, Richmond's, and the Lost Cause South's most hallowed ground. Black leaders later admitted that they wanted the Ashe statue to reflect that "Richmond is changing. We have changed…, we're a city for all people….it's more than symbolic. It's real." This proposal

[39] "Expressing Appreciation for the Life of Arthur Robert Ashe, Jr., and Sorrow at His Passing," Resolution 93-R17A-30, February 8, 1993; "Tribute to Arthur Ashe, Jr.," February 10, 1993, Arthur Ashe Folder Series XI Box 3, (*Governor Wilder's General Files*, L. Douglas Wilder Library, Virginia Union University, Richmond, Virginia); "Thousands Pay Tribute to Arthur Ashe," *Richmond Afro-American*, February 20, 1993, 1; "Commending Various State and City Officials for Their Roles in Arranging the Memorial Service for Arthur R. Ashe, Jr.," Resolution 93-R45-40, February 22, 1993; and "Creating a Committee to Study an Appropriate Memorial for The Life of Arthur Ashe, Jr.," Resolution 93-R38-81, April 13, 1993. For more resolutions detailing the various appointments to the "Appropriate Memorial Committee," see https://richmondva.legistar.com/Legislation.aspx.

was quite unpopular among the city's elite. Hence, the seriousness of the proposal remained a secret for much of 1993 and 1994.[40]

For most of Richmond's history, Monument Avenue was a dirt road that led to the rural westward countryside of Henrico County. That changed in the late 1880s when the mostly white city council sought to enshrine Richmond among the nation's elite cities through the creation of a grand avenue. Over the next thirty years, city government carved Monument Avenue into the landscape. Development continued when the streetcar line connected the developing district to the industrializing downtown. With its wide streets and grand homes, the avenue quickly became the residential hub of Richmond's New South Establishment. Doctors, lawyers, businessmen, politicians, city officials, and scientists purchased and constructed elaborate homes along the grand tree-lined avenue. Black Richmonders, who were being effectively segregated and disenfranchised at the time, did not enjoy this real estate expansion. The city council did not codify neighborhood segregation until 1911. However, Monument Avenue, and its adjacent West End streets, was reserved for whites only. It is from these critical years, between 1890 and 1930, when Richmond transitioned from the Old South to the New South, that the West End in general, and Monument Avenue in particular, became the residential heart of the city's affluent merchant and banking class.[41]

The cornerstone of this white's only avenue was the Robert E. Lee statue, erected in 1890. The selection of Lee was significant at the time. As the nation moved into the twentieth century, the former Confederate general became a mainstream hero in the white American consciousness. He was once seen by many white Americans as a Virginia gentleman-turned-

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[40] "Ashe Due Spot Among Heroes," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 13, 1995, 1 and A8.

[41] Sarah Shields Driggs, Richard Guy Wilson, and Robert P. Winthrop, *Richmond's Monument Avenue*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 13-35 and 97-138.

traitor. Decades after his death, Lee became a bipartisan figure of honor, civility, and white manhood. His image facilitated the mythmaking that grounded the Lost Cause narrative -- a belief that the Civil War was a northern attack on the noble southern agrarian lifestyle, and not the institution of slavery -- was founded and cultivated. As one scholar wrote, "Richmond was the Mecca of the Lost Cause, and Monument [Avenue] was the sacred road to it." This narrative inspired southern authors and historians to romanticize slavery, and its underpinning of white supremacy, as the natural function of race relations. "In many ways the Lost Cause took on the trappings of a civic religion," a historian later said. Monument Avenue was both its cathedral and insignia. Over the next forty years, local women's groups and former Confederate soldiers helped erect statues to J.E.B. Stuart (1907), Jefferson Davis (1907), Stonewall Jackson (1919), and Matthew Maury Fontaine (1929). To this day, Monument Avenue has the densest concentration of Confederate statues of any city in America. These grand statues became implanted in the subliminal mind of the white elite. Whenever black Richmonders pressed for their civil rights, Monument Avenue reminded the oligarchs that, as a black Richmond activist once joked in the 1890s, "The Southern white folks is on top [*sic*]."[42]

Black Richmonders opposed everything Monument Avenue stood for since the cornerstone was laid for the Lee statue. In 1887, the remaining few black councilmen voted against allocating public funds towards its construction. With city employment becoming harder

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[42] Driggs, Wilson, and Winthrop, *Richmond's Monument Avenue,* 55-93*;* Thomas L. Connelly, *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society*, (Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 3-12; C.R. Wilson *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause*, (University of Georgia Press, 1980), 29; Matthew Mace Barbee, *Race and Masculinity in Southern Memory: A History of Richmond, Virginia's Monument Avenue*, (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books. 2014), 19-36; "Stand Firm," *Richmond Planet*, June 7, 1890, 2; Johnathan Lieb, "The Witting Autobiography of Richmond, Virginia: Arthur Ashe, the Civil War, and Monument Avenue's Racialized Landscape," in Richard H. Schein, ed., *Landscape and Race in the United States*, (Routledge, 2006), 187-207; Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth Century America*, (Princeton University Press, 1997), 149-53; and Marvin T. Chiles, "Black Richmond Activism Before the Modern Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of African American History*, Volume 105, No.1 (Winter 2020), 1-27.

to come by, black laborers helped erect Monument Avenue's capstone project. Yet, a local black newspaper editor mentioned that "should the time come, [they will] be there to take it down." Monument Avenue became a prime target of obliteration during the Civil Rights Era. "If certain elements in the City of Richmond were to take over the city government they would tear down all the monuments on Monument Avenue," a white delegate from Richmond told the General Assembly. As blacks entered Richmond City Hall, the Establishment deeded the Confederate statues to the overwhelmingly white and conservative state legislature. Issues arose again in the 1990s when some black councilmen wished to add black heroes to the avenue. They felt, as the *Washington Post* stated, "Black achievers would be a potent symbol of racial progress and healing." The measure failed in the biracial city council, leading one white local to acknowledge that, "It's a Confederate boulevard. It's not about American history, it's not Civil War history, it is Confederate history."[43]

The Confederate statues along Monument Avenue outlasted the Jim Crow regime that put them in place. In the process, the city's collective identity became enslaved to the racist baggage associated with the Lost Cause, and Tom Chewning knew it. That is why he was unsure if he should help erect a statue to Arthur Ashe along the avenue. Chewning remembers taking a phone call in 1994 from a Virginia Heroes representative. They told him that the organization wanted to erect a statue in Ashe's honor, and that Monument Avenue was one of the possible locations. Chewning did not commit to anything other than calling them back at another time. Virginia

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[43] Marie-Tyler McGraw, *At the Falls: Richmond, Virginia, and Its People*, (University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 209; "Stand Firm," *Richmond Planet*, June 7, 1890, 2; John Moeser and Rutledge B. Dennis, *Politics of Annexation*: *Oligarchic Power In A Southern City* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Pub. Co, 1982), 77 and 100; Johnathan Lieb, "Separate Times, Shared Spaces: Arthur Ashe, Monument Avenue and the Politics of Richmond, Virginia's Symbolic Landscape," *Cultural Geographies* 9 (3). 2002, 293: 286–312; "Monument Issue Divides Old Dominion," *Washington Post*, September 29, 1991, (https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1991/09/29/monumental-issue-divides-old-dominion/8877114d-7f2b-48e2-b764-6bb6fc86e2ec/?utm_term=.0051c1c8af9f).

Heroes knew all about Chewning's and Ashe's lifelong friendship. Another person who knew about it was Chewning's wife. "What are you thinking, of course you're going to do that," she told him. Chewning later called Ashe's brother to confirm his involvement with the plan. From then on, Chewning agreed to help Virginia Heroes and the city council erect the statue in Ashe's honor, regardless if it was on Monument Avenue or not.[44]

From here the process became more complex. The city council, Virginia Heroes, and Chewning kept their site selections close to the chest. They met with city planners and several well-connected residents about the statue's placement, assuring everyone that Monument Avenue was one of the many locations that they were considering. Whites who lived along the avenue mostly supported the idea of having the Ashe statue. Their responses removed all doubt from those involved that the statue would be placed on Monument Avenue. A *Times-Dispatch* editor had gotten wind of the pending decision. He called Chewning and told him that the newspaper's ownership would use the editorial page to protest the Monument Avenue selection. For what it was worth, the same editor also told Chewning that he believed the statue belonged there.[45]

With the white power structure seemingly divided, some committee members felt pressured to change the site location. One person suggested that the committee sponsor a series of public meetings to gain the residents' support for any decision they made. The sculptor prophetically retorted, "I do not agree that public airing will reduce controversy and

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[44] Interview with Tom Chewning, May 10, 2019; and "Friend Recounts Segregation Days: Two Met at West Virginia Tourney," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, February 11, 1993, A14.

[45] Interview with Tom Chewning, May 10, 2019; Virginia Heroes Incorporated, Fundraising Report, 1992-1993, February 8, 1993; Advisory to the Media, Governor Wilder Announces National Portrait Gallery's acceptance of Richmond's Artist's Arthur Ashe Portrait, undated; Lawrence T. Vetter to Timothy G. Oaskman, Esquire, "Re: Committee to Study an Appropriate Memorial for the Life of Arthur Ashe, Jr.," May 31, 1994; and Minutes of Virginia Heroes, Inc. Board of Directors Meeting June, 27, 1994, Virginia Heroes, 1992-1996, Box 108, M302, (*McClenahan Papers*).

emotionalism." Chewning and the other committee members also felt that including the Richmond public would prolong the already increasingly difficult selection process. "There will not be any public hearings or town meetings on the site selection issue prior to our committee making its recommendations. The decision continues to trouble me," the dissenting member said. By December 1994, the committee finally agreed in secret to place the statue on Monument Avenue. The same member noted that regardless of their solidarity, "the public will question the recommendation."[46]

Chewning remembered that the committee agreed to market the Ashe statue as an *addition* to the avenue, and not a "big frontal assault on the Confederate past." This plan did not matter, as hours after the announced site selection, hundreds of residents called City Hall in protest. "The African American Community is divided. The white community is [also] divided" on the issue, a site committee member later told the *Times-Dispatch*. This statement was partly true. Although the *Times-Dispatch* later published polls and editorials portraying biracial disagreement with the decision, most blacks wanted to see Ashe's image along the avenue. The few dissenters felt that Ashe was too honorable to share space beside Confederate icons. Whites, some of them very liberal, found every excuse not to honor Ashe on the avenue. "Do we put a black man on Monument Avenue," a white man rhetorically asked. He later stated that, "of course...but Ashe is the wrong man." Even the white artistic community, who donated a fair

[46] Interview with Tom Chewning, May 10, 2019; Lawrence T. Vetter to Timothy G. Oaskman, Esquire, Re: Committee to Study an Appropriate Memorial for the Life of Arthur Ashe, Jr., May 31, 1994; Minutes of Virginia Heroes, Inc Board of Directors Meeting June, 27, 1994, "Virginia Heroes, 1992-1996," Box 108, (*McClenahan Papers)*; "Wilder: Put Ashe on Monument-Ex Governor Helps Drive For Statue, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, December 6, 1994, B3; "Va. Heroes Continue Dream With Unveiling," *Richmond Afro-American*, December 8-14, 1994, 1; and Tim Kaine to The Virginia Heroes Site Selection Committee for the Arthur Ashe Monument, February 14, 1995, Virginia Heroes, 1992-1996, Box 108, M302, (*McClenahan Papers*).

amount of money to the project, claimed that the $400,000 statue was not aesthetically pleasing and too "second class" to be on the avenue.[47]

The *Times-Dispatch* stayed true to its mission and became the bullhorn for Richmond's white opposition. The paper was judicious in only printing letters that couched its opposition as a protection for Richmond's Confederate history. The *Times-Dispatch* failed, however, to capture the full nature of resistance. The site committee received coercive pressures to reverse their decision. For city councilmen representing the West End, re-election depended on opposing the selection. Some corporate executives threatened to pull their funding from future projects and black political campaigns if the statue ended up on Monument Avenue. It was later alleged that the current mayor -- Leonidas Young -- was offered a bribe to keep the statue off the Avenue. Richmond was one of the first cities to use its painful history to heal race relations. However, opposition to the Ashe statue proved that, as the *Richmond Afro-American* said, "Phrases such as racial harmony and healing of the past floated around the city like pollen…. [But] now the reality [is] that the city is far from healed or harmonic."[48]

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[47] Paul DiPasquale to Committee Members Virginia Heroes Site Selection Committee for the Arthur Ashe Monument, February 17, 1995; Virginia Heroes Announces Final Location of Ashe Monument, June 22, 1995, Virginia Heroes, 1992-1996, Box 108, *McClenahan Papers*; To Authorize The City Manager, Robert C. Bobb, For and on Behalf of The City of Richmond, To Accept The Design from Paul DiPasquale, Artist, of a Statue and Monument Honoring Arthur Ashe, Resolution 95-R135-124, May 8, 1995; Barbee, *Race and Masculinity*, 91-100; "Ashe Memorial Site Selection Near," *Richmond Afro-American*, February 23-March 1, 1995, 1; "Ashe Due Spot Among Heroes," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 13, 1995, 1 and A8; To Approve the Intersection of Roseneath Avenue and Monument Avenue as The Location for The Arthur Ashe Memorial Statue and Monument, Resolution 95-R225-175, July 17, 1995; "World Watches City Struggle," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 11, 1995, 1, A6, and A8; "City Oks Monument Site for Ashe," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 20, 1995, 1 and A5; "Ashe Statue Without A Home," *Richmond Afro-American*, June 29-July 5, 1995; "Debate on Location For Ashe Statue Continues," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 6, 1995, A12; and "Sculptor Cites Statue Claim," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 8, 1995, 1, A6, and A8; *Minutes of the City Council of Richmond, Virginia*, March 27, 1995 to September 25, 1995, 303, 308, 338, (*Richmond City Hall Archives*).

[48] Creating a Citizen Commission to Advise Council and the City Manager Concerning the Development of an Arthur Ashe Park in Downtown Richmond and Making it The Home of an African-American Sports Hall of Fame, Resolution 95-R236-208, September 11, 1995, (*Richmond City Hall Archives*); and "Mayor Offers A Compromise," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 17, 1995, 1, A7, and A8.

The mountain of resistance compelled the city council to call a public hearing on July 17, 1995, to decide the statue's placement once and for all. Before the public arrived, the nine city councilmembers and Chewning took a private straw vote to see where their sentiments lie. This was commonly done to solidify the council's votes on controversial issues. The vote was seven to-two in favor of not placing the statue on Monument Avenue. Chewning, who was not a city councilman, asked the council what characteristics someone needed to possess in order to be placed on Monument Avenue. After collecting their responses, he read an encyclopedia description of a man who had every single characteristic. When he finished, a dissenting council member said, "I have no argument that is Arthur Ashe." Chewning smiled and said, "No sir, that is Robert E. Lee," the man whose legacy set the standard for others to be honored on the avenue. Chewning followed that moment by asking, "If these attributes qualified Robert E. Lee to be on Monument Avenue, then why not Arthur Ashe?" In that moment, Chewning spoke to the heart of the city council. This group of black and white leaders occupied a legislative body that was once a pillar of white supremacy in Richmond. Voting to keep the statue off of Monument Avenue would have resurrected the not-so-distant memories of the city council resisting racial integration and black equality. If the city council was to be a progressive force in Richmond, it started with using public history to acknowledge and overcome its legacy of discrimination. The council agreed to take another straw vote, and they unanimously agreed to place the Ashe statue on Monument Avenue. One councilman, who previously voted the other way, later told Chewning that they all had to acknowledge that, "if you exclude anything but color, there isn't any reason to not have him [Ashe] on Monument Avenue."[49]

[49] Interview with Tom Chewning, May 10, 2019; and Interview with Viola Baskerville, July 28, 2019.

About an hour later, 118 residents and media representatives from across the nation entered the council chambers to discuss the statue's placement. The mayor first addressed the crowd, telling them that "No American city with the racial and economic composition of Richmond, have [*sic*] made the extraordinary strides toward racial harmony that we have." He wanted residents to remember that the discussion was not just about the placement of a statue, or even an effort to honor a city's beloved son. It was one of the most "essential questions of our collective identity." The council listened to six hours of resident opinions. Most of the speakers wanted the site committee to place the statue along the avenue. The most compelling argument in favor of this decision came from a black resident. She believed that if the Ashe statue was placed anywhere other than Monument Avenue, Richmond would be sending the message that he was just a great athlete. But, if the statue was placed along Monument Avenue, Richmond would admit that Ashe was a great person. Bestowing Ashe with the city's highest honor would also prove that Richmond was dedicated to conquering its identity crisis. The entire council followed that speech by sponsoring a resolution to place Ashe's statue on Monument Avenue. Without hesitation, all but one councilmember voted in favor.[50]

"Today we let the entire nation see that Richmond is not a city torn apart and divided along racial lines," a speaker said at the statue unveiling. He ironically said these words while facing several white demonstrators dressed in Confederate uniforms. Earlier that morning, Monument Avenue residents opened their doors to flyers from the Ku Klux Klan. No one was

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[50] Public Hearing on the Appropriate Location for the Arthur Ashe, Jr. Memorial Statue, *Minutes of the City Council of the City of Richmond, Virginia, March 27, 1995 to September 25, 1995*, 341-51, (*Richmond City Hall Archives*); "To Approve the Intersection of Roseneath Avenue and Monument Avenue as the Location for the Arthur Ashe Memorial Statue and Monument," Resolution 95-R225-175, July 17, 1995, 303, 308, 338; "We Rose to Ashe's Level," *Richmond Afro-American*, July 20-26; and "Ashe Statue Will Go on Monument, National Embarrassment Avoided in Our Finest Hour," "Hearing Puts Focus on City," and "Statue Placement: A Monumental Site," *Richmond-Times-Dispatch*, July 18, 1995, A1 and A10; Interview with Tom Chewning, May 10, 2019; Interview with Dr. Paige Chargois, May 17, 2019; and Interview with Viola Baskerville, July 28, 2019.

able to identify where the Klan chapter was headquartered. However, the white knights placed flyers on every house along Monument Avenue. "The Ku Klux Klan watched with amusement as the Ashe family and other primates urged the Richmond City Council to send a message of racial healing by putting a statue of Arthur Ashe on Monument," the flyer began. It continued by asking, "How much healing do these creatures want?" The Klan articulated its opposition as its way of abiding by "God's laws of segregation," and the "struggle for white rights." The flyer called for a groundswell of collective outrage. They did not get any. Stage crews and Monument Avenue residents trashed most of the flyers. The local news picked up the story. However, like the set-up crew and residents, city leaders cleaned up the narrative by absolving Richmond residents and blaming outsiders. After the dust settled, and the statue had taken root, Richmond as a whole embraced a black man on Monument Avenue. "It was amazing to me how quickly after that monument was up, that people forgot all of the fuss. Many people who were a part of the fuss went to see it, and they took their children and grandchildren to see it, and still do," Tom Chewning remembered. He later recalled that local black leaders told him that the Ashe statue assured them that, as one of them said, "We belong in *all* of the city."[51]

The Ashe statue was more than a symbolic representation of racial reconciliation. It represented another important shift in race relations. By placing the Ashe statue on the avenue, Richmonders proved that they were no longer captive to past interpretations of its history. To

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[51] "Ashe Vote Eluded Mayor," "Ashe Family A Big Factor in the Outcome," "Ashe on Monument," "Many Oppose Monument Site," and "In the End, No Place but Monument," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 19, 1995, A1, A8, A10, B1; "Wilder: City Breaking with Inglorious Past," *Richmond Afro-American*, August 17-23, 1995, 1; "Creatures of the Night Target Ashe With Hate Fliers," *Richmond Afro-American*, August 31-September 6, 1995, 1; "Hate Fliers: Anti-Defamation league is Altered," Richmond Times-Dispatch, August 29, 1995, B1; Target Ashe Statue Site and "Richmond Balks At Mixed Icons," *Washington Post*, July 6, 1995; "Rest in Peace? Not in Richmond," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 2, 1995, D1; "Efforts to Block Statue Continues," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 22, 1995, A-1; and White Pride Flyer, undated, Broadside 1995, 2, White Pride, (*Virginia Museum of History and Culture*); "Quiet Event Ends in Furor Over Statue: Protest Fade as Ground is Broken For Ashe Statue," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, August 16, 1995, A1; and "Official Calls Latest Ashe Issue Narrow: Statue Itself Is Not Open To Debate," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 24, 1995, B1.

some, Richmond still exists with the irony of racial reconciliation and white supremacy. However, the Ashe statue assured that the history of racism and desire for racial reconciliation are tethered together by the need to understand Richmond's collective identity.

"A Call to Community," 1996-1998

The Arthur Ashe statue remained, even until this very day, the only city-owned statue on Monument Avenue. City residents even revere and protect the black marble structure, as it is the only statue on the avenue to never be tarnished by spray paint. Its placement on Monument Avenue showed how far Richmond had come in terms of acknowledging its history. The discourse surrounding the placement showed how far the city had to go. Quite a few people reached out to Hope in the Cities about "the sword that hangs over Richmond's head if we do not resolve the racial and other problems that have divided all the citizens for a great long time." Hope in the Cities quietly supported Tom Chewning's mission to erect the Ashe statue on Monument Avenue. Yet, "We are aware of recent events and issues which have revealed deep divisions and hurts in our community," Corcoran wrote to the Hope in the Cities board. The Ashe controversy showed how painful history could undermine efforts to mend race relations. Hope in the Cities believed that they needed to help guide communities as they used history to investigate race relations in the present. Rob Corcoran told a long-time civic leader that, "It occurs to me and to several others which whom I have consulted, that there is a need for some agreed upon ground rules which can provide a frame of reference for our changes with each other." This compelled Hope in the Cities to begin *A Call to Community*. This was "a set of

ground rules to which elected officials, business, and community leaders will commit themselves and agree" to help guide the city through future disputes over public history.[52]

Hope in the Cities held a series of call-in television broadcasts to promote their *honest conversation plan,* as created by Dr. Paige Chargois. It required residents to acknowledge and explore the depths of their racial history. Then, they needed to spearhead change at the interpersonal level. They introduced this model at the Virginia Fine Arts Museum with the support of the city council and wealthy white donors. The local support compelled Hope in the Cities to ensure that "the Richmond model of honest dialogue and healing of racial history might be replicated in other cities in various parts of the U.S." After months of planning, they agreed to take their model to different cities. In the process, they assured that "Richmond ...set the national standard on public conversations" about race in America's most troubled cities.[53]

Richmond was not alone in experiencing racial issues in the mid-1990s. City leaders, ranging from mayors to grassroots organizers across America, told Robert Corcoran that growing urban/suburban divides, and other national events -- such as the exoneration of black football star O.J. Simpson -- unveiled an undercurrent of racial tension. "Race is America's Achilles heel. It is the underlying issue that touches most other domestic issues, from crime to welfare," the Baltimore Mayor wrote to Hope in the Cities. In May 1996, Hope in the Cities selected 100 leaders from around the country to attend the National Call to Community meeting in Washington, D.C. Many of the leaders later employed Hope in the Cities to create local forums, symposiums, and speeches about interracial dialogue about overcoming controversial issues that evoke racial tensions. One representative from Michigan later read the entire *Call to Community*

[52] Rob Corcoran to Professor John Charles Thomas, January, 5, 1995; and Rob Corcoran to Melvin Law, Chair of Richmond School Board, undated letter, Call To Community, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*).
[53] Rob Corcoran to Hope in Cities Steering Committee, February 9, 1995, "Call To Community" and WCVE Channel 23, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*).

mission on the floor of the U.S. Congress. Hope in the Cities wanted public officials to champion their new plan. However, they made it clear that, "race must be coupled with personal responsibility. Government is not the solution to this problem; people are."[54]

By 1996, Hope in the Cities fielded requests to create branches in cities as large as Los Angeles, Chicago, Phoenix, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Baltimore, Hartford, Camden, and Minneapolis. Even smaller cities such as Norfolk, Virginia, Natchez, Mississippi, Hampton, Virginia, Rocky Mountain, North Carolina, Fort Myers, Florida, Selma, Alabama, and Dayton, Ohio requested their help as well. This growth made Richmond -- the former Confederate capital, the city that almost denied Arthur Ashe a place on Monument Avenue -- the new headquarters for America's racial reconciliation project. However, "the challenge of overcoming deep-seated racial hurts and mistrust can appear overwhelming...Many communities are still suffering the trauma of their racial history," Corcoran later admitted in a project summary. The Richmond headquarters struggled with expansion because it was an introspective process requiring arduous network building with those who did not understand how difficult racial healing was.[55]

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[54] Interview with Dr. Paige Chargois, May 17, 2019; Rob Corcoran to Hope in the Cities Board, February 27, 1996; Commitment to Community Memo, undated; National Update, February 27, 1996; Rob Corcoran to Hope in Cities Steering Committee, February 9, 1995, Call To Community and WCVE Channel 23, File Cabinet #1; HIC Final Report to W.K. Kellogg Foundation, June 2000, File Cabinet #3; A Call to Community Working Draft, October 1995; Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates on the 104th Congress, First Session, October 31, 1995, Vol.141; Kurt Schmoke, Mayor of City of Baltimore, to Fellow Mayors, January, 1996; A Call To Community Position Paper, February 22, 1996; Ruth Messinger, Borough President of Manhattan, New York, to Robert L. Corcoran, May 10, 1996; Jerry E. Abramson, Mayor of Louisville to Mr. Walter T. Kenney, May 23, 1996; Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Professor of the Humanities at Harvard University to Karen Greisdorf, July 24, 1996; The National Launch of A Call to Community, undated booklet; Call to Community National Endorsers & Partners, September 19, 1996, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*); For more letters of support and newer implemented programs after the national meeting in D.C., see A Call to Community Folder in the File Cabinet #1 of the *Initiatives of Change Archives*.

[55] HIC Final Report to W.K. Kellogg Foundation, June 2000, Filed Cabinet #3, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*). For more information about the satellite branches, see Baltimore, MD; Camden NJ; Dayton, OH; Franklin, VA, Hartford, CT; Norfolk, VA; Natchez, MS; New Orleans; Oregon 1997-1999; Oregon 2000-2003; Pasadena, CA;

"No matter where we went, it was almost exactly the same," Chargois remembers. The Richmond Hope in the Cities group spent much of 1997 and 1998 traveling to various cities, meeting with over 250 local leaders, and training them in the methods needed to fully understand and resolve racial conflict. "Training includes interracial coalition building, facilitation skills, and exploration of the 'walk through history' model, and interaction with Richmonders who are applying the HIC process in various sectors of the community," a report stated. After their intense training, local civic leaders took to the streets and began phase one. The Richmond group quickly realized that they would have to build houses with new playing cards; and in some cases, castles with dry sand. "The people who were at our events were people who wanted to be there and who wanted to learn. So it was always a positive experience," Chargois remembered. She went on to say that "it was the experiences, beyond the work in certain localities that could be potentially negative."[56]

In West Coast cities like Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Pasadena, pockets of low income blacks, Asians, and Latinos were quarantined by white suburban flight. Racial hatred was at an all-time high among them, and they were not very willing to reach across the aisle and promote harmony. In Midwestern and northern cities like Dayton, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, community leaders found the races were "intractably separated emotionally/psychologically/physically," a summary report said in 1997. They interacted more fluidly in the workplace than in any other area. However, they showed little care or compassion for each other's thoughts, feelings, and economic conditions. This cold, deflective sentiment was

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Philadelphia, PA; Pittsburg, PA; Selma, AL; Rocky Mount NC; Twin Cities MN; and Hamilton, ONT, Canada folders in File Cabinet #3 of the *Initiatives of Change Archives*.

[56] The Mission of Interfaith Action For Racial Justice Memo, 1996; Fundraising Proposal for The Baltimore Metropolitan Area: A Call to Community, An Honest Conversation About Race, Reconciliation, and Responsibility, undated; Participant's Guide, The Baltimore Metropolitan Area: A Call to Community, An Honest Conversation About Race, Reconciliation, and Responsibility, April 1997, Baltimore, MD, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*); and Interview with Dr. Paige Chargois, May 17, 2019.

not the case in the Deep South. There, "societal values of graciousness and hospitality are revered; [and] individuals of different races interact more often and more intimately." These places felt similar to 1980s Richmond where civil politeness often left little room for racial progress. White leaders lacked an interest in exploring their own racial privilege. Blacks, who had recently broken into the political power structure, cared little to teach it to them.[57]

"Two of my worst experiences with this work happened there," Chargois said in reference to Portland, Oregon. She remembers the day where three white men in a pickup truck zoomed past her downtown and yelled, "Get out of our street nigger!" That one experience stuck with her because, "I have never been called a nigger in public anywhere but in Portland, Oregon," she said seriously in an interview. The hardest lesson from this incident was the response she received from fellow race workers later that day. Chargois told them about the incident. A white person in the Richmond crew responded, "Well Paige, when are you going to get over that?" Others from both Richmond and Portland echoed the sentiment. Chargois calmed

[57] The Mission of Interfaith Action For Racial Justice Memo, 1996; Fundraising Proposal for The Baltimore Metropolitan Area: A Call to Community, An Honest Conversation About Race, Reconciliation, and Responsibility, undated; Participant's Guide, The Baltimore Metropolitan Area: A Call to Community, An Honest Conversation About Race, Reconciliation, and Responsibility, April 1997, Baltimore, MD; Jane Wax and Peter Kipp to Rob Corcoran, March, 29, 1995; Patrick McNamara to Mike Jean Bean, October 26, 1998; Rob Corcoran to Patrick McNamara, November 3, 1998, Rob Corcoran to Ms. Randy Ross-Ganguly, September 22, 1998, Camden, NJ; Los Angeles, CA; Larry James, County Liaison to Commission to Rob Corcoran, December 2, 1995; Rob Corcoran to The Honorable Larry L. Brown, Mayor of Natchez, Mississippi, January 31, 1997; Rob Corcoran to Frances Trosclair, March 27, 1997; Reflections on The Workshop and Survey in Natchez, MS, June 1997; Rob Corcoran to Frances Trosclair, City Clerk for City of Natchez Mississippi, December, 1996, Natchez, MS; Dick Baldwin, Director of the Oregon Law Center, to Hope in the Cities, December 15, 1997; Rob Corcoran to Michael Henderson, Coordinator Hope in the Cities Portland, 1998; Michael Henderson to Rob Corcoran, 1998; Rob Corcoran to Michael Henderson, March 3, 1998; Hope in the Cities Conference Brings Portland into the Great National Conversation on Race: undated Memo, Oregon, 1997-1999; Citizens' Unity Commission, City of Hampton, Virginia Community Action Panel, December 11, 1997; Michele Woods Jones, Interim Director of the Citizens Unity Commission of Hampton to Robert Corcoran, December 19, 1997; Dianne English, Director of Community Building Initiative, Charlotte, North Carolina, October 1998; Paige Chargois to Breck Daughtrey, City Clerk for the City of Norfolk, Virginia, August 18, 1998, Norfolk, Va, File Cabinet #1, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*). For more on the national network building, see File Cabinet #1 in the *Initiative of Change Archives*.

herself down to prevent bubbling over with violent rage. This instance reflected that Hope in the Cities still struggles with its own racial issues.[58]

White race workers often believed that they were completely free of racial bigotry. However, some of them mistook their personal comfort with black people as an expertise on the black experience. Chargois later learned that white race workers thought that blacks were used to whites calling them racially insensitive names. Hence, the whites in Portland, as well as the group from Richmond, expected Chargois to "get over that" when it happened in the streets. That assumption compounded the trauma she experienced. Yet, she understood that without honest conversations about race within the organization, they "could not have realized or known that I have never heard that."[59]

Internal reform remained a thorn in the side of Hope in the Cities throughout the years of expansion. "We have had to work as intentionally internally [*sic*] in the organization about race as we have had to work externally. And that reality blows some people's minds," said Chargois. Her experiences in Portland was reminiscent of past issues that she overcame. On one occasion, Chargois was lambasted by her colleagues for criticizing a white intern who refused to obey her directions. The intern felt that the white office manager, who often told her to do other assignments, was Chargois's boss. This tension came to a fever pitch when the manager told Chargois in public that her ideas were often too complicated to be implemented. "Don't blow my great ideas out of the water just because it's a great idea!," Chargois told her in front of everyone. She felt that the tension between herself and the office manager was a racial one. Over time, those involved felt the same way. Chargois and the white office manager have since

[58] Interview with Dr. Paige Chargois, May 17, 2019.
[59] Ibid.

resolved their issues, and they both share their stories to illustrate the difficulties of race work. From these experiences, where racial differences underwrote interpersonal conflicts, Hope in the Cities openly acknowledged that, as Chargois previously stated, "You got to work on the same struggle internally as you have externally."[60]

"There is No Thought of Winding Down The [National] Project," Conclusion

By the end of 1997, Hope in the Cities had transplanted their vision of racial healing to places outside of Richmond. Oregon's state legislature created the Oregon Uniting Day of Acknowledgement to apologize for its past prohibition against black residency in the state. The local schools also adopted a massive oral history project to capture the experiences of the state's long-overlooked and undervalued black residents. Baltimore's group, which struggled to get suburban white support, organized a walk through history day that "has modeled its event on the Richmond Unity Walk." Hope in the Cities in Dayton got the city's power structure to acknowledge and enact legislation against furthering the city's historic prohibition on black city employment. Selma's group addressed its history with substandard black housing and worked with Habitat for Humanity to redevelop blighted black neighborhoods.[61]

[60] Interview with Dr. Paige Chargois, May 17, 2019.

[61] Rob Corcoran to Joel J. Orosz, Philanthropy and Volunteerism W.K. Kellogg Foundation, January 7, 1998; Hope in the Cities: A National, Grassroots Network on Race, Reconciliation, and Responsibility, Grant Proposal, 1997, Found in the Kellogg Funding Proposal 1997 binder, File Cabinet #3, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*). For more on Kellogg funding, see Kellogg Report June 1990 and June 2000, File Cabinet #3, (*Initiative of Change Archives*).

Figure 8: Photo of Hope in the Cities in Selma, Alabama, 1998. Courtesy of Initiatives of Change

"There is no thought of winding down the [national] project," Hope in the Cities wrote in a grant application. Between 1997 and 1999, they applied for several grants to fund their seemingly unfundable operation. Richmond-based companies such as Capital One, Ukrops Grocery, and Dominion Resources regularly donated to their cause. However, in terms of scope and reach, Hope in the Cities had outgrown Richmond, and local contributions could not cover the growing expenses. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and later the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, helped underwrite much of the national field work in the early 2000s. "We have great appreciation for the history and circumstances of greater Richmond that have shaped your strategies to work towards racial healing and reconciliation," a Babcock Foundation director once wrote to Hope in the Cities. National foundations helped Hope in the Cities remain a fixture in several U.S. cities to this very day. Some of their branches evolved into other organizations that focused on specific issues, such as police brutality, municipal resource spending, and affordable housing.[62]

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[62] Project Summary for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, October 5, 2000, Found in the Kellogg Funding Proposal 2000 binder; Sandra Milkush, Assistant Director of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation to Rob Corcoran and Sylvester Turner, November 22, 2004, Babcock Foundation, File Cabinet #3, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*). For more on Hope in the Cities funding information, see File Cabinet #3 entitled "Fundraising" in *Initiatives of Change Archives*.

Hope in the Cities rightfully claims credit for starting over half of the 181 known racial reconciliation movements in America between 1992 and 1997. This success placed the group into contact with the President William J. Clinton's White House staff. "We have torn down [racial] barriers in our laws. Now we must tear down barriers in our lives, our minds and our hearts," the president said in a speech about race in America. The Richmond group spent much of 1997 conversing with White House officials about creating a national conversation about race. The goal was to make the federal government into an active agent of racial healing in the twenty-first century. This resulted in President Clinton including Hope in the Cities in a biracial blue ribbon commission, headed by historian John Hope Franklin, to craft the *One America Dialogue Guide*. This thirty-page document about facilitating dialog between racial groups and conflict resolution was designed to inspire national legislation to fund racial healing projects throughout the nation. However, the guide and its authors received minimal attention because of President Clinton's scandal with his intern, Monica Lewinsky.[63]

As the 1990s gave way for the 2000s, Richmond became America's epicenter for racial reconciliation. The small-scale potlucks that began at 1103 Sunset Avenue grew into a national organization designed to discuss and strategize ways of promoting social integration in America's most divided cities. To those outside of the city, Richmond's issues with public history proved that it is still a hidebound, racist city where whites value being the former Confederate capital more than they did racial harmony. To black and white locals who remember the 1990s, the issues with public history proved just the opposite. Richmonders used discussions

[63] Project Summary for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, October 5, 2000, Found in the Kellogg Funding Proposal 2000 binder; Elizabeth Furse, Member of U.S. Congress to Michael D. Henderson, January 15, 1997, "A Call to Community;" Call to Community List of National Endorsers & Partners, September, 19, 1996; Rob Corcoran to John Springer, June 1, 1997, Baltimore MD; Rob Corcoran to Mr. Philip Freeman, June 9, 1998, Rob Corcoran to Mr. Philip Freeman, June 9, 1998, Camden, NJ, File Cabinet #1 (*Initiatives of Change Archives*)*;* Corcoran, *Trustbuilding*, 89-92; *One America in the 21st Century: America Dialogue Guide, Conducting a Discussion on Race,* (Washington, D.C., March 1998), 1-31.

about race and memory to determine what kind of city they wanted to live in. This method of discussion created an unprecedented level of racial harmony that facilitated a national discussion about race and racism. As Robert Corcoran once predicted after the Healing the Hearts of America Conference in 1993, "Using history as a catalyst to break the cycle of guilt and anger, and to connect communities long divided" was "Richmond's unique contribution to the nation."

Figure 9: Photo of a typical set up of a community dialog at Richmond Hill in the early 1990s. Courtesy of Robert L. Corcoran

Figure 10: Photo of BTA's Speech to the Moral Re-Armament 1990 Caux Conference. Courtesy of Robert L. Corcoran

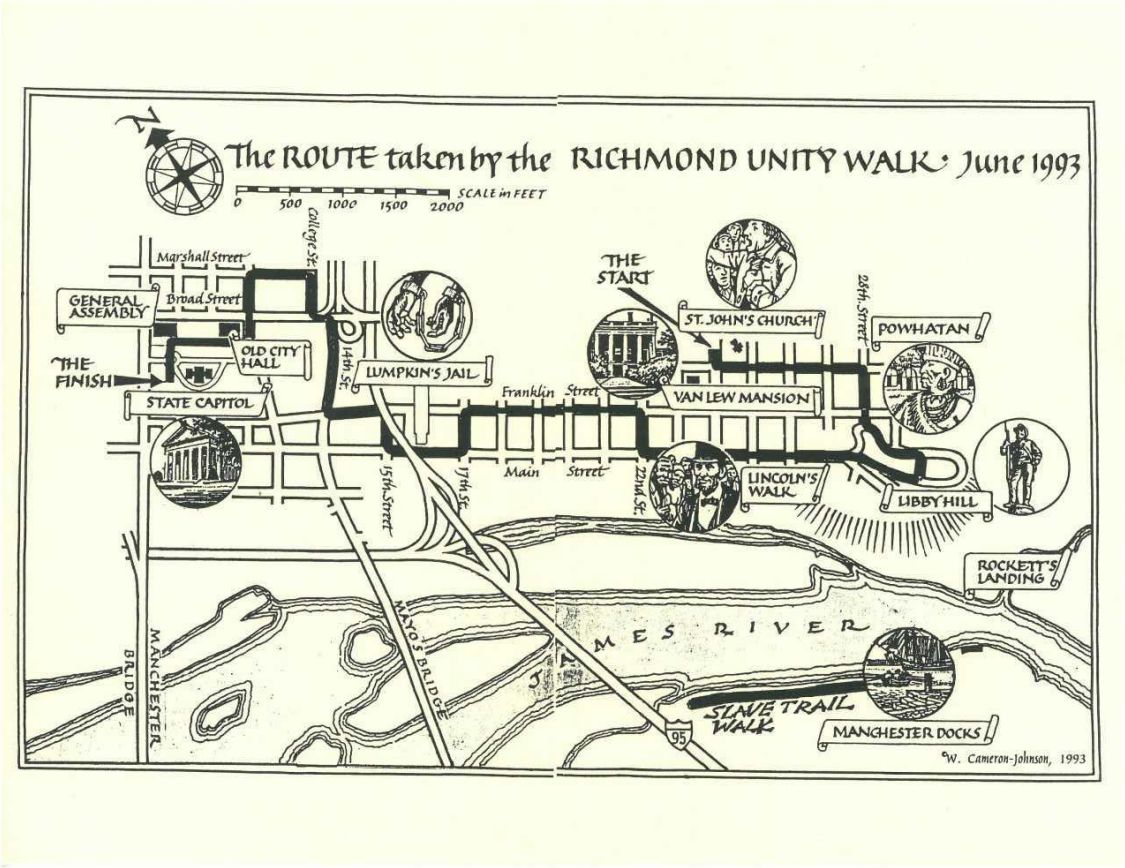

Figure 11: Photo of route taken by the tour and the 1993 Healing the Heart of America Conference. Courtesy of Initiatives of Change.

Figure 12: Photo of re-enactment of an African Griot along the 1993 Unity Walk telling the history of slavery in Richmond. Courtesy of Initiatives of Change.

Figure 13: Photo of the Baltimore Unity Walk. Courtesy of Robert L. Corcoran.

Figure 14: Photo of Hope in the Cities Training in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1997. Courtesy of Initiatives of Change.

Figure 15: Photo of Hope in the Cities training in 1998. The location was not listed. Courtesy of Initiatives of Change.

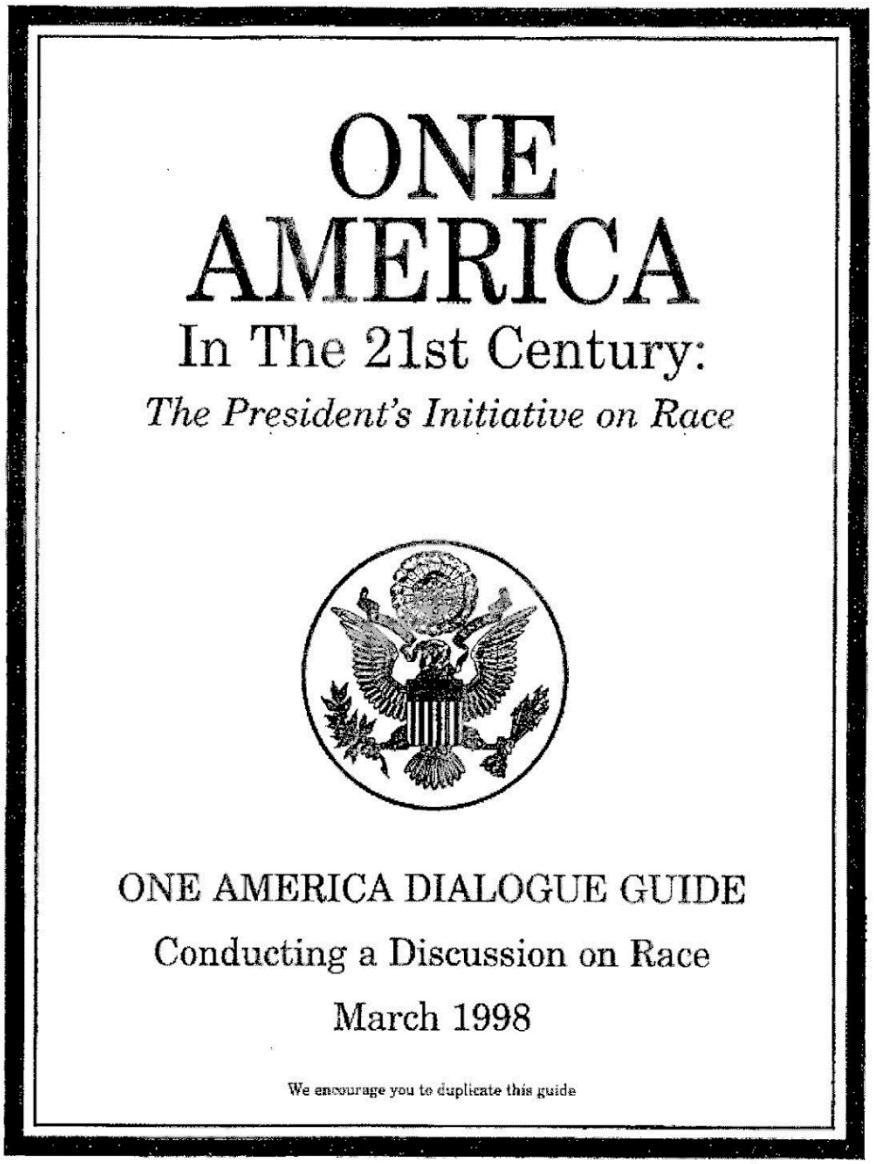

Figure 16: Photo of front page of the finished One America Dialogue Guide. A copy of the entire guide is in the possession of the author.

EPILOGUE

"THE ROAD TO BUILDING ONE RICHMOND," 1999-PRESENT

Richmond exited the troubled twentieth century for the uncertain twenty-first as the nation's center for racial healing. However, its landscape did not reflect this reality. The suburbs were still majority white and affluent. The inner city was largely black, working-to-under class, infrastructurally blighted with empty storefronts, decaying neighborhoods, and filled, in many places, with more debris than actual people. This issue stemmed from the inability to generate revenue or grow its tax base because Richmonders who climbed the social ladder quickly moved to the West End or the Henrico/Chesterfield suburbs. Suburban flight defined Richmond society in the late 1990s and early 2000s. However, city leaders had not given up on the dream that Richmond could, one day, be the socioeconomic center of the metropolitan area. They felt that rehabbing and repopulating the downtown area would create centrifugal residential and economic growth elsewhere. The last downtown revitalization plans (Project One and the Sixth Street Marketplace) failed miserably because they were enacted in a racially tense city. By 1999, residents had, for almost a decade, used its tumultuous history to ease racial tensions. The business and museum communities sought to capitalize on this seismic shift by making the city's history a vital part of a new downtown revitalization plan.

"A Touchy Proposition in Richmond," 1999-2016

A more progressive history was now a marketable commodity in the Richmond area. Since the erection of the Arthur Ashe statue, black community leaders clamored for an African American sports hall of fame. They felt that this multi-use complex would bring retail and restaurant chains back into the downtown area. However, those plans succumbed to partisan

politics and funding issues. The Establishment suggested that the city develop its James River waterfront. Largely abandoned by industry and government since the late 1800s, the waterfront was overgrown, often flooded, and reeked of algae and sewage. By the mid-twentieth century, the Chamber of Commerce envisioned the James River to be "The front yard of a new river city." However, suburban flight assured that Chesterfield's minuscule Lake Chesdin received more development than Virginia's longest river. Richmond Renaissance picked up the idea in 1989, and by the late 1990s city leaders were committed to making it happen. They had learned from other struggling cities that riverfront restoration was the best means of recruiting new industry and residents back into the inner city.[1]

By the late 1990s, the business and museum communities formed the Richmond Riverfront Development Corporation (RRDC) and the Richmond Riverfront Historic Foundation (RHRF). These organizations intentionally brought the Establishment and black leaders together to assure that the riverfront renovation fit within the city's commitment to racial progress. The first phase of restoration was turning the 1.25 mile area along the Kanawha and James River Canals into "a new historic district for the city through the creation of an outdoor museum," a 1998 brochure stated. This historical district, later known as the Canal Walk, would have twenty-nine murals displaying Richmond's "turbulent history." The depictions of slavery, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Era, and the present was a subliminal attempt to counter the narrative along

[1] J.S. Walmsley, "Planning a New Richmond," *The Commonwealth Magazine, The Magazine of Virginia, Virginia Chamber of Commerce*, Vol. XXXIV, No.2, March, 1967, (*James C. Wheat Papers*, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Richmond, Virginia), 26-33; "The Richmond Canals Bulletin," Volume I Number I, May 1989, (*Valentine Museum Archives*); and Interview with Viola Baskerville, June 28, 2019.

Monument Avenue. Whereas the Confederate statues displayed Richmond as a city stuck in the past, the Canal Walk showed that Richmond had reimagined itself as a city of the future.[2]

There was much excitement and optimism for the Canal Walk's success. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* advertised that the "opening offers something for everyone." Three boats named after Martha Washington, Martha Jefferson, and Maggie L. Walker were selected to christen the celebratory event. Private vendors offered to sell boat rides to visitors who preferred to sail down the river rather than walk its paths. Musicians from all genres were even slated to perform during its opening weekend. To spark more interest, the *Times-Dispatch* gave its readers a sneak peak of one of the twenty-nine murals being placed on the walking trail. The one they showed was of former Confederate General Robert E. Lee standing in his crisp wool-grey uniform. Little did they know that this image would cause controversy. "The general might have commanded the Army of Northern Virginia during the Civil War, but he doesn't command the respect of many Richmond residents," the *Times Dispatch* discovered shortly after the paper hit newsstands.[3]

The morning after General Lee's image appeared on the front page of the city's largest newspaper, Councilman Saad El-Amin threatened to organize a black boycott of the Canal Walk grand opening. City leaders had spent over a decade completing this project, so they did not take any chances. "We got what we wanted. The mural's coming down," El-Amin told protesters after a meeting with the RHRF that afternoon. El-Amin was a maverick in Richmond politics.

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[2] Brochure from the Historic Interpretive Committee of the Richmond Riverfront Corporation by Ralph Appelbaum Associates, June 4, 1998, Richmond Riverfront Development Corp., and Richmond Historic Riverfront Foundation, 1999, Box 115, M303, (*Mary Tyler Cheek McClenahan Papers*, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia); For more on Richmond Renaissance's early efforts to rebuild the canal walk area, see folder entitled RR-Riverfront Improvements Program, 1988-1991 in Box 98, M303, of the *McClenahan Papers*; Historic Interpretive Committee, found in an internal memo from the Historic Interpretive Committee of the Richmond Riverfront Corporation by Ralph Appelbaum Associates, June 4, 1998, Richmond Riverfront Development Corp., and Richmond Historic Riverfront Foundation, 1999, Box 115, M303, (*McClenahan Papers*).

[3] "A New Vision For City Canals," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 1, 1999, A1, and D1-D16; and Richmond Canal Dedication Brochure, June 4, 1999; Richmond Canal Dedication Brochure, June 4, 1999, Richmond Riverfront Development Corp., and Richmond Historic Riverfront Foundation, 1999, Box 115, M303, (*McClenahan Papers*).

The man formerly known as Je'Royd X. Greene was not a minister or businessman. He was a lawyer. However, El-Amin did not descend from the Virginia Union/Howard University pipeline like other prominent black Richmond attorneys. He was a New York native, Yale University alumnus, and a part of the radical generation of working-class students who turned Ivy League law schools into social activist think tanks during the Civil Rights Era.[4]

Upon graduation, El-Amin moved to Richmond, converted to Islam, and became a career rabble-rouser in the local law community. El-Amin saw, as he once stated, "white people as the enemy of black people." His open anti-white temperament, combined with a sharp New York accent, resulted in several contempt of court charges. Black attorneys and politicians likewise turned against El-Amin when he sought key appointments in the 1970s and 1980s. In spite of his outsider status among the black elite, black Richmonders in general loved El-Amin. He was once the Crusade for Voters president and a regular contributor to the *Richmond Afro-American* newspaper. By the late 1990s, he won a highly-coveted city council seat in Richmond's Sixth District. The majority black area he represented ironically housed the Canal Walk and the controversial Robert E. Lee mural. Richmonders had a high tolerance for Confederate imagery. El-Amin, however, did not. He felt that Robert E. Lee and the Confederacy had no place in a Richmond that was using public memory to heal its image. El-Amin made sure that as long as he was in City Hall, Confederate commemoration on newer public projects was "not going to happen...no way."[5]

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[4] Thomas L. Connelly, *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society*, (Knopf, 1977), 1-9; "R.E. Lee Portrait Removed From Wall: City Councilman Protested Display," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 3, 1999, A1 and A8; Laura Kalman, *Yale Law School and the Sixties: Revolt and Reverberations*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2005); "Ex-Council Member Had Contentious Career," *The Washington Times*, July 26, 2003; and Interview with Robert Corcoran, March 10, 2019.

[5] "R.E. Lee Portrait Removed From Wall: City Councilman Protested Display," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 3, 1999, A1 and A8. El-Amin and Wilder's feud goes back to 1974. El-Amin was in the running to become a law

The removal of the Lee mural complicated the Canal Walk's opening ceremony. On Friday, June 4, 1999, the ribbon cutting, canal boat rides, and live music performances shared space with protesters from the local chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV). About twenty or so middle-aged white men dressed in the grey-wool Confederate garb, stood above the 14th Street Bridge, draped a large Confederate flag over the canals and chanted, "We want Lee." Luckily, most of the protesters went to the Lee statue on Monument Avenue and boycotted the grand opening altogether. The local media largely ignored the SCV. However, they could not help but take notice of the police officers guarding the empty wall-space where the Lee mural portrait previously sat. "All the decisions were made before I heard about it," a white city councilman said disappointedly. He went on to echo the sentiments of many residents by saying, "much of our history is not pleasant, [but] you can't whitewash it."[6]

After the grand opening, many white residents expressed displeasure with the removal to the *Times-Dispatch*, local news, radio stations, and the RRDC. "If Richmond keeps turning away from aspects of its history, it's going to be a city without an identity," said one white resident. Blacks were divided on the mural removal. "Lee's picture should not be put up there," one resident told the *Times-Dispatch*. A black Canal Walk consultant retorted that, "The mural is about Richmond and the Civil War. How can you talk about the Civil War without Lee?" The most compelling argument in support of the Lee mural came from a black city employee. He told the *Times-Dispatch* that, "We can't erase him from the history books...When former victims turn around and victimize their enemies, they become just like those who they [*sic*] accuse." Robert

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professor at the College of William and Mary. Wilder refused to endorse him because of his lengthy contempt of court charges. El-Amin got some revenge when he represented Wilder's ex-wife during a messy divorce. El-Amin also spent years attacking Wilder with op-eds in the *Richmond Afro-American*; especially when Wilder ran for lieutenant governor in 1987, and then governor in 1989. For more on El-Amin's rivalry with Wilder, see the *Richmond Afro-American* editorial pages from 1983 to 1990.

[6] "Lee Absent For Canal Walk's Opening" and "Many Say Put the Portrait Back," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 4, 1999, A1 and A17; and "Mayor: Congratulations to Us," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 5, 1999, A1.

E. Lee represented the crystallization of white supremacy through slavery and Jim Crow, a legacy that the city, as a whole, was trying to leave in the past. However, many Richmonders took a more nuanced approach, seeing Lee's inclusion as a conscious effort to acknowledge how far Richmond had come in the twentieth century.[7]

"There is a place for Robert E. Lee on the Wall," said former Virginia Governor L. Douglas Wilder. One of the most memorable scenes from the Canal Walk opening weekend was Wilder saluting the protestors and their Confederate flag as he sailed down the canal with some of his invited guests. El-Amin believed Wilder to be "senile or he's a damn fool and a buffoon." However, his salute was a recognition that the city needed to include its divisive past into their future plans. "The majority of Richmonders are not interested in obliterating history," he told the *Times-Dispatch*. City leaders soon took charge to assure that this did not happen. A little over a month after the grand opening, the RHRF organized a 19-member bi-racial committee to review all of the murals and select the image that best displayed the city's history and current image.[8]

The committee quickly realized the issues of selecting artwork that best represented Richmond's current political interpretation of the past. El-Amin came to the first meeting and shared his discontent with using Lee's image. Representatives from the museum community disagreed with him, feeling that Lee's legacy could not be omitted from the Canal Walk because of his significance to the Civil War. After a series of meetings, the group chose to include a new set of murals depicting Richmond's fall on April 3, 1865, black Union soldiers receiving medals

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[7] "Lee Absent For Canal Walk's Opening" and "Many Say Put the Portrait Back," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 4, 1999, A1 and A17; "Many Say Put The Portrait Back," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 4, 1999; and "Reaction," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 5, 1999; and "Crusade Backs Removal of Lee Image from Wall," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 16, 1999.

[8] "Praise, Protest at Waterway Ribbon-Cutting," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 5, 1999; "Five Council Members Back Lee," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 11, 1999; "El-Amin Reasserts Stance on Mural," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 7, 1999; "About 250 Protest Removal of Lee," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 14, 1999; *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 13, 1999; "Group Starts Lee Discussion," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 15, 1999, A1.

of honor, and President Abraham Lincoln visiting the city at the conclusion of the war. The only disagreement was whether to include an image of Lee. The committee voted overwhelmingly to use a less-heroic image of the general, showing him as a civilian instead of a soldier. "It doesn't matter whether Lee is sitting on a horse or Lee standing on the moon. It is still General Lee," El-Amin said disappointedly. One of the three dissenting committee members agreed with him. The other two wanted, but did not get, an image of "Generals Lee and [Ulysses S.] Grant at Appomattox as a symbol of reconciliation."[9]

After the decision, the committee members worked within various civic organizations to "educate the public about the purpose of the outdoor museum." This took place at the Richmond Convention Center where over 1100 residents saw the new murals in July 1999. Each picture had a description that explained its impact on Richmond's history. The images were also printed in the *Times-Dispatch*. After a few weeks, the city council, RRDC and RRFC received positive emails, letters, and phone calls about the new mural selections. These responses encouraged the three entities to place them along the Canal Walk by September of that same year. There was no celebration or re-grand opening ceremony for the new murals. A committee member encapsulated the sentiments of his peers in saying, "I think we needed balance and I think we achieved a balance." The powers at be were more-so relieved that the city avoided another public relations disaster involving the juxtaposition of its racial reconciliation movement and Confederate history.[10]

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[9] Committee Meets to Review Floodwall Images, June 14, 1999; Report of the Advisory Committee to the Historic Riverfront Foundation, September 20, 1999, Box 115, M303, (*McClenahan Papers*).

[10] "Decision on Lee Mural Delayed," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 18, 1999; "Put Lee on Floodwall, Panel Says," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 1, 1999; "Talking About the Walk," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 7, 1999; "Directing the Removal of The Image of All Twenty-Nine (29) Images Which are not Displayed or are Contemplated to be Displayed on the Richmond Floodwall for any other Public Property Connected with The Richmond Canal Walk," Resolution 99-R155, July 12, 1999; "El-Amin Seeking Vote on Wall Murals,"*Richmond*

The Canal Walk controversy remains a faint memory in the minds of many Richmonders. With the exception of newspaper accounts, there are very few primary sources about it. Some of the committee members I interviewed for this dissertation remembered little about it also. This collective amnesia resulted from city residents, at the time, looking towards capstoning their public history and image change in the new century. "Richmond always seems to trip over itself in matters of race and the Civil War, in controversies ranging from the placement of the Arthur Ashe statue on Monument Avenue to hanging Robert E. Lee's mural on the flood wall," a state official once said. The *Times-Dispatch* concurred by saying, "Is Richmond's Civil War history holding us back? No, but our approach to it is." This approach, since the 1990s, teetered on, as a local museum director said, "The boogeyman in Richmond," that is "how do you deal with this Confederate past." How could the birthplace of the Lost Cause use history to reflect its current, more-progressive race relations? This question drove the local museum community to demystify Richmond's Confederate past and make it a vital part of the city's racially inclusive image.[11]

Times-Dispatch, July 12, 1999; "Officials Challenge El-Amin on Murals," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 13, 1999.

[11] Interview with Rob Corcoran, March 11, 2019; Interview with Benjamin Campbell, March 14, 2019; Interview with Christy Coleman, June 25, 2019; Interview with Dr. Paige Chargois, May 17, 2019; Interview with Viola Baskerville, June 28, 2019; and "Making History: New Approach to Feature Black Experience," *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* September 3, 2000, B1.

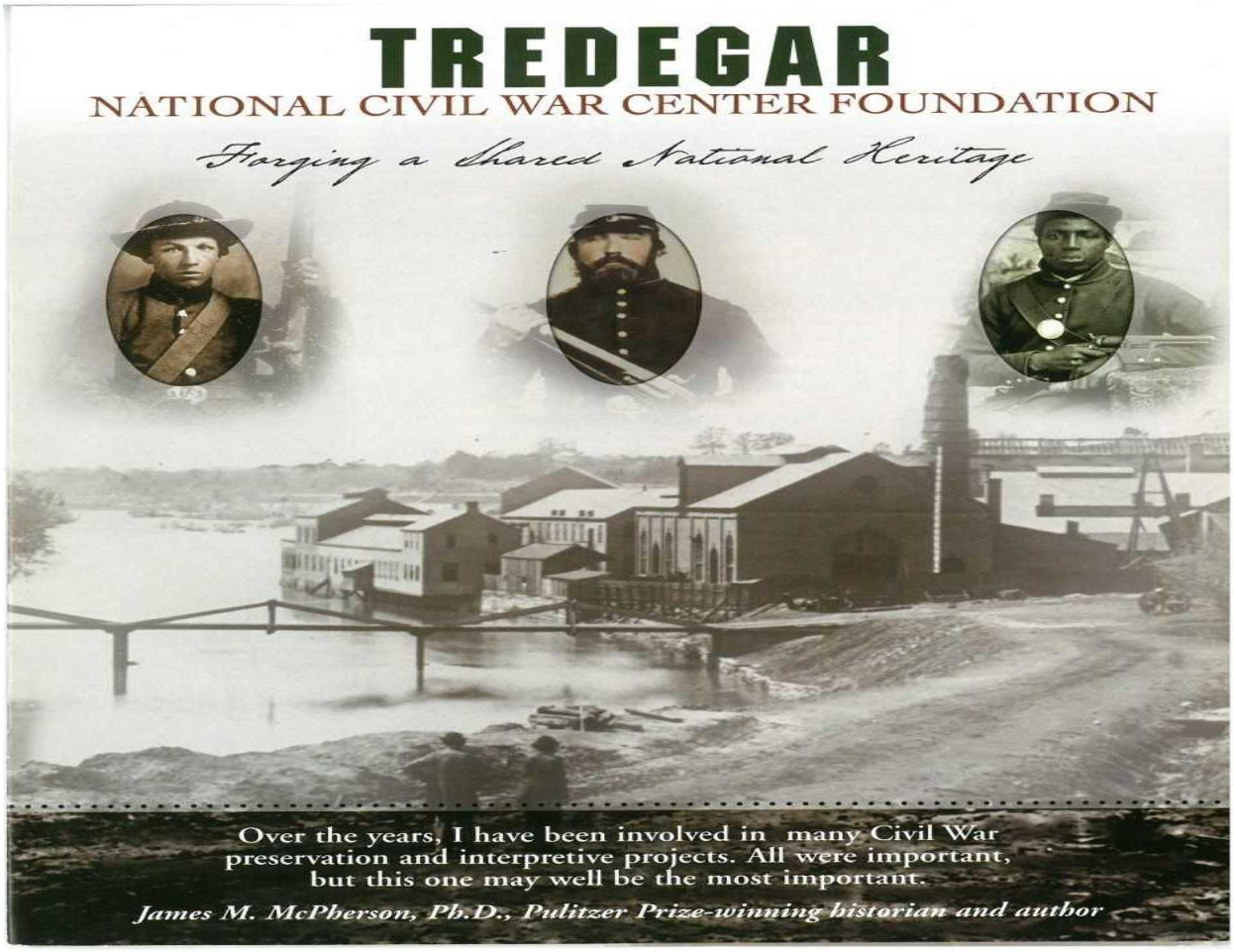

Figure 17: Photo of the original image for Tredegar National Civil War Museum, later named the American Civil War Museum. Courtesy of Initiatives of Change.

In the wake of the Canal Walk Controversy, the museum community worked with Hope in the Cities, and other groups, to erect the Tredegar National Civil War Museum at the former Tredegar Iron Works factory along the James River -- famously known as the Ironmaker of the Confederacy. The museum's mission and site selection was intentionally designed "to put the Civil War in its place in Richmond, to put the conflict behind us, and to remove blight from the city's reputation," the future director said. This was a tall task. Richmond already had a Civil War narrative, most of which sat along Monument Avenue, the Virginia Historical Society, and the Museum of the Confederacy. Richmond was the Lost Cause Mecca. But those within the museum community no longer wanted the city to have that mantle. They saw it as Richmond's

responsibility to deconstruct the Lost Cause image and history it had built. However, they understood, like Reverend Dr. Benjamin Campbell did years prior, that this task should be done along the James River, where slavery began in Richmond. As the director stated, "If a national Civil War center were to be created anywhere, it needed to be here."[12]

"I have an interest in history, but I also have an interest in racial reconciliation, which I think is a major focus and underlying motivation for all of us who are involved," said the director. The Tredegar National Civil War Museum was the first museum in the nation dedicated to telling the Civil War from the Union, Confederate, and enslaved black perspectives. The director lamented the difficulty of this task. "Racial reconciliation has always been a touchy proposition in Richmond ...Many have wondered whether the money could ever be raised and whether it's even feasible to explore racial reconciliation by creating a national Civil War center and revisiting the war from three highly divergent perspectives." These doubts did not stop the city from rallying behind this museum. Black Richmonders overwhelmingly supported its erection, seeing it an opportunity "to convert the Civil War from an open wound into a community asset and healing opportunity." The Establishment and *Times-Dispatch* supported it as well. Even directors at the Museum of the Confederacy donated items to the upstart museum with the "hope [that] it will begin a process of racial healing." The museum finally opened its doors in 2006. To this day, the narrative remains balanced. The board is mostly white and

[12] "Making History: New Approach to Feature Black Experience," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 3, 2000, B1; Alex Wise Speech, undated but maybe February 1999; H. Alexander Wise, Jr., to The Honorable Bobby Scott, November 2, 1999; H. Alexander Wise, Jr. to Robert L. Corcoran, February 12, 2000; H. Alexander Wise, Jr. to Reverend Paige Chargois, April 14, 2000; Tredegar National Civil War Center Sources Key African-American Collection, Newsletter September 12, 2000; Vice Admiral Samuel L. Gravely, Jr., First African-American Admiral in the United States Navy, Will Chair Foundation, September 19, 2000; Carmen Foster to Alex Wise and Rob Corcoran, November 6, 2000; Tredegar National Civil War Center Foundation Agenda, January 9, 2001; "Center Offers a New Approach to Civil War History," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 29, 2003, (*Initiatives of Change Archives*). Any newspaper citations without page numbers were found in clipping form in the Initiatives of Change Archives.

wealthy, and the director is a black woman who once helped bring the slavery narrative to Colonial Williamsburg in the 1990s. Many locals see the museum as an aesthetic upgrade to the once overgrown James River area. Most importantly, it is a testament to a city trying endlessly to use history as a socially engineering tool of progress. This museum became a site of reconciliation and, as a local minister said upon its opening, "a place of hope" in the years to come.[13]

A longtime newspaper editor and local historian forewarned of the day when Richmond would abandon its Lost Cause legacy. He said, "Richmond was the capital of the Confederacy, the citadel for four years against invading armies. Once this mystique is gone, Richmond will be just another city." That prediction could not have been further from the truth. Richmond has maintained its distinctiveness while intentionally shedding the racist baggage associated with the Lost Cause. To date, the city government and non-profit organizations have erected statues of Abraham Lincoln along the Canal Walk, the Slavery Reconciliation Statue along the slave trail, markers for various unsung black activists in downtown, a civil rights memorial at Capitol Square, and a plaza honoring Maggie Lena Walker along East Broad and North Third Streets. These monuments and attractions are, as was said about one of them, a "historic symbol of unity and reconciliation" in a city that could not have imagined it decades before. Richmond's revisionist sentiment even drove its most recent mayor to consider the possibility of reinterpreting the Confederate statues on Monument Avenue. This seismic shift in Richmond's

[13] "Collection Donated to Planned Museum," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 13, 2000; Tredegar National Civil War Center Foundation Fact Sheet, undated; "Museum of Civil War Are Torn By Debate," *The New York Times*, November 25, 2001; "Civil War Museum Brings Three Views Together," *USA Today*, December 12, 2003; Tredegar National Civil War Foundation Board of Directors, National Advisory Board, and Community Advisory Board, undated; "Center Will Tell Tale of War From 3 Sides," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, March 11, 2005; "New Civil War Center Stresses Healing Process," Richmond Times Dispatch, undated but in 2005; Internal Memo, October 1, 2006; Prayer for the Dedication of the American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar, October 6, 2006; "New Civil War Center Stresses Healing Process," Richmond Times-Dispatch, October 5, 2006; "Civil War Site: A Place of Hope," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 7, 2006, B3; Interview with Christy Coleman, June 25, 2019.

public history narrative and image reflects that the city today no longer relishes in being the former Confederate capital, leading Jim Crow city, or a bastion of white resistance to black civil rights. It is, for all intents and purposes, a city with a healed history.[14]

[14] Virginius Dabney, *Richmond: The Story of a City*, (University of Virginia Press, 1990), 398; Resolution 2000-R111-109, "To Modify The Composition of The Slave Trail Commission and To Establish a Quorum for Meetings," July 24, 2000; Resolution 2003-04255, (*City Hall Archives*); "To support and encourage the placement and dedication by the United States Historical Society of a Life-Size Bronze Statue of Abraham Lincoln Sitting on a Bench Beside His Son Tad," February 24, 2003; Resolution 2007-R057-38, "To Recognize the Historic Significance of the Richmond Slavery Reconciliation Statue Unveiling," March 12, 2007, (*City Hall Archives*); Resolution 2010-R171-180,"To Support the Erection of a Statue Honoring Maggie L. Walker," November 22, 2010, (*City Hall Archives*); "The First Woman to Start a Bank — A Black Woman — Finally Gets Her Due in The Confederacy's Capital," *Washington Post*, July 14, 2017, (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2017/07/14/the-first-black-woman-to-start-a-bank-finally-gets-her-due-in-the-confederacys-capital/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.d7745527ace3); and Monument Avenue Commission Report, Prepared for the Office of the Mayor and City Council, City of Richmond, VA, July 2, 2018, copy in the possession of the author.

Figure 18: Photo of the dedication and unveiling of the Maggie L. Walker Statue along East Broad and North Adams Streets in 2017. Courtesy of the Valentine Museum Online Collection.

Richmond's new image cannot be solely attributed to the fight to heal its history. Much of it has come from the changing attitudes and demographics downtown. In the early 2000s, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) aggressively expanded its campus by purchasing dilapidated downtown properties. Its art, design, engineering, and medical programs have generated a sizable influx of non-white and non-local college students to downtown Richmond. These students attracted investments from the real estate, restaurant, and retail store industries. VCU has become Richmond's saving grace, revitalizing a downtown that had been widely recognized as dead for decades.

This awakening was crystallized in 2011 with the commodification of the RVA brand (short for Richmond, Virginia). The brand represented a newer image of Richmond as a hub for

art, culture, and racial diversity. Marketing agencies, local businesses, universities, city government agencies, and everyday people have fully adopted this acronym. Not only does RVA has its own website, but one would be hard pressed to drive along Interstate-95 or Interstate-64 within a fifty-mile radius of Richmond without seeing an RVA decal. The new brand reflects, as one local stated, "Richmond growing in spite of Richmond." Some longtime locals have not embraced the change that RVA represents. "There's Richmond and then there is RVA," the resident continued. Yet, the continued growth of VCU and the downtown economy shows that RVA is here to stay. "RVA is like 'I don't need any of y'all to do this. We are gonna make this happen because this is the city that we see, and this is the city that we want to express in our art, and our culture, and our diversity."[15]

Richmond has become a more transient city in the past few decades. The influx of new residents from the northeast and mid-Atlantic region has removed old attitudes and customs from city life. One of the most sacred norms to be recently broken was the reverence for the West End Establishment, a group that now operates at the social periphery of Richmond. Much of this comes from the change within the Establishment itself. Robert Corcoran, co-founder of Hope in the Cities, has noticed that, "The leadership has shifted to people who have less long-term investment personally in the life of the community." He remembered when Richmond leadership comprised of a handful of homegrown businessmen who implanted themselves into the many aspects of civic life. Now, older Richmond businesses are merging with, or being replaced by, newer ones from out of town. Make no mistake, the newer Establishment "have a whole lot of money and can make a whole lot happen whenever they want, there is no doubt about that," a

[15] Interview with Christie Coleman, June 25, 2019; "For the RVA brand, 'No' turned to 'Go!,'" Richmond Times-Dispatch, February 24, 2014, (https://www.richmond.com/business/local/for-the-rva-brand-no-turned-to-go/article_b498c7a2-81cb-5b22-9471-3fbb384f62e5.html); https://rvanews.com/news/sticking-it-to-richmond-the-origin-and-future-of-the-rva-sticker/56426; http://www.rvacreates.com/overview.php; and Hayter, *Dream is Lost*, 243.

local museum director once said in an interview. Yet, their transient nature has assured that "the deference [for them] is not nearly as intense as it used to be." The Establishment use to embody everything that was oddly right (strong civic involvement by the powerful) and wrong (consolidation of power into the hands of a wealthy few) about Richmond. However, to those who have worked with and against the Establishment, the strong corporate citizenship that they provided is quite gone with little indication that it will return. The new Establishment's efforts, as Corcoran once said in sadness, "just doesn't quite feel the same."[16]

"The Road to Building One Richmond," 2017-Present.

During a citywide press conference in 2017, current Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney claimed that his administration was on "The road to building *One Richmond*." Like RVA, One Richmond has often been used as a marketing slogan to attract new industries, residents, and tourists back into the city. At the time, however, the mayor used the phrase to propose the possible removal of the city's controversial Confederate statues along Monument Avenue. With racial issues lingering in cities such as Charleston, New Orleans, Austin, Texas, and more recently Charlottesville, Richmonders have publicly questioned whether the Confederate statues they inherited belong in their city.[17]

This valid question has not troubled the city's most seasoned racial healers. In fact, they believe that the monuments are more of a moot issue today than they have ever been in years

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[16] Interview with Robert Corcoran, March 11, 2019; and Interview with Christie Coleman, June 25, 2019.

[17] Remarks by Mayor Levar M. Stoney, June 22, 2017, (Monument Avenue Commission, Richmond, Virginia, https://www.monumentavenuecommission.org/in-the-news/remarks/), 34-39; "Mayor Stoney Announces Commission on Confederate Statues for Monument Avenue," *RVA Magazine*, June 22, 2017 (https://rvamag.com/news/mayor-stoney-announces-commission-on-confederate-statues-for-monument-avenue.html); "Mayor Stoney: Richmond's Confederate Monuments Can Stay, But 'Whole Story' Must Be Told," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 22, 2017, (https://www.richmond.com/news/local/city-of-richmond/mayor-stoney-richmond-s-confederate-monuments-can-stay-but-whole/article_80e564f7-69f3-5897-a579-5799a9293b68.html); and Monument Avenue Commission New Monuments Working Group Meeting Notes, August 2, 2017, (*Monument Avenue Commission Collection*).

past. “I thought it was a political move, pure and simple” Reverend Sylvester Turner said about the mayor’s controversial inquiry. Reverend Benjamin Campbell, a man who deserves extensive studies about his lifelong racial advocacy, noted in an interview that, “I just spoke to Tee [Reverend Turner] the other day about this. I think we both see it the same way. I hope they don’t take down those statues on Monument Avenue.” These men understand the potential damage that the statues inflict upon the city’s image. However, Campbell is jaded by his experiences as a tutor and mentor at Armstrong High School in Church Hill. Armstrong has the highest concentration of poor black students in Richmond (close 99% both black and impoverished). Many of their parents do not have the most basic economic needs met for themselves, let alone their children. Still, city government and state legislators collectively fund the school at about 25% of its functioning rate due to its low standardized testing scores. Armstrong’s struggles with underachievement are emblematic of most Richmond City Public Schools. “Everybody feels like, ‘oh I'm not racist.’ Yes you are. Why is it that we feel that we have enough time to wait for public housing to evolve, or wait for the public schools to shift? Therefore I always ask why aren't your kids in public school,” a local bureaucrat often says to residents about city schools.[18]

Campbell’s outreach efforts are just a small part of the newer questions about race and collective identity in Richmond. Instead of focusing on history and memory, they question whether the city’s image will ever translate into racial equity and erase, in the words of Campbell, “the worst kind of poverty in America.” Currently, Richmond is experiencing a downtown commercial rebirth while housing almost half of the metropolitan area’s impoverished

[18] Interview with Reverend Sylvester Turner, March 13, 2019; Interview with Johnathan Zur, March 13, 2019; and Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 14, 2019; and Interview with Reginald E. Gordon, June 27, 2019.

population. Poverty touches all racial categories in Richmond. But it has a stranglehold around the necks of black Richmond. Over half of the city's blacks are impoverished and economically quarantined in the East End and uptown (lower Northside) housing projects. The majority of low-income households, not including public housing residents, are also black. Blacks make up the lowest amount of college graduates and the highest amount of low-wages unskilled workers. Even the city's small unemployment pool is majority black as well. Longtime Richmond residents are not surprised about the gross inequity between the races. Fifty years after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., led his Poor People's March through Richmond, wealth remains identifiably white, and poverty identifiably black.[19]

Studies have shown that poverty in Richmond is a generational quagmire. From 1990 to 2014, Richmond's high poverty and low poverty areas have remained mostly unchanged. The metropolitan area's wealthiest (exclusively white) Windsor Farms neighborhood is only three miles away from the (majority black) Gilpin Court Housing Projects. This short distance places Richmond in-line with other cities that have successfully separated black people from the economic prosperity just beyond their neighborhoods. Scholars of urban politics trace the prevalence of black urban poverty to the Great Migration of the early 1900s. Over the last half-century, systemic black poverty has worsened. Inner cities are now almost exclusively work and entertainment spaces for whites and municipalities of destitution for blacks.[20]

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[19] Office of Community Wealth Building Flyer, undated; Office of Community Wealth Building Brochure, undated; and *Annual Report 2018* from the Office of Community Wealth Building to the Mayor of the City of Richmond, March 2019, 1-32, (*Office of Community Wealth Building* in Richmond City Hall, Richmond, Virginia), a copy of the report is also in possession of the author.

[20] Unpacking the Census Powerpoint Presentation, 2010, (https://www.slideshare.net/jzur/unpacking-the-2010-census-part-1); "Poverty In Richmond, How Long Must We Wait," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, July 1, 2012, (https://www.richmond.com/news/article_11888344-dc1f-59b1-941a-5f5959ec007d.html); Unpacking the Census 5 Years Later, 2016, (https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e361/b559ac4eb7ae0e6882eacb76d253175f9df2.pdf).

"By any criteria, the persistent concentration of poor residents in older cities ...isolated from the opportunities that could improve their life chances, constitutes a major national problem, and yet the general public remains largely indifferent," a recent historian concludes. This indifference is even more heightened in Richmond: a place that socializes a biracial disdain for the black poor. Many locals believe that impoverished blacks mostly deserved their underclass status. Scholarship on race and poverty contradicts this line of thinking. Since the 1960s, American historians have generally seen race-based poverty as the result of local, state, and federal policy. Thus, the gross disparity between white and black economic, housing, and educational opportunities are desired results of the white business and black political establishment. Many white Richmonders dismiss the city's black impoverished people as a blight upon the city. The black middle class, many of whom have relocated to the West End or surrounding suburbs, have largely *othered* the black poor as well. They see their poor skinfolk as lazy, unmotivated, and the products of their life choices.[21]

Race-based poverty in Richmond, like other southern cities, has rarely been the topic of serious exploration. However in the 1980s, a local coalition of scholars and civic leaders (fifteen white and fifteen black) took on this task when forming Richmond Urban Institute. This

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[21] Howard Gillette, Jr., *Camden After the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Post-Industrial City*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 3; Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto*, (Chicago, 1967); David M. Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century*, (University of Illinois Press, 1973); Kenneth L. Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland: 1870-1930*, (University of Illinois Press, 1976); Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburg, 1916-1930*, (University of Illinois Press, 1987); and Joe W. Trotter, Jr., *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-1945*, (University of Illinois Press, 1985); Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s*, (Harpers and Row,1984), 220 and 270; Thomas Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*: *Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton University Press, 1996); Sheryll Cashin. *The Failures of Integration: How Race and Class Are Undermining the American Dream*, (New York: Public Affairs Council, 2004); David Rusk, *Cities Without Suburbs*, (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995); Frank Stricker, *Why America Lost The War On Poverty-- And How To Win It* (University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 4, 2, 36, and 37; James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration*, (University of Chicago Press, 1989), 278-279; Douglass S. Massey and Nancy A Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, (Harvard University Press, 1993), 3-9; Interview with Reginald Gordon, June 27, 2019; Interview with Patrick Graham, July 9, 2019; and Interview with Benjamin Campbell, March 14, 2019.

makeshift group of liberals conducted groundbreaking studies and services that combated the oppressive forces of poverty in Richmond. In 1981, the Institute convinced city government to subsidize public transportation expansion into struggling black communities. The next year, they convinced local banks to reverse their racist lending practices and help some working class blacks purchase homes in neighborhoods that they had lived in for generations. They also focused on childhood employment, annually providing over 500 black inner city youth with summer jobs. Many of their projects began lowering the city's poverty rate from 40% in the mid-1980s to around 25%, a number that has remained constant until today. In spite of its popularity and productivity, the Institute died a very Richmond death. Blacks and whites regularly fought to control the organization's image and direction. The turmoil created a collective distrust among its members, leading to the firing of both its black and white Urban Missioners in 1984, and a complete disbandment by 1990.[22]

The fight to end race-based poverty seemingly died with the trailblazing Institute. One of its members -- and local political scientist Dr. John Moeser-- publicly griped in the 2000s that "it's a disgrace that 30 years of talk have produced virtually nothing. There has been a change, no mistake about it, but, unfortunately, the change has to do with our problems getting larger." The activist academic dedicated his final days of research to studying the impacts of race and poverty in Richmond. In a series of public lectures in 2010 entitled *Unpacking the Census*, he drew direct

[22] Christopher Silver, *Twentieth Century Richmond: Planning, Politics, and Race,* (University of Tennessee Press, 1984); Stephen J. Hoffman, *Race, Class, and Power in the Building of Richmond, 1870-1920,* (McFarland and Company Publishers, Inc., 2004); By Laws of Richmond Urban Institute, By-Laws, Certificate of Incorporation, 1980-1985; Report on the Electric Trolley Route Location Committee, April 7, 1981 at Reynolds Metal, Bus Riders Committee Meeting, 1981-1983; "Average Income Necessary to Purchase an Average House in Richmond," undated chart made by Richmond Urban Institute, Federal Reserve Board, Housing Issue, 1981-1982, Highlights of Community Reinvestment Act, 1983-1985, Community Reinvestment Act, 1983-1985; Brochure for Private Sector Partnership for Creative Community Economic Development, September 10-12, 1985; Richmond's Poor: Why are 77% Women and Children, September 1984, "Richmond's Poor: Why are 77% Women and Children 1984;" Summer Jobs '85 Directory, Summer Youth Employment, 1981-85; Boxes 1-20, M258, (*Richmond Urban Institute Papers*); Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 12, 2019.

lines between blackness in poverty. He showed that Richmond's economic growth is largely separated from its majority black residents. City government has also failed to mend the divide, cementing black residents as the economic floor by which whites use to stand in the middle and upper class. This research proved that while Richmond experienced a metamorphosis in terms of race relations, its people were, and still are, quite comfortable with severe racial inequity.[23]

"Now is the time to develop mixed-income neighborhoods ...so that a rainbow of people can live together and well," the political scientist told the *Times-Dispatch*. His studies pressured city government to take racial reconciliation beyond public history and towards a better distribution of wealth. In 2012, the mayor created the Office of Community Wealth Building (OCWB). "Community wealth building is the aspirational goal of getting thousands of Richmonders to the point of self-sufficiency and financial wellbeing," said the office's leader, Reginald E. Gordon. This office is the first of its kind in the nation, combining social services with public education and business development. With support from the mayor's office, OCWB leadership plans to reduce the citywide poverty by forty percent in 2030.[24]

Reginald Gordon's path to the OCWB is antithetical to *the* black Richmond experience. The Blackstone, Virginia native was one of the first black children to attend an integrated elementary school in his small, mostly white, piedmont-area town. In 1967, he moved to Richmond's (then black middle-class) Northside neighborhood of Battery Park. Gordon rarely

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[23] "Poverty In Richmond, How Long Must We Wait," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, July 1, 2012; Unpacking the Census Powerpoint Presentation, 2010, (https://www.slideshare.net/jzur/unpacking-the-2010-census-part-1); and (https://www.richmond.com/news/article_11888344-dc1f-59b1-941a-5f5959ec007d.html); Unpacking the Census 5 Years Later, 2016, (https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e361/b559ac4eb7ae0e6882eacb76d253175f9df2.pdf).

[24] "Poverty In Richmond, How Long Must We Wait," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, July 1, 2012; Office of Community Wealth Building Ladder: The Climb for Two Adults and Two Children, January 2018; Office of Community Wealth Building: The Climb for an Individual with a Child, January 2018; Office of Community Wealth Building BLISS: Building Lives to Independence & Self Sufficiency, undated, (*Office of Community Wealth Building*), copies are in the possession of the author.

received ill treatment from whites. In fact, he befriended several white students at Thomas Jefferson High School during the years of busing and white flight. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Duke University, and later a law degree from Howard University Law School. Gordon remembered that his middle-class background, excellent grades, and gentleman demeanor led people to think that "I was destined to be this judge." However, he felt compelled to fit the Howard Law School mold of becoming a *social engineer*. Gordon shocked everyone when he spent his first few years out of law school providing legal services for impoverished black people in Emporia, Virginia. It was here, not Richmond, where he learned first-hand about the systemic nature of black poverty.[25]

Gordon expected to help black people navigate Virginia's complicated legal system. However, he was little more than a grammar teacher. Gordon helped countless people simply read the terms and conditions on delinquent bills and other non-punitive contracts. These experiences showed Gordon that the services he provided were but a band-aid over the deeply entrenched wound called poverty. He wanted to continue his work in Emporia. However, his wife, who had recently received her law degree, wanted to live in the nation's capital. One day Gordon drove through Richmond to begin job hunting in Washington, D.C. While stopping for gas, he ran into a white friend that he made while volunteering for the American Red Cross in high school. After the two chatted for a bit, Gordon's friend asked him to accompany him to D.C. Gordon obliged the request. The next day, the two made their way to the American Red Cross headquarters. Little did Gordon know that his friend was a high-level director in the corporate office. "We walked into the general counsel's office and he says, 'This is Reggie Gordon, he grew up in Richmond. He was a Red Cross volunteer. He's a great guy, now he's a

[25] Interview with Reginald Gordon, June 27, 2019.

lawyer; hire him," Gordon remembered. In just a blink of an eye, his longtime friendship had landed him a plush job as a biomedical attorney for one of the largest non-profit organizations in America.[26]

Gordon did "a whole lot of soul searching" in his nine years at the Red Cross. He still cannot fully explain why, but he resigned from his job to return home to Battery Park in 1997. A dark cloud of sadness quickly overtook Gordon as he crossed the Potomac River. "When I got back, my neighborhood had been turned into one of those 'bad' neighborhoods ...And I wanted to know what happened," he said. Poverty and crime was the new norm in Northside. Battery Park was but one of the former middle-class areas to feel its effects. Gordon quickly inserted himself into various non-profit organizations to help redevelop his decaying neighborhood. His experiences in Washington, D.C., and status as a 'local boy made good,' earned him a place in the hierarchy of several non-profits throughout the city.[27]

Gordon was not aware of it at the time, but he ran towards his destiny. After being placed at the helm of the OCWB, Gordon prioritized a holistic approach to solving poverty. "The mayor's platform, his thrust is One Richmond. We matched that perspective, looking at the systemic and structural issues that kept us from living as *One Richmond*," Gordon said in an interview. One of the issues had been the paternalism within non-profit organizations. As a high-level non-profit executive, Gordon "got behind the curtain. Because on the surface you think a lot of do gooders want to help. But as I explored systems and integration, people need poor people to stay employed. Its poverty pimping!," he said. When Gordon tried to help people reach financial stability, "People got mad. They would say things like 'how dare you do this.' They

[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

would threaten lawsuits and say that we like the status quo." He went on to describe one story where, "A white woman who ran a non-profit for the homeless said to me, 'I have two kids in college, I have a mortgage, how dare you try to end this! Because this is my hometown, I was fascinated by it, instead of being repulsed by it." This fascination led Gordon at the time to, again, forfeit a plush job as the head of a non-profit to work in city government."[28]

"What I am landing on after all of these years working in nonprofits, and even in the city, is that we need to work on what's at the root of all of this," he said. Most of his experiences in non-profit organizations were in the mid-1990s. However, he has seen similar trends as a city bureaucrat. "What has happened is now is we have non-profits groups who are imported into the city to help the 'poor little black kids.' Then they leave and put the parents in an awful position….it perpetuates this villain called the *Great White Savior*," he said frankly. Many non-profits in the Richmond area were overly dependent on maintaining black poverty. Hence, most of their efforts went to helping poor children rely on them for various needs. Gordon has shifted his office's focus from poverty management to poverty eradication; and it begins with "the family. It sounds conservative, but it is not," he believes. However, most families suffer not from relational breakdowns, but a lack of economic resources. "We have figured this out, the reason why certain schools are not thriving is that the parents do not have living wage jobs. The parents do not have the support they need," Gordon says. Hence, his office focused on the creation of livable-wage jobs. This agenda caught the attention of the mayor's office in 2016.[29]

The once pigeon-holed OCWB now frames City Hall's entire human services department. Gordon and his team has become the essential bridge between local legislators, the

[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

business community, city schools, and underserved residents. "All those components that have been dispersed, community wealth building is the composite, working as a team, almost like a triage of community and family," he said. Whereas erasing race-based poverty was *an* issue in the past, Gordon and his staff are trying to make it *the* issue in twenty-first century Richmond. The OCWB has taken cues from Hope in the Cities by engaging in "equity conversations" where city leaders and residents discuss ways to fix housing, jobs, and education issues. They even host education workshops, job fairs, and other events that are attended by all sectors of the city's economy.[30]

The fruits are steadily ripening. Over the last few years, thirty local employers have worked with the OCWB to become better corporate citizens. They have agreed to help lower the black poverty rate by offering more livable-wage jobs. However, the OCWB has run into a consistent snag. "Once they arrive, and we have a pipeline of people walking through the door, there's always: she doesn't have this, or he doesn't fit the culture," Gordon complained. Corporate partners have been vocal about the black labor force being largely under-skilled for decent-waged employment. Some within the OCWB believe that the business establishment should work directly with Richmond City Public Schools to help develop the untapped human capital into a skilled workforce. This would offset the city's school funding issues and create a direct labor pipeline for the city's largest employers. However, those steps have not been taken. Some feel that transformative policy like that will never be seriously considered. Yet Gordon believes this goal "is what we will have to spend the next couple of years on." He and his staff understand that if there is not more intentional planning to connect the black poor to decent

[30] Ibid.

education and livable-wage jobs within the growing economy, racial poverty will undoubtedly continue.[31]

The new-age racial healers, or as they would like to be called equity practitioners, are both hopeful and pessimistic about receiving the mantle from those before them. "People in Richmond, this includes all of us, have this racial baggage, most of it is unspoken. That's the classic issue in Richmond, and I hate to admit it, but it's true," said Gordon. They understand that fighting race-based poverty means undoing the racist attitudes and systems that perpetuate it. This requires a new understanding of identity, one where collective uplift is a vital part of everyone's self-interest. Although Richmond is growing, and its identity is more transient in nature, the city is still related to itself. What happens in one side of the city still impacts the thoughts and feelings of those in the other. This allows Richmonders to own this moment and strive towards a citywide initiative to end race-based poverty. That would be, in the words of the current mayor, "the road to building One Richmond," and the most appropriate means of continuing the fight to reconcile the city's divisive racial history.[32]

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[31] OCWB Listening Sessions Notes, August 2016; Steve Dubb and Alex Rudzinski, "Richmond, Virginia, Social Enterprise Feasibility Enterprise Analysis: Reducing Poverty and Building Community Wealth Through Social Enterprise," Final Report Submitted to the City of Richmond, June 2016, possession in the copy of the author; and Interview with Reginald Gordon, June 27, 2019.

[32] Interview with Reverend Benjamin Campbell, March 14, 2019; Interview with Dr. Paige Chargois, May 27, 2019; Interview with Christy Coleman, June 25, 2019; Interview with Reginald Gordon, June 27, 2019; and Interview with Dr. Patrick Graham, July 2, 2019.

ESSAY ON SOURCES

This dissertation was written with an array of primary source materials located mostly in Richmond. I first began with newspapers, and then I moved on to census data, personal letters, and general correspondence to round out my first phase of research. I later focused on grassroots papers, organizational notes, promotional pamphlets, and private surveys. The majority of these materials have been wonderfully preserved and easy to locate. Over time, I became aware of the issues raised in Michael Rouph-Trouillot's seminal book entitled *Silencing the Past*. Although I wanted to write Richmond's recent racial history as a story of human activity, I quickly realized that this dissertation would never be the reflection of truth or a mirror of the past. It is the production of a junior scholar with the privilege to recount it as I saw fit.

Historians are the creators of history, and not its messengers. We are trained to evaluate mostly archived materials with a sharp eye to contextualize and criticize. Then, we are to produce a story that can be traced directly back to the authoritative sources we used. This expectation forces us to omit the stories that do not make their way into the archives. Although repositories have expanded their reach in the past fifty-or-so odd years, the bulk of human activity never gets recorded or archived for scholarly inquiry. This reality hit home when I began writing a history of race about my hometown. I wanted to tell a story of Richmond that was both accurate and academically sound. Most importantly, I wanted it to reflect the city's consistent struggle with change.

This agenda ran afoul with my initial research. Much of the archival material I found followed a consistent trend. Richmond was segregated, then it was not. Downtown was

immaculate, then it decayed. City schools were top-tier, then they failed. Richmond was the center of the metropolitan area, then it became the periphery. It was at this point I realized that I was trapped in the historical continuum I was writing about. Since the mid-twentieth century, Richmond had been an image conscious city. One would be hard pressed to find a plethora of archival sources showing Richmond's racial issues beyond the Civil Rights Era. This challenged me to navigate through and connect the mountain of disconnected materials in a meaningful way. I was later able to show that Richmond was more than a city. It was an identity, painful memory, manufacturer of oppression, and a place of healing.

The greatest primary sources were Richmonders themselves. Due to the self-imposed time constraints on graduation, I did not speak to nearly as many residents as I wanted to. The local leaders and residents I spoke with, however, confirmed many of the conclusions I came to, and they proudly shared their experiences with me. Much of it, like most other source material, could not be used for the dissertation. These were stories about childhood experiences, marriages, friendships, rumors, and rumors of rumors. In the future, I plan to expand this project by illuminating the social side of urban history. Racial reconciliation happened while people lived their everyday lives thinking about things other than race. If this dissertation failed anywhere, it was in omitting this truth from the narrative. Nevertheless, the interviewees provided an invaluable piece to this growing puzzle. They were the soul within the body of this work. Without their contributions, this dissertation would not have been a true reflection, and product, of Richmond.

Historiography

This dissertation informs two historiographical streams. The first is the debate, more or less, about southern exceptionalism after World War II. *White Flight* (2005), *The Silent Majority*

(2006), *The End of Southern Exceptionalism* (2006), *In Search of Another Country* (2007), *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism* (2010), collectively argue that, in the words of historian Matthew Lassiter, "the era of southern exceptionalism is over." These works define the *South* -- The former Confederate States of America and Kentucky -- as a region that lost its distinction after World War II with federal spending, corporate investment, civil rights activity, and urban sprawl. This cocktail of modernity, seen mostly in southern metropolitan areas, these historians argue, rid the region of its one-party politics, sub-par public and higher education, exclusively rural-based economy, and, most importantly, its domineering force of white supremacy. These changes assured that the South was no longer distinct, and that its postwar reality was intertwined with American story of political moderation, "suburban exclusion, and middle-class entitlement," not an obsession with maintaining racial discrimination.[1]

In more recent years, local and regional historians have argued just the opposite. *Away Down South* (2005), *Southern Past* (2008), *After the Dream* (2011), *Southern Crucible* (2015), *What Can and Can't Be Said* (2015), and *Charleston in Black and White* (2015), and other local histories acknowledge that political and economic changes brought the South closer to the American mainstream. However, they show that the South broadly, and more so its major cities, maintained its regional distinction because of the southern identity: a contested social terrain built on the very-American rivalry between white supremacy and black freedom. The South best reflects America's struggle with the theory of human equality and the practice of inequality.

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[1] C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of The New South, 1877-1913*, (Louisiana State University Press, 1951), x; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution*, (Harper & Row, 1988), 153-70; Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction*, (Oxford University Press, 2007), vii-viii; Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and The Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton University Press, 2005), 1-10; Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in The Sunbelt South*, (Princeton University Press, 2006), 1-20; and Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution*, (Princeton University Press, 2007), 1-16; Byron E. Shafer and Richard Johnston, *The End of Southern Exceptionalism: Class, Race, and Partisan Change in the Postwar South*, (Harvard University Press, 2006), 8-22; and Matthew D. Lassiter and Joseph Crespino, eds., *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*, (Oxford University Press, 2010), 4-30.

However, the region is, more so than any other region, defined by its tense race relations. Because slavery and Jim Crow existed in its worst form below the Mason-Dixon Line, other regions judged themselves, and the nation, according to how much they resembled the South. Modern discussions about race and public memory, seen in issues about the placement of public monuments, reflect that the southern identity remained well-intact after the social movements of the 1960s, and that race *is* the defining feature in and of this distinct American region.[2]

In focusing on the City of Richmond, this dissertation helps to define the South and the nation's struggles with race in the late twentieth century. Historians mostly see southern identity as an unhealed tension between whites and blacks. I argue that Richmond helped provide a roadmap for easing such tension. It was in the former Confederate capital where blacks and whites constantly question the division between them. This discourse resulted in biracial efforts to change the city's image through rebuilding the inner city and changing its public history. By the late 1990s, Richmond had successfully shed the cultural baggage of southern history. City residents and leaders were psychologically ready to embrace the current challenge of better improving other aspects of city life. In the South, the race question was never settled by slavery,

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[2] Steven F. Lawson, *Running For Freedom: Civil Rights Black Politics in America Since 1941*, (Temple University Press, 1991), 1-20 and 65; Harold A. McDougall, *Black Baltimore: A New Theory of Community*, (Temple University Press, 1993), 91-99; Ronald Bayor, *Race and The Shaping of Twentieth Century Atlanta*, (University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 52, 193-5, and 256-7; Dwight Watson, *Race and Houston Police Department, 1930-1990 A Change Did Come*, (Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 62-93; Kent B. Germany, *New Orleans After The Promises: Poverty, Citizenship, and the Search for the Great Society*, (University of Georgia Press, 2007), 1-20; Alton Hornsby, Jr., *Black Power in Dixie: A Political History of African Americans in Atlanta*, (University of Florida Press, 2009); Leonard N. Moore, *Black Rage in New Orleans: Police Brutality and African American Activism from World War II to Hurricane Katrina*, (Louisiana State University Press, 2010); Steven Estes, *Charleston in Black and White: Race and Power in the South After the Civil Rights Movement*, (University of North Carolina, 2015), 1-7; Chanelle N. Rose, *The Struggle for Black Freedom in Miami: Civil Rights and America's Tourist Paradise, 1896-1968*, (Louisiana State University Press, 2015), 12-20; Shirletta J. Kinchen, *Black Power in the Bluff City: African American Youth and Student Activism in Memphis, 1965-1975*, (The University of Tennessee Press, 2016), 10-14; and Maurice J. Hobson, *The Legend of the Black Mecca: Politics and Class in the Making of Modern Atlanta*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 1-10; and James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity*, (Oxford University Press, 2005), 1-13.

Jim Crow, or the Civil Rights Movement. However, Richmond remained a crucial place for the South and the nation to explore the seemingly unreachable goal of reconciliation.

This dissertation also adds to a collection of local histories about race-relations in Richmond. Compared to cities like Atlanta, Memphis, and New Orleans, Richmond has not had nearly the degree of racial studies that it should have. However, a small group of scholars have taken up this task and turned this niche genre into a legitimate topic of study. The first group of scholars were highly-educated white men who were members of the Richmond Establishment. They romanticized the city, seeing it as a window to American history because of its primary role in the European colonization, the American Revolution, the Civil War, and New South industrialism. Because of this, and these men's social position, the earliest works were not very critical, more descriptive than informative. Their most important contribution was the conceptualization of Richmond as a body of people that was defined by the landscape they shared, and the common culture they created.[3]

The earliest history of race in Richmond was written by a Jewish resident named Samuel Mordecai in 1856. While *Richmond in By-Gone Days* was not solely about race, it had an entire chapter dedicated to city race relations. Mordecai argued that blacks and whites interacted harmoniously under the slave system. "Black slaves and servants are provided food, fuel, and clothing, while our poor-houses and other receptacles for the destitute and dissipated whites are overcrowded," he said. Mordecai described free blacks as the *mock-aristocracy*, a group whose "silk dress of gaudy colours sweeps the ground." He dedicated most of his attention to the slaves of affluent white oligarchs. "The servants belonging to the old families in Virginia, and especially those pertaining to domestic households, were as proud of the establishment as if it

[3] Thomas L. Connelly, *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society*, (Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), xiii-xv.

were their own," he wrote. Mordecai's description of the master-slave relationship was common among pro-slavery advocates at the time. However, the redeeming value in this scantily-cited work is that it provided a genealogy for the integral nature of racism in Richmond. Very few people, both past and present, could truly analyze Richmond beyond its issues with race.[4]

The next book was published in 1912 by a prominent white minister who wrote three books about Virginia history. The monograph about Richmond was the last in the trilogy. Rooted in a tremendous amount of primary sources, W. Ashbury Christian's *Richmond: Her Past and Present* argues that since "the time the white man first appeared on the banks of the Powhatan" to the impending years of World War I, "no city in America, therefore, is richer in historical interest than is Richmond." This 600 page book was published during immense turmoil over Jim Crow laws in Richmond. Hence, it comes as no surprise that Christian went out of his way to highlight that Richmond was an identifiably white city. The displaced Indians were *savages*. The blacks, often left unnamed with the exception of slave minister John Jasper, were either *Negroes* or *coloreds*. Christian presented both groups as either invisible, or barriers "to the irresistible march of civilization." Like the previous work by Mordecai, this book is more valuable as an intellectual history of whiteness in Richmond than an academic history of race relations. Christian's trivialization of black life pushed black people to the periphery of Richmond's history, taking trained historians more than fifty-years to begin pulling them back to the center.[5]

Sixty four years later, longtime Richmond newspaper editor and son of a prominent historian named Virginius Dabney "portray[ed] Richmond in the round," and in the process, "examine[s] Virginia's capital in its economic, social, racial, and cultural aspects, from the

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[4] Samuel Mordecai, *Richmond in By-Gone Days: Being Reminiscence of An Old Citizen*, (Richmond, Virginia: G.M. West, 1856), 309-18.

[5] W. Asbury Christian, *Richmond: Her Past and Present*, (Richmond, Virginia: L.H. Jenkins Press, 1912), 1, 52, 64, 101, 119, 181, and 536.

earliest time to the present." *Richmond: Story of a City* "rescue[d] unsung heroes and heroines from oblivion" by turning blacks from objects of ridicule to subjects of inquiry. In doing so, he portrayed Richmond as a place shaped by more than its elite white men and Confederate history. However, the detailed account remained just that. The accomplishments of blacks such as Gabriel Prosser, John Mitchell, Jr., and Giles Jackson shared space, not nearly equal, with members of the Establishment. The award-winning journalist was a southern apologist who spoke against the issues of racism. However, he later became one of the most vocal advocates for *separate but equal* in almost every facet of life. His book reflects half of that opinion. Black and white history in Richmond were indeed separate. They were not, however, equal by any stretch of the imagination.[6]

Socially conscious scholars, mostly with ties to the Richmond area, began examining Richmond's race relations in the 1980s. They reversed the previous framework by focusing on the issues that plagued the city, and not how great Richmond was as a place. *The Politics of Annexation* (1982) was both a work of history and political science. It argues that Richmond was dominated by a racist white oligarchy who stopped at nothing to maintain power. The story began after World War II and ended with the election of Henry Marsh in 1977. The scholars were not very hopeful for Richmond's political future. They felt that the Establishment was "still adhering to a racial politics that blacks perceive as black subordination." This compelled them to predict that "the [white] elite will, no doubt, continue to struggle for a return to white rule in Richmond" after the 1977 election.[7]

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[6] "Professor Dabney and The Negro," *Richmond Times*, October 10, 1901, 4; and Virginius Dabney, *Richmond: The Story of a City*, (Garden City: New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1976), 3-54. This book was also reprinted in 1990 by the UVA Press. Minus the clarification of a few factual errors, and the inclusion of more material at the end, the book is mostly the same.

[7] John Moeser and Rutledge B. Dennis, *Politics of Annexation*: *Oligarchic Power In A Southern City* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Pub. Co, 1982), 188.

Less than a decade later, Robert A. Pratt authored a groundbreaking study on school desegregation in Richmond. His work was both historical and prophetic. *The Color of Their Skin* (1992) argues that school desegregation never truly happened; and at the rate the city was going at the time of publication, chances were that it would never happen. Richmond both defied and exemplified the southern pushback against the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. While the city had little-to-no racial violence during the years of desegregation, Richmond whites used thirty four years of foot-dragging, grassroots resistance, and legislative loopholes to prevent any meaningful level of integration. Richmond was, more than any other city at the time, proof that the federal judiciary would not force legislators and executives to enforce *Brown*.[8]

Affirmative Action and the Stalled Quest for Progress (1996) argues that Richmond's tumultuous racial history explains the retrenchment of America's Civil Rights Era progress. Affirmative action was a set of public programs used to economically, socially, and politically favor previously oppressed groups. In 1983, Richmond's black-controlled city council lost the most critical lawsuit in the affirmative action era. While securing a city contract, a white-owned construction firm refused to adhere to the *set-aside* clauses -- a requirement to allocate between 10%-30% of its sub-contracts to black-owned firms. The Supreme Court ruled in the white firm's favor, reasoning that set-aside programs punished white-owned firms for past racial prejudices that they had not committed. This decision mimicked the failures of school desegregation a decade before, prompting states and localities to largely abandon Civil Rights Era economic reforms.[9]

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[8] Robert A. Pratt, *The Color of Their Skin: Education and Race in Richmond, Virginia, 1954-89*, (University of Virginia Press, 1992), xi-xiii and 98-110.

[9] W. Avon, Drake and Robert D. Holsworth, *Affirmative Action and The Stalled Quest for Black Progress*, (University of Illinois Press, 1996), 1-9.

Rights for a Season (2003) takes a more critical approach to race relations in Richmond, calling black political advancements mostly "short-lived." While focusing on the rise and fall of the first black majority council, the authors argue that, "After the election of 1982, biracial conservative coalitions have dominated political and economic decision making in Richmond and have served to thwart black political advancement." The black majority council survived for five years until one of its key members was unseated in 1982. This gave the Establishment control of the city council, and the mayor's office. This political development, led by a black conservative mayor, assured that "the implementation of progressive policies aimed at improving the social and educational conditions for the city's poor and working class residents" would end, and they mostly did.[10]

The most recent monograph is a more refined inquiry of the first black-majority city council. *The Dream is Lost* (2017) "is not merely a triumph narrative about Richmond's contribution to the long struggle for black freedom but also a cautionary tale about a city coming to terms with the continuation of racist political trends in American life." The author sees the rise of black conservatism in the mid-1980s as an unintended consequence of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA). The black support for decreased public spending and tough-on-crime legislation, he argues, perpetuated the systemic racism of the past. In siding with historian Steven Estes's analysis of Charleston, Julian Maxwell Hayter shows that black political progress in the 1960s mostly succumbed to a longer history of white paternalism (mainly economic pressure) in the political arena. This reality was part-and-parcel of the crisis over regional identity and distinction after the Modern Civil Rights Movement.[11]

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[10] Lewis A., Randolph and Gayle T. Tate, *Rights for a Season: The Politics of Race, Class, and Gender in Richmond, Virginia*, (University of Tennessee Press, 2003), xiv-xvi.

[11] Julian Maxwell Hayter. *The Dream Is Lost: Race and Voting Rights and The Politics of Race in Richmond, Virginia*, (University of Kentucky Press, 2017), 1-10 and 239-45.

The most recent scholarship paints a vivid picture of Richmond. It does not romanticize the city for its role in the American Revolution, Civil War, and the New South; nor does it see Richmond as an example of the nation's issues with racism. My dissertation opens a new door for inquiry about Richmond, the South, and the nation. By charting racial politics and race relations from the mid-to-end century, I show both a continuation and break from the past. Richmond is still obsessed with race, and there is little doubt that it will continue to be in the near future. This obsession is best seen in its racially segregated housing, public schools, and churches. However, Richmond's obsession has changed significantly. Through the use of revitalization and public history, Richmonders have helped the nation explore newer ways to deal with race relations. Once hidden by the dual silence of hatred, race relations are now more openly discussed throughout the city. These discussions have allowed Richmond to come to terms with its awkward place in the American psyche. It is the former capital of the Confederacy, the Lost Cause Mecca, and a home of racial reconciliation.

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