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Urban v. Suburban: The Examination of the Debate Over Where to Site
Two New Jersey Community Colleges

by

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the debate surrounding the site selection of several New Jersey community colleges. It takes into account the 1960s time period in which they were founded. The process to establish a community college commenced with each county establishing a committee to assess whether or not there was a need to institute a county college within its boundaries. As each county deliberated where to locate its community college, New Jersey experienced civil unrest, a demographic shift from the cities to the suburbs, and race riots. In this study, two New Jersey counties, Essex and Mercer, are thoroughly studied in depth as to how they chose the sites for their community college. Two other counties, Passaic and Middlesex, are studied as a means of comparison. These counties were chosen since they contained urban and suburban locations as possible locales for their community college. These decisions were watched very closely by the community, the press, and many civic and religious organizations. The primary research question is: How did each of the two counties approach its decision where to site its community college and in what ways did the concept of race influence that decision?

To examine these decisions, I adhere to a standard methodology of history where a review and analysis of primary and secondary sources are the key components. The county committees' reports that investigated the needs of a community college within each county, Trenton's responses to each county's recommendations, and other relevant reports are analyzed in depth. Other primary sources are newspaper articles, documents from the colleges' archives, institutional reports, and other government documents such as the minutes of college trustee meetings. Secondary sources have been identified as books and

journal articles written about the events that took place during that period. Census data, education statistics, and college catalogs were also consulted.

With the passage of the County College Law in 1962, the state was obligated to assist in the funding of these new public institutions in each county. However, the county freeholders in each county along with the county college trustee board they appointed could only select one main campus location for the entire county. While numerous factors were considered in determining where to locate each new community college, the final decision on location for the permanent site was made by the trustees and often met with controversy from members of the public. The debate stemmed from different communities having inflexible opposing views, often made on the basis of race. For the most part, suburban dwellers and inner city folks alike made the case where they wanted the county college to be located.

In the open county college trustees meetings that were often powder kegs of emotion, several members of the public and various community groups voiced their opinions and often ranted their reasons concerning the county college's site. This factor, along with consultant reports, and surreptitious pressure from local politicians were the three significant reasons that swayed the outcome. Counties that decided on an urban first campus pledged they would eventually have a suburban campus. While those counties who initially chose a suburban main campus envisioned a future utopian urban locale. This political assurance of a second campus was very often written right into the Board of Trustees resolution that created the main campus.

It appears that the trustees and the freeholders ameliorated the site debate as much as possible and tried to be "all things to all people." The final decision on location was often

an amalgamation of local political agendas and government incentive programs to offset the true cost of land acquisition. While the state had to approve each county college site, the Department of Education usually went along with the recommendations that were set forth by the local college board of trustees.

This historical study will investigate and report about the founding of Essex and Mercer County Community Colleges. Additionally, this dissertation will contribute to the larger understanding of the history of community colleges in America, specifically the development of the New Jersey community colleges during the restless decade of the 1960s. Since a similar review has never been produced against the turbulent political backdrop of the period, it is fitting to review the history of how the sites were chosen for Essex County College and Mercer County Community College.

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Education has always been paramount to me. Growing up in Newark, New Jersey, my dad would always ask us children at the dinner table each night, "What did you learn in school today?" Knowing that he and my mom struggled a great deal for us, we always had an answer readily available. Since he only had a sixth grade education himself, he rarely questioned our responses. However, once he listened to our answers, he almost always

added a relevant current event that he had read in the newspaper to supplement the school-based lessons we shared aloud. For all of their sacrifices and instilling in me a curiosity to learn, this dissertation is dedicated to the beloved memory of my parents.

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INTRODUCTION

I had the good fortune of working for an urban New Jersey community college for many years. Open admissions policies meant that the college could accept and enroll anyone who wanted an education and a chance for a brighter tomorrow. It seemed to coalesce with my personality. Born in Newark just weeks after its deadly riots, I grew up in my rapidly changing city believing all people were equal, regardless of race, creed, gender, or class. I lived in a neighborhood with kids from many different races, religions, and nationalities. We were taught at a very young age that we were all given gifts and that you had to share them with others for the good of the community.

One of the many gifts several of us were blessed with was perception. The older we got, the more we realized that not everyone was given the same resources or opportunities. When we went to other schools to play soccer or a football game, we noticed the athletic fields and the playground equipment. We had neither. We noticed that other neighborhoods had buildings that were clean and not strewn with graffiti or had boarded up houses and buildings around them. We saw those latter sites everyday in our neighborhood. While we were taught that all people were equal, we quickly realized that not all towns and neighborhoods were. Unsurprisingly, we wanted those nice ball fields and swing sets for our city and our neighborhood. I would posit that this is a common feeling for urban dwellers who want the same suburban excellence in their city. Why not? Themes of deprivation and fairness were common when the debate began over selecting community college sites.

Years later when I started working and attended meetings as a professional at other community colleges around the state, I wondered why each one was located where it was. I wondered who made those decisions and why? Newark, Jersey City, and Paterson had main community college campuses, so why didn't every major city in every New Jersey county have one? I conjectured how that might affect access for its potential student body. What about the kids in those cities who might be like me when I was their age and yearned for an education? Hence, this dissertation or "story" is rooted in my intellectual curiosity and is deeply personal to me. As a child and young adult, I witnessed firsthand the debilitating effects of urban decay but also the joyous realization that "we are all in this together" and the belief that an education provides limitless opportunities.

This dissertation is a political history of how the original sites of two community or "people's" colleges in New Jersey were selected. The site selection for Essex and Mercer Counties will be examined in depth. Two others counties, Middlesex and Passaic, will be studied as a means of comparison. These counties were chosen since each of them contained urban and suburban locations that could have been selected as the main campus of the county college. This study is significant since there is presently no other research relevant to community college site selection. There were many different stakeholders involved in the decisions to site the community colleges. These influential people represented many different national, statewide and local organizations, both political parties, public schools, newspapers, colleges and universities, businesses, chambers of commerce, unions, churches, and numerous civic and civil rights groups,

Higher education in New Jersey underwent massive changes in the 1960s with the creation of community colleges and the transformation of teachers colleges to liberal arts institutions. I believe that the community college trustees who were responsible for

selecting a main campus for each county's community college were very sensitive of their major decision and the impact it would have on the county. They knew that the location of the college would influence the attendance for needy black urban students. Most of the folks who already lived in the suburbs, as well as the mass exodus of those leaving the cities in the 1960s, were white. Thus, this research will highlight the important debate over county college site selection that took place in three out of the four counties featured. Themes of socioeconomic class and race were implicit and explicit in many of the arguments that were presented for and against an urban community college.

While most histories involve winners and losers and a struggle for control, this story is much more complicated than that. The winners or "heroes" in this story did not always wear capes or masks and the losers or "bad guys" did not always carry guns or have an evil laugh. It is far from "cut" and "dry." This situation with community college sites is told in varying shades of grey and is complex. My "story" is more than a reiteration of events that resulted in the formation of Essex, Mercer, Middlesex, and Passaic County Colleges. It is the telling of a social movement that involved people's lives and futures wrapped up in a perceived inalienable right called education. Emotions, hopes, and dreams were always two inches below the surface of every argument on both sides. The events will be re-told here with no agenda in mind. There is no "smoking gun" that caused all of the controversy over community college site selection. Three of the colleges had public debates over site selection that involved similar stakeholders and patterns which will be elucidated here.¹

¹ The site selection of Middlesex County College did not follow the state's normal guidelines due to a unique situation. The federal government announced the closure of Raritan Arsenal and Camp Kilmer in 1961. The freeholders were able to acquire land at no cost that was formerly the "Family Housing Area" of the Raritan Arsenal for the main campus of Middlesex County College in Edison Township.

Stakeholder Arguments

There were several common themes that arose in this research, particularly the stakeholders and their arguments. The people who wanted the college in the suburbs were not all bad and the people who castigated the suburbs for not wanting the county college in the city were not all good. The ends didn't always justify the means. It seems each set of stakeholders had their ardent reasons and were steadfast in their tenacity.

Those who campaigned for a city location in Passaic, Mercer, and Essex Counties were local newspapers, civil rights groups such as the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), union representatives, Paterson, Trenton and Newark mayors, several state and local politicians, white philanthropists, city businessmen and the chamber of commerce, and some student and faculty groups. While they all supported an urban location for the main campus of the community college, their motivation and reasons differed considerably.

The research in this study will highlight how local newspapers and their editorial boards championed social justice for metropolitans. They saw the big picture of what was happening in the cities in the 1960s (white flight and factory closings) and advocated for the “underdogs” who were left behind. CORE, the NAACP, and other civil rights groups advocated for educational opportunities for blacks after generations of racism and discrimination and being treated as second class citizens. CORE and the NAACP backed urban community colleges as early as 1964, long before the assassination of Dr. King. Like civil rights organizations, unions had many members who still lived in the cities and worked in the local plants that permeated the vicinity. The mayors' offices wanted to anchor the urban areas with a college to stem the tide of crime and drugs that plagued some of their seedier neighborhoods. Their motivations and reasons will be discussed in depth.

In addition to advocating for their constituents, the state and local politicians favored an urban community college since it was proximal to the largest amount of impoverished people (according to the most recent census) who needed it the most. They also said that it was close to mass transportation and bus routes. Access to the city's cultural establishments such as museums, art galleries, libraries, and other colleges was another reason why politicians supported a city location. A few county freeholders and a handful of congressmen were also brave enough to go on record in support of urban county college locations (to the dismay of some suburban voters).

We will see that white philanthropists also campaigned for a city location. Their reasons were mostly altruistic and they felt it was important to "give back" to the community where they grew up. They argued that it would give hope to people who lived there and reverse the cycle of poverty through education. In some cases, the philanthropists provided major financial support to buy the land for the urban college campus. Some student and faculty groups also publicly endorsed the urban community college. In some cases, we will see that students boycotted classes or faculty went on strike to stop the acquisition of land for a suburban campus. These groups believed they had to send a message to the college's administration. They felt two campuses would create "de facto" segregation by having a "black" campus in the city and a "white" campus in the suburbs. Local urban chambers of commerce aligned themselves with local politicians in sponsoring a center city site since they felt many businesses could provide students with job and internship opportunities within walking distance of the new institution.

Conversely, this study will demonstrate that there were many reasons suburban politicians and parents cited against having an urban community college. They were: crime-ridden, unsafe neighborhoods that were prone to violence and riots, congested areas

with smog and pollution, limited parking, concern over the safety and reliability of mass transportation, lack of space to study, play, and recreate (athletic fields); high cost of land acquisition plus the construction of high rise parking decks; and the fact that cities already had an abundance of tax-exempt lots and could not afford to lose any more tax ratable income.

Key influencers who campaigned for a suburban site that are identified in this research were: suburban teachers and principal groups, student groups, some freeholders, some county college trustee chairmen, and several citizens groups who formed as a response to several pro-city site groups. The teachers and principals formed an alliance in some counties and went on record of endorsing a suburban site stating that it would allow for a “state of the art facility that would be first-rate for our students.” Some student groups were also interviewed who attended the temporary city campus and said they would prefer a suburban site. Several county freeholders pledged their allegiance to a suburban site because they referenced the state’s guideline of 100 acres for a county college. Actually, the state wanted 100 acres but it would accept a site as few as 45 acres. (Still, finding 45 acres was almost impossible in any New Jersey city.) Some local politicians also pointed out that the state recommended that the county college should be near the geographic center of the county and not necessarily near the most populous areas according to the most recent census. They also cited the census projections that called for the cities to shrink dramatically and the suburbs to explode. We will compare the projected census figures the trustees and consultants used to the actual census numbers that were filed for 1970 (towns and county) and 1980(county figures).

We will illustrate how some county college trustee chairmen were viewed as pro-suburban in their lack of support for a city site. They were often judged by what they did

not say. Some of them constantly questioned the money that would be spent for an urban campus. Other trustee chairmen were targeted by civil rights groups as “pro-suburb” when they backed a two campus system. Lastly, citizens groups sprung up in response to several pro-city site factions claiming that a perfect locale in the woods would make a utopian spot for their children to study which was far away from the smog and pollution of the city.

Another factor that was not explicitly pro- suburb but was implicit was the consultant reports. By and large, we will see that these documents mostly showed that suburban land costs were cheaper per acre and construction prices would be lower in the suburbs since it would not entail high-rise facilities. These reports also noted that the suburban sites often contained plenty of acreage for parking and athletic fields. These reports just looked at numbers and never considered the social justice issues that could be addressed by placing the college in the city.

Conversely, this paper will discuss how there were many reasons against a suburban county college location. The consultant reports often mentioned that a suburban location often had no public utilities and they would have to be brought in at substantial additional costs. Other motivations against a suburban setting were: a lack of mass transportation or established bus routes to get the urban students back and forth to class, concern over the academic majors offered (will they appeal to urban students?), the issue that a suburban campus would create “de facto” segregation where white students would attend a superior suburban campus while the black kids would occupy the decidedly inferior city campus (“separate but equal”). Lastly, the issue of adjustment surfaced. Would the urban students fit in at the suburban campus? Would they feel comfortable?

This study will explain that while this debate was taking place in New Jersey, social justice issues were on the minds of everyday Americans in the 1960s. Issues over

discrimination, the Vietnam War, and the importance of social welfare programs were played out daily in the media. Heated debates over issues of race, access, equity, and fairness were commonplace. Black groups and some whites advocated for an end to racism in all of its forms. Landmark legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 attempted to heal the indelible scars of racism on a national level. While peaceful marches were advocated by some groups, other factions resorted to protests and violence. However, few topics evoked stronger feelings than equal opportunities for education. “Separate but equal” was rarely equal.

Community Colleges in the Garden State

New Jersey community colleges were created by the New Jersey County College Act of 1962. However, their history did not begin there. There were six federally funded junior colleges in New Jersey in the Depression in the 1930s. Most of these institutions disappeared when the source of funds exhausted. These will be discussed in depth in chapter one. These federal institutions were not the ancestors of today’s community colleges. New Jersey can trace its roots of the modern “community college” to the Presidential Commission on Higher Education (also known as the Truman Commission) to 1946. It was headed by George Zook, the President of the American Council on Education. The Commission released a report titled, *Higher Education for Democracy*, and spanned six volumes released from December, 1947 through March, 1948. Often referred to as the Zook report, it recognized that more colleges would need to be built nationally to accommodate the growing number of students who sought a college education. It lauded the work of junior colleges and officially renamed them “community colleges” in order to

more aptly label their mission to benefit many groups of the public and not just the traditional high school graduate. It suggested that scores of these new colleges should be built in the coming years (the issue of capacity). It also recommended that the federal government assist students in paying for college through grants. This would later be called, “federal financial aid.”²

New Jersey politicians and educators heard the rallying call from the Truman Commission Report for community colleges and issued several state reports over the next dozen or so years that called for their creation in the state. New Jersey desperately needed more colleges to accommodate the ever increasing numbers of high school graduates. After all, New Jersey had a reputation as the “cuckoo state” since it relied on other states to college educate many of their native sons and daughters. The politicians also wanted to stop the “brain drain” that was taking place in the state. Once students left New Jersey for college, the greater their chances were of settling down in that other state permanently.

The state legislators’ hard work and the assurance of federal funding culminated in the New Jersey County College Law of 1962. After the law was passed in Trenton, it charged each county with establishing a local committee to assess whether or not there was a need to establish a community or junior college within its boundaries. The committees that were appointed by each county’s freeholders executed their exploratory studies in the politically stirring decade of the 1960s. During this period, the country and in particular, New Jersey, experienced civil unrest, a demographic shift from the cities to the suburbs, and deadly race riots. Nationally, Dr. Martin Luther King led the battle against discrimination of blacks on

²Julie A. Reuben and Linda Perkins, “Commemorating the Sixtieth Anniversary of the President’s Commission Report,” *History of Education Quarterly* 47, Number 3 (August 2007): 265.

every level of society.³ While the civil rights struggle continued, the White House initiated several programs to end these social injustices. President John F. Kennedy introduced his New Frontier agenda in 1961 which was then continued by his successor, President Lyndon Baines Johnson, through his War on Poverty programs including the landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

However, back at the county level, the stage was set for local New Jersey politicians to exert their influence over these new educational institutions. Many of them saw these new educational reforms as tools for wielding patronage within their local communities. Countless elected officials averred publicly that they were concerned for the groups who would benefit the most from the county colleges, specifically, the poor, minority groups, adult students, and veterans. Their interest in these groups could also have been seen as an admission of guilt after years of neglect. Nevertheless, it was a tight rope for the politicians to balance. On one hand, they had to convince the tax base that funding these new endeavors was worthwhile while, on the other hand, they promised them that everyone would benefit. The perception was that wherever the county college was located, it would have the most benefit to the people who lived in that community.

Location, Location, Location

The first three rules of real estate also applied to community college sites. New Jersey was (and is) as diverse a population as the ocean is wide and one of the most heterogeneous states in terms of race, class, and socio-economic status. The county freeholders appointed

³Terms such as “Negro”, “Colored”, or “Black” are all used interchangeably with the more accepted phrase “African American”. In most cases, the former terms will be used in their contemporaneous contexts.

the county college trustees whose task was to establish a county college from nothing. The chore before the county college trustees was daunting, to say the least. They were the ones who ultimately decided where to locate the main campus. How could one county college serve the post secondary educational needs of ten to fifteen different cities and towns?

Politicians in Essex County had to build one college that would satisfy the folks of Newark and East Orange as well as those in Short Hills and Livingston. Mercer County contains the city of Trenton as well as the farming communities of Hightstown and Hopewell.

Passaic County boasts the cities of Paterson and Passaic and the suburbs of Wayne and Pompton Lakes. Middlesex County encloses the cities of Perth Amboy and New Brunswick along with their outskirts that cover the sleepy commuter towns of Cranbury and Kendall Park.

When the open public meetings were held to discuss the college's permanent location, vociferous arguments were made from both sides of urban and suburban communities alike. Many local leaders only knew the New Jersey K-12 educational model where school attendance (and segregation) was based on zip code. New Jersey did not have school busing laws. If you could afford to live in the town, then you could send your child to the public school there. Home rule in New Jersey defined our public schools back in the 1960s. The local tax base subsidized the majority of public school costs. When the towns approved the K-12 school board budget each year, they gave the local school board "carte blanche" to create the best schools for their children. Thanks to *Abbott vs. Burke*, the expenditures per pupil today in our New Jersey cities' public schools are not as disparate as they once were compared to those in the suburbs.

However, this was not the case at the county college level. Taxpayers from all the towns had to pay county taxes which subsidized up to one third of the college's operating

costs. The thought of sending their hard-earned taxpayer money to educate other people's children from other towns sometimes infuriated, and almost always, nauseated them. Each town lobbied for their position. Housing patterns, banking practices such as redlining, and public transportation (or the lack thereof) often played a role in what the town "looked like" and who lived there. Some municipalities were in favor of having the college located in their jurisdiction while others were adamantly opposed. Thus, county politicians had to come up with a "one location fits all" solution which proved to be a herculean charge. Rarely did someone say, "I don't care where they place the community college." They either vociferously wanted it in the city or not. For most people, their minds were made up one way or another long before the conversation even started. There was often no nebulous opinion which made the college trustees' final decision on site even more divisive.

It was hard to allay the fears of politicians and business men in the suburbs that a community college would be worth the expense of taking away valuable tax ratable land. At the same time, a suburban community college would also bring in many a city dweller right to their front doors. Moreover, public transportation routes would have to be created and maintained through several, otherwise pristine, suburban communities to transport city folks back and forth. Conversely, if the college were to be located in the city, some suburban folks were concerned about the safety of their children in an area that had higher crime rates than their town. Parking was also a concern in that many urban sites lacked adequate space for parking. Having suburban students take public transportation into a metropolis was rarely seen as a viable option.

Suburban sites often contained a substantial amount more acreage than their urban counterparts. Backers cited that more land meant they could have more aesthetic grounds that would foster learning and room for expansion in the future. Athletic fields could also

be accommodated in large suburban locales. New Jersey's guidelines for community college sites initially required that a site of forty five acres be chosen which was successfully challenged by various urban stakeholders around the state. Likewise, sponsors of suburban locales argued that while the cities were the most densely populated at the time, demographers predicted that the suburbs would explode exponentially in growth in the near future while the city populace was projected to decline. The notion here is that they were building a community college for the future and not just for the current day. As with many political decisions, time ultimately decided who was right.

Municipal champions around the state were steadfastly opposed to locating a county college in the suburbs. They thought that a county college should be located near the most populous locales and be proximal to people who, in their eyes, could benefit the most from a college education. After all, studies had shown that many urbanites had diminutive educational levels and the corresponding lowest household incomes and socio-economic statuses. Many open-minded individuals hoped that placing the community college in the inner city would cure many of society's ills. Specifically, they hoped it would reverse the poverty, joblessness, drug addiction, towering high school drop-out rates, and despair that typified most New Jersey urban ghettos in the 1960s.

A community college could provide the remedial education that students were not getting in high school. It could also supply short-term training programs and vocational certificates that would qualify them for higher paying jobs. Furthermore, there was the issue of transportation that affected the college attendance rate for urban dwellers. Studies showed that the closer the campuses were located to city inhabitants' homes, the more likely they were to attend. For many urban occupants in the 1960s, a county college in

their neighborhood was seen as an opportunity for them and their children to receive an education to achieve the heretofore elusive “American Dream.”

Advocates for the urban community college included some politicians and several suburban folks who had ties to the city. Often, it was where they were born and raised or had their businesses. Recognizing the problems of the city, they hoped a county college would stabilize the city’s economy by bringing in other small businesses. They thought the loss of tax ratable land that would occupy the community college would be more than offset by the taxes (municipal and sales taxes) from the stores and companies that would invariably spring up around it. Metropolitan officials also vowed that they would beef up police presence in the area that would stem the tide of crime. City locations also assured students that there would be plenty of part-time jobs or internships available in their chosen field at local corporations or firms that could result in a permanent job offer after graduation. Often, proponents of urban community college sites boasted of the already established educational and cultural institutions that would be within walking distance of the new college. They were museums, libraries, art galleries, and historical societies. Plus, if they chose land slated for urban renewal, they could qualify for federal grants that would cover up to half the cost of land acquisition.

Civil Unrest

At the center of these arguments on both sides is the matter of race. In the 1960s when the battle for Civil Rights was in full swing, blacks and their white supporters most often promoted urban locations. After all, they argued, cities needed these new colleges the most in order to reverse their low attainment of college degrees and end the “circle of poverty.” They felt it was time to level the playing and they relentlessly campaigned through the

designated channels. Riots also played a role in these deliberations in that many suburban whites did not want to build a college in an area ravaged by violence that left many neighborhoods in ruin.

Newark saw its worst riots in its history in 1967, when twenty six people died, hundreds of people were injured, and millions of dollars in property was destroyed.⁴ Noted historian Kevin Mumford further elaborated on the mounting frustration that precipitated the Newark riots of 1967. He cited deplorable housing conditions, unequal pay between the races for the same work, high unemployment rates, low standardized test scores, and a markedly inferior public school system. Elevated high school drop-out rates created an expanding juvenile delinquency trend which created an even higher unemployment rate amongst blacks. These conditions drove many poor, black ghetto dwellers toward Black Nationalism. Sociologists have termed it deprivation theory: joblessness creates frustrated, angry people who may resort to violence or a “burn, baby, burn” mentality. The analogy of a simmering pot seemed apropos in this situation and that it was only a matter of time before their pot of contention exploded and boiled over. The official three main causes of the riots were listed in a statement called the *Report for Action* issued by the Governor’s Commission. They were: “the lack of political representation; police brutality; and worsening social conditions.”⁵

While Newark experienced the most devastating race riots between blacks and whites in the state, riots also took place in the early 1960s in Jersey City, Elizabeth, and Paterson. In the latter part of the decade, in addition to Newark, major riots occurred in Plainfield and

⁴ The Newark Riots took place from July 12-17, 1967.

⁵ Kevin Mumford. *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America*. (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 98-106.

Englewood. Around the same time as the major riots, lesser ones transpired in Trenton, Camden, Paterson, Atlantic City, and New Brunswick.⁶

What led to the riots? The causes of the race riots of the 1960s did not occur overnight. They can trace their beginnings back to just before World War II. The Second World War created a shortage of workers in the northern states that caused many blacks from southern states to migrate to New Jersey. This is often times referred to as “the Great Migration.” This made many industrial jobs in northern cities like Paterson, Passaic, Camden, Elizabeth, and Newark available to blacks. Since the war underscored racial and inequality issues abroad, domestically, blacks also started to rebel against the inequalities that they saw happening around them. Seeking better paying industrial jobs, blacks continued to migrate north after the war. The black population in New Jersey was 226,973 in 1940 and rose to 318,565 in 1950, an increase of 40 per cent.⁷

By the 1960s, black neighborhoods started to transition to black ghettos as many of the jobs that originally brought them to the state disappeared or migrated overseas. This factor, along with the phenomenon of “white flight”, left urban neighborhoods vulnerable to decay. “White flight” referred to the situation when whites moved to the suburbs. As a result, schools in the urban areas then began to decline and saw high dropout rates while black unemployment numbers soared. Along with mounting black expectations for equality, violence began to surface in urban areas in the 1960s around the state and country.

⁶Giles Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey: A Short History*. (Trenton, NJ: The New Jersey Historical Commission, Department of State, 1988), 72.

⁷Ibid, 74.

In post World War II, developers were building new Cape Cod and split-level “Victory Homes” homes for veterans returning home from the war and other young families in mostly suburban neighborhoods. If a family wanted to finance a new home through the new Federal Housing Authority (FHA) founded by the 1949 Housing Act, suburbia was often the only choice for them. Veterans led the way in this effort since they were eligible for low interest mortgages for only one dollar as a down payment. These factors, along with the expansion of the federal highway system, placed almost forty percent of all Americans (approximately 80 million) in fairly new suburban housing by the end of 1960s.⁸

Another factor that led to the decay of urban neighborhoods was the practice of redlining. The practice used geography as the basis of making lending decisions by banks.⁹ Started in the 1930s by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), this practice drew red lines on a map around communities that it believed to be risks for lending and insurance purposes. Generally, black neighborhoods were outlined in red on a map indicating that banks should not lend money to anyone for housing or other investment purposes. Its effect produced segregated neighborhood communities.¹⁰ Redlining was not addressed as an illegal practice in the banking industry until the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Some believe this practice considerably accelerated the decline of major urban areas

⁸ Ibid, 72.

⁹ Lee Gardenswartz and Anita Rowe, *The Lending and Diversity Handbook*. (Chicago: Irwin Professional Publishing, 1996), 68.

¹⁰ Jason Kuznicki, “Never a Neutral State: American Race Relations and Government Power,” *CATO Journal*, 29, Issue 3 (Fall 2009): 417-453.

and increased the civil unrest. “White flight” and “redlining” left the inner cities to black families and the underprivileged.¹¹

All of these practices and events transpired while the political leaders in each county, in conjunction with state officials in Trenton, were deciding where to establish the colleges within each county. The research questions for this study guide the historical inquiry as to why Essex County sought to “anchor” the urban areas by placing the community college within its neighborhood while Mercer County chose a more suburban location.

The Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

New Jersey developed a first and second phase of a Master Plan for Higher Education starting in 1969. Access and equity in education were two central themes of the master plan. Since one of the objectives of the Second Phase of the New Jersey Master Plan for Higher Education stated that “community colleges should pay particular attention to the needs of inner city and minority groups,” it seems fair to expect the proximity of the community colleges campuses to the neighborhoods of these inner city and minority groups would have been paramount to achieving that objective.¹² In this study, Essex and Mercer Counties are examined in depth as to where they sited their community college. Essex County contains New Jersey’s largest city, Newark, while Mercer County is home to the state’s capital, Trenton. Both cities were former manufacturing powerhouses before urban

¹¹Blanche Linden-Ward and Carol Hurd Green, *American Women in the 1960’s: Changing the Future*. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), ix-x.

¹² New Jersey Higher Education Department. *Master Plan for Higher Education in New Jersey*, 1969, 43.

decay, industrial abandonment, and white flight became realities. Essex County ultimately chose 23 acres in Newark as its main campus for its community college while Mercer County chose a sprawling 291 acres in West Windsor, a suburb located six miles outside of Trenton's city limits. Other counties, Middlesex and Passaic, are discussed as a means of comparison.

The primary research question is: How did each of the two counties approach its decision where to site its community college and in what ways did the concept of race influence that decision? In order to develop this inquiry, three subsidiary research questions will be used:

- a. Where did each county choose to locate their main campus?
- b. What other sites were considered as possible locations?
- c. What effect did civil rights, civic, religious, and community groups have (if any) on the site decision?

The trustees in three of the four counties studied were aware of the magnitude of their decision regarding location of the main campus of the community college. Middlesex County was the only anomaly since the freeholders obtained the former Raritan Arsenal land before the college trustees were even appointed. The three other counties, Essex, Mercer, and Passaic, had trustees who weighed the pros and cons of putting the college in different parts of the county. Their constituencies from the various municipalities also voiced their opinions to the trustees and their political first cousins [the freeholders] who appointed the college trustees. Maybe the trustees were aware that a "one-size fits all approach" could only end in turmoil? In many cases, they appeared to be as fair as possible by hiring consultants to conduct feasibility studies and hosted half of their meetings in front

of the general public who aired their comments, suggestions, and criticisms on the matter. The trustees tried to be transparent while focusing their efforts on creating a college from nothing. Very often, they were trying to gather data and make a decision before some time limit that usually was tied to funding.

In Middlesex County, the land for the county college came from the federal government in the form of a de-commissioned army base at zero cost. Meanwhile in Mercer County, it came from land the county had planned to acquire for Assunpink Park. The latter had the lowest cost per acre of any other site that was under consideration by the board. In Essex and Passaic Counties, funding was secured in part through Urban Renewal funds and substantial cooperation from the city mayors' offices. Both Newark and Paterson had municipal administrations who pledged they would clean up the neighborhoods where the county college would eventually be located. The mayor's office in Trenton also tried this approach but was overruled by the Mercer County Community College Board of Trustees, which also had the implicit backing of the state DOE.

Since community colleges were paid for by all of a county's taxpayers, citizens often felt strongly where one was located. I posit that that the community college trustees who were charged with choosing a permanent site for each county's community college were keenly aware of the magnitude of their decision and how it would affect people's lives. They knew that where they located the college would affect access for the city's poor and underprivileged, many of whom were black. Many of these urban dwellers lagged behind their mostly white suburban counterparts educationally and financially. Hence, this paper will seek to show that the decisions to locate the community college in some New Jersey counties caused a controversy that was often divided along the lines of race and class.

The outcome in three of the four counties produced neither winners nor losers.

Compromise was king. The town that got the main campus never celebrated and boasted of their victory for they knew the folks in other towns were still licking their wounds. The city or town that did not initially seat the main campus eventually got a satellite or smaller campus of their own to serve that part of the county. While many stakeholders had their best interests in mind, some could only think of their own.

Let's begin our story with the founding of American higher education through the creation of the modern community college. Knowledge of this history will serve as the catalyst through which this political history study can now be told.

CHAPTER I

ORIGINS OF AMERICAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Colleges have had a place in American society since the early seventeenth century. Early settlers of this country prioritized the need for higher learning and that of establishing colleges. The first chronicled request to establish an American college came in 1618 with the establishment of a college at Henrico, Virginia. Its purpose was to teach the savage Native Americans (Indians) civility, language, and culture. Any progress that was made to erect one there fizzled in 1622 with the Powhatan Indian Rebellion.¹³ Another request came in 1633 by John Eliot and three years later, an act by the Great and General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony created New College (now Harvard University).¹⁴ From those beginnings, eight other colonial colleges were founded prior to the American Revolution. In order of their founding (starting with the oldest) they were: the College of William and Mary in 1697, the Collegiate School (now Yale University) in 1701, the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) in 1746, Kings College (now Columbia University) in 1754, the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania) in

¹³ Bobby Wright. "The 'Untameable Savage Spirit': American Indians in Colonial Colleges." *Review of Higher Education* 14, no. 4 (1991): 429-30.

¹⁴ Richard Hofstadter and Wilson Smith, editors, *American Higher Education: A Documentary History*. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 1.

1755, Rhode Island College (now Brown University) in 1764, Queen's College (now Rutgers University) in 1766, and Dartmouth College in 1769.¹⁵

By the late nineteenth century, college attendance increased as public high schools became more common. Starting with the founding of the English Classic School in Boston as the first public high school in 1821, public high schools became the norm by the early twentieth century.¹⁶ By and large they replaced private academies which were fairly common from the early eighteenth century until the 1870's. These academies enabled girls, and in few states, free blacks, access to the higher branches of learning that followed grammar schools.¹⁷ Around the mid nineteenth century in some states, academies and venture schools eventually were replaced by the rising common school movement.¹⁸

Educational reforms that were conceived in the early twentieth century, mandatory secondary education, kindergartens, middle and junior high schools, helped spur the creation of the junior college.¹⁹ Two other factors in the first two decades of the twentieth century that influenced higher education were the great influx of immigrants, and the power of the women's suffrage movement.²⁰ These new groups of students were applying

¹⁵Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (Athens: GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1962), 3-20.

¹⁶William J. Reese, *The Origins of the American High School*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), Introduction, XIV.

¹⁷Ibid, 31.

¹⁸Reese, *Origins*, 1993, 29.

¹⁹George A. Baker III, editor, *A Handbook on the Community College History in America: Its History, Mission, and Management*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 6.

²⁰ Ibid, 9.

to the already established private colleges and the fledgling land grant public agricultural colleges that were established as a result of the Morrill Land Grant College Acts of 1862 and 1890.

Another post-secondary institution that started to develop in the mid nineteenth century was the state normal school. The first state normal school in the country was founded in Massachusetts in 1839. New Jersey started its normal schools in Paterson, Trenton, and Newark in 1855. Normal schools offered teacher certification training and prepared instructors to teach in the new institutions called “high schools” that were dotting the landscape all across the country. Normal schools were considered to be “low-status” establishments within higher education since they enrolled a large number of women who were routinely inconspicuous at the more prestigious male-dominated colleges of the day. A few southern states created separate normal schools for black students while Oklahoma and North Carolina set up a normal school to train Native American teachers. By the turn of the twentieth century, some of these normal schools changed their name to “normal colleges.” Naturally, many of these colleges began to offer a four year bachelors’ degrees and became “teachers colleges.”²¹

The college leaders of the day were not sure what to do with all of these new groups of students. The term “junior college” was coined by William Rainey Harper, the president of the University of Chicago, in his quest to create alternate institutions to accommodate the

²¹ Christine A. Ogren, “Rethinking the ‘Nontraditional’ Student From a Historical Perspective: State Normal Schools in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” in *The History of Higher Education*, 3rd edition. Ed. Harold S. Wechsler, Lester F. Goodchild, and Linda Eisenmenn.(Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2007), 392-3.

ever-increasing throngs of high school graduates.²² Harper wrote several books on higher education and believed in education reform by eliminating waste in higher education.

Harper wrote,

The work of the freshman and sophomore years in the colleges of this country-and here again I include the institutions properly called universities-is but a continuation of the academy or high school work. It is a continuation, not only of the subject matter studied, but of the methods employed. It is not until the end of the sophomore year that university methods of instruction may be employed to advantage.²³

Here, Harper seems to imply that there should be a divide between lower level work that is done in the first and second years in college and that one's major can be completed in the third and fourth years at the senior colleges.

Harper wrote on this topic again in response to calls for shortening the college degree from four years to three by writing,

Among other educational tendencies today may be cited (a) that of the high school to enlarge its scope and add to its curriculum one or two years of additional work...I would suggest that the plan which has been in operation at the University of Chicago for nearly ten years has seemed to many of us to meet in large measure the demands called for this morning. This plan provides a course of four years and a course of two years. It permits students of exceptional ability to do the work in three years. It makes it possible for those who so desire to prolong the work to five years. It is adapted to the needs of

²² J. Wade Gilley, editor, *Thinking about American Higher Education: The 1990's and Beyond*. (New York: The American Council on Education and the Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991), 32.

²³William Rainey Harper, *The Trend in Higher Education*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1905), 83.

individuals of different classes. With the completion of the two-year course a certificate is given, granting the title of ‘associate’ in the university. This, for the present, is sufficient in the way of a degree. To students who maintain a standing of the highest grade, certain concessions are made.²⁴

Harper seemed to recognize that colleges were now enrolling students of lower academic caliber who may have wanted to cease their education at the associate degree. At any rate, he was encouraging educational reform that should have accommodated all types of students.

In 1901, Joliet High School, following Harper’s suggestion, added a fifth and sixth year to its curriculum and became the first junior college in America.²⁵ As the high school was viewed as the “upward extension” of the elementary school, the junior college became the “upward extension” of the high school during the first period of junior colleges, 1900-1930. With its higher curriculum, by the 1950s, the junior college had become what the high school pretended to be in name, “a people’s college.”²⁶ Since public transportation was not yet available, having them as part of the high schools in already established neighborhoods ensured their survival.

²⁴Ibid, 347.

²⁵H.T. Kasper, “The Changing Role of the Community College,” *Occupational Outlook Quarterly* 46, number 4 (2002): 15.

²⁶John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition: A History of American Colleges and Universities*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 253-7.

Four Generations of Junior or Community Colleges

Scholars have categorized the development of the junior or community college into four generations. Starting at the turn of the twentieth century and spanning up to the current day, each generation is marked by distinct characteristics and philosophic ideals. In the first generation, they were places where the less educated went to college and were viewed as decidedly substandard. The second generation was marked by the colleges' quest for professionalism and independence. The third generation ushered in a massive expansion of colleges thanks to government support. The fourth generation was when community college became quite dichotomous and more responsive to their local communities. The educational reforms that gave way to the rise of each generation of the community college had profound effects on its students and the communities it served.

In the first generation spanning the years 1900-1930, junior colleges were designed to remove the “unclean” from the prestigious land-grant research universities. Since the junior college was not to be fashioned like the university, it had to be viewed as an extension of the high schools. This notion had serious effects on the prestige of the newly established institution. It allowed the universities to continue to be specialized and elitist while the junior colleges started out as an inferior educational alternative.²⁷

The second generation of junior colleges transpired between 1930 and 1950. During these years, the junior college abandoned the high school model. Junior college administrators and faculty fought hard against their “inferior” label and were determined to

²⁷William L. Deegan and Dale Tillery, *Renewing the American Community College: priorities and strategies for effective leadership*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985), 65-6.

do something about it. They sought to be more aligned in governance and prestige with the four-year collegiate paradigm. In the midst of this transition, the Great Depression took place, bringing with it a demand for low-cost job training which made junior college enrollments skyrocket. With federal and state funding, they met the challenge of retraining thousands of people out of work. During this period of junior colleges, their mission solidified:

- a. with close to 200 junior colleges throughout the United States, the American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC) formed in 1921 as an effort to enhance professionalism and be clearly linked with colleges and universities
- b. they had a goal as being “an institution offering two years of instruction of strictly collegiate grade”
- c. offered terminal education for career certificates and associate’s degrees such as nursing and criminal justice
- d. offered general education
- e. offered transfer and career guidance
- f. lower-division preparation for university transfer particularly in the areas of liberal arts and pre-professional degree programs (medicine, law, and engineering)
- g. offered adult evening and week-end part-time education
- h. offered removal of matriculation deficiencies (remedial work in English and mathematical skills) and ESL (English as a Second Language) courses.

All of these attributes secured the American junior college as an institution that was no longer affiliated with the high school and was poised for growth as a collegiate institution.

The period following World War II, 1945 until 1970, is considered by scholars to be the third generation of junior or community colleges. State and local governments allocated more financial resources to what were now called community colleges during this time period. The surge of World War II veterans returning home requiring vocational and educational training was overwhelming. Community colleges during this era were a low-cost solution to the veterans' training needs. It was felt that community colleges could be used to equalize opportunity and that their activities should be augmented. Almost throughout much of the 1960s, a new community college opened each week.²⁸

Most of this growth occurred due to the recommendations made by the President's Commission on Education Report (which is better known as the Truman Commission Report.) It affirmed the local control of the community college and stated that it should provide "educational service to the whole community." It elaborated on this by stating:

It will require of it a variety of functions and programs. It will provide college education for the youth of the community, so as to remove geographic and ethnic barriers to educational opportunity and discover and develop individual talents at low cost and easy access. But, in addition, the community college will serve as an active center of adult education. It will attempt to meet the total post-high school needs of the community.²⁹

The Truman Commission changed junior colleges permanently. Over time, the true nature of the two year college was built on the belief that community service was not just

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹President's Commission on Higher Education. *A Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education, Vols. 1, 3, 5.* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947).

another task. It was the core mission of the all-inclusive community college.³⁰ It also suggested that each community college distribute a survey to its citizenry and adapt its offerings accordingly.³¹

What took place within the community college movement in the early twentieth century was similar to what transpired with the Civil Rights movement and in America's post-World War II foreign policy. Domestically, communities were concerned for their citizens' post-secondary educational needs. In the meantime, America's international policy became concerned with issues of world peace and minimizing threats to freedom around the globe, particularly against the spread of communism. No longer isolationist in its policies as before the two world wars, America now showed an interest in the welfare of other countries. One example was the Marshall Plan that gave thirteen billion dollars in aid for the European reconstruction and stabilized their economies following the carnage and devastation of World War II.³² Similarly at home, concern by activists for the Civil Rights movement sought to create equal opportunities for people of color. Following the court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, "large numbers of black citizens from every walk of life began to challenge white paternalism."³³ The *Brown* decision rejected the notion of "separate but equal" as defined in the court decision, *Plessey v. Ferguson* of

³⁰George A. Baker III, editor, *A Handbook on the Community College History in America: Its History, Mission, and Management*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 14.

³¹*Ibid*, 19.

³²Greg Behrman, *The Most Noble Adventure.: The Marshall Plan and the Time When America Helped Save Europe*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), 4.

³³S. Alexander Rippa, *Education in a Free Society: An American History*. 4th ed. (New York: Longman Inc., 1980), 276.

1896. Not only did the Civil Rights movement spur school desegregation, but it also brought about the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the school busing debate. All of these events are taking place during this third generation of community colleges.”³⁴

The fourth generation of community colleges started in 1970 and continues to this day. During this time, community colleges were no longer seen as innovative and developed into the “comprehensive” community college. Instead of implementing a model after which students would mold themselves, and faculty and staff would use as guide, the colleges did the reverse. They tried to adapt themselves to the needs of their students and became followers rather than leaders. They developed a reputation that they offered a lot of courses and programs but demanded little academic rigor.³⁵

Because open door admissions policy was a cornerstone, community colleges had to substantially increase the amount of remedial course offerings. This was attributed to the staggering numbers of academically unprepared students advancing their studies. Comprehensive community colleges of today do not offer many unique course offerings; instead, they offer narrow-focused professional courses or academic specialties, which expanded into diplomas or full associate’s degrees.³⁶

In this period, community colleges adapted to their populations and it became harder to generalize about their students. Some campuses had a two per cent transfer rate while

³⁴Ibid, 276-77.

³⁵William L. Deegan and Dale Tillery, *Renewing the American Community College: priorities and strategies for effective leadership*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985), 68.

³⁶Michael Scott Cain, *The Community College in the Twenty-First Century: A Systems Approach*. (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1999), 11.

others had an 80 percent statistic. Some looked and felt like four-year colleges while others had similar qualities to trade schools. The student body was so dichotomous and vacillating that any outreach to them did not have a uniting message. There were so many different student groups that it was just unclear who could benefit from any one particular college initiative.³⁷

Situating this study against the backdrop of the history of the community college is paramount. From its genesis as an upward extension of the high school to the all-encompassing institution that anticipates every adult post secondary educational need, the junior (now community) college has always had its connection to the citizens and communities it serves. Three themes of the community college are central to this study. The first is community activism. This concept first appeared in the 1890s and stressed that members of the community must come together to support the education and training needs of its citizenry. In New Jersey, it would develop into the notion that counties would shoulder this responsibility for providing all of the post secondary education needs for its constituents.

The second community college belief that is relevant to this study is that of open access to higher education. In order for all members of the community to attend this new post secondary creation, it must be centrally located within each geographic area. In New Jersey, each county was responsible for making the decision of location with approval from the State Board of Education.

The third community college core belief that is germane to this study is the rise of adult and continuing education and community services. If the community colleges were

³⁷Mary Lou Zoglin, *Power and Politics in the Community College*. (Palm Springs: ETC Publications, 1976), 54.

designed to offer adult services such as GED (general equivalency diploma) and ESL (English as a Second Languages) classes to all people, especially minority group members and those in the lower socio-economic classes, then these institutions should be centrally located to allow access for these people to better themselves.

Evolution of Public Higher Education in New Jersey

While Princeton and Rutgers Universities are members of the “colonial nine,” despite the emergence of state “normal schools,” state colleges in New Jersey (as we think of them today) did not come into formal existence until the 1930s and 1940s.³⁸ With the passage of the Morrill Federal Land Grant Act in 1862, Rutgers vied for the title as being the land-grant college for New Jersey beating Princeton and the Normal School at Trenton (later Trenton State College, now The College of New Jersey). The Morrill Act’s purpose was to offer courses in agriculture and mechanical education for everyone and not just the upper class. It awarded each state 30,000 acres for each senator and congressman based on the 1860 census. The land was then sold and the proceeds created a fund to perpetually assist these new colleges financially.³⁹ Once Rutgers started receiving public funds as the land grant college, it gradually shed its private affiliation, absorbed other colleges, and officially became The State University of New Jersey on March 26, 1945.⁴⁰

³⁸Peter Sammartino, *A History of Higher Education in New Jersey*. (Cranbury, NJ: A.S. Barnes and Sons, 1978), 15.

³⁹Rudolph, *The American College*, 252.

⁴⁰*Ibid*, 41, 52.

The rest of New Jersey's public colleges (with the exception of Ramapo College and The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey) started out as Normal Schools, or training schools for teachers. The first teacher training schools were established in Newark, Trenton, Paterson, and Jersey City in the 1850s. Trenton's Normal School had the support of national leaders, Horace Mann and Henry Barnard. With the passage of the New Jersey Laws of 1903, these teacher training schools were to become two-year normal schools. These normal schools eventually added four year courses and became State Teachers Colleges. Currently, many of the state's public universities trace their origins back to the Normal Schools of the 1850s. They are: Newark State College (now Kean University), Trenton State College (now The College of New Jersey), Paterson State College (now William Paterson University), and Jersey City State College (now New Jersey City University). Montclair State College (now Montclair State University) and Rowan University (formerly Glassboro State College) also trace their origins to Normal Schools but were formed later, 1908 and 1911, respectively. Two other public colleges were formed in 1971 as a result of the 1968 public bond issue, Ramapo College in Mahwah and The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey in Pomona.⁴¹

Public Community Colleges in New Jersey

The impetus for government-funded community colleges in New Jersey did not start in 1962 with the passage of the County College Act. The concept of junior or community colleges in New Jersey had been discussed since the 1930s when the federal Emergency

⁴¹Ibid, 99-125.

Relief Administration (ERA) funded six junior colleges in the state.⁴² They were positioned in six urban centers: Newark, Perth Amboy, Long Branch, Morristown, Paterson, and Roselle. They were placed in areas with large populations to allow easy access for students by bus, street car, or train. Tuition was free. The colleges in Newark and Paterson were located at the State Teachers College and the State Normal School, respectively. The others were located in high school buildings. Since they shared facilities with either teachers' colleges or high schools that operated during the day, federal ERA junior colleges' hours of operation were Monday through Friday, 4:00pm to 9:30 PM. Only two were left by the early 1940s, when the ERA funding ran out.⁴³

Inundated with World War II veterans returning home who needed training, New Jersey passed legislation in 1946 allowing towns to develop two-year colleges but did not adequately fund it. Meanwhile, the population exploded (the Baby Boom) and more and more students were required to leave NJ for their education. The situation higher education found itself in New Jersey in post World War II was:

- a. many private, post-secondary institutions
- b. many students attending out-of-state colleges
- c. minimal state financial aid
- d. the feeling that students should pay their own college education⁴⁴

⁴²Robert H. Morrison, *Emergency Junior Colleges in New Jersey: A Study of Their: Need, Nature, Instruction Staff, Student Body, Management, and Accomplishment* (Trenton, NJ: State of New Jersey, Emergency Relief Administration, 1935), 3.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Council of County Colleges, *Community Colleges in New Jersey: The First Ten Years* (Trenton, NJ: The State of New Jersey, 1973), 7-8.

Since these factors had negative financial effects on the state, legislators, educators, and business professionals felt they must do something to accommodate the post secondary educational needs of these two emerging groups (baby boomers and veterans). If they created low cost colleges in-state and offered financial assistance, they thought it would decelerate the “brain drain” that was taking place at the time and spur economic development.

Encouraged by the federal Truman Commission Report (1947) and the feeling that NJ policy makers had to do something to keep its best students in the state led to the creation of several reports created by the NJ Department of Education. The first one to discuss a master plan for higher education was a report titled, *New Jersey Undergraduates 1954-1973* produced in 1955. Two other influential reports that led to the creation of the County College Act of 1962 was the report, *Education Beyond the High School: The Two Year Community College*, published in 1960 and *The Needs of New Jersey in Higher Education 1962-1970*, published in 1962 and is also commonly referred to as the Strayer Report.

The 1960 state report set up procedures that established two-year colleges and obligated the state to partially fund them at a rate of \$200 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student. Other state reports and legislation ensued, leading up to Phase One of the Master Plan for higher education and passage of the Higher Education Act of 1967. This established a separate Board of Higher Education, the office of Chancellor and the Department of Higher Education, which oversaw the county college development. Phase Two involved the continued building of community college campuses.

The first public community college in New Jersey to open its doors on its own campus was Cumberland County College in 1963. In 1964, Ocean County College opened while Atlantic Cape (the community college for Atlantic and Cape May Counties) received its

approval from the state. Ocean claims to be New Jersey's first community college, as it was the first to establish a study for the feasibility of a community college in 1957. In 1965, Bergen, Camden, and Gloucester Community Colleges formed. In the following year, 1966, Middlesex County College began operations on its main campus in Edison. Mercer joined the community college system in 1967. The opening of campuses in Essex, Morris, and Somerset and Hunterdon Counties (now Raritan Valley Community College) took place in 1968. Passaic County Community College was also chartered (as recognized by the state of New Jersey) in 1968. Burlington, Brookdale, and Union County Colleges were established. In 1970, Raritan Valley Community College moved to its permanent home in Branchburg on 225 acres.

On October 4, 1971, Passaic County Community College held its first class. That same year saw Salem County change the existing Salem County Technical Institute into a community college. Sixteen community colleges in eighteen counties were formed within a decade after the passage of County College Act of 1962. Three other community colleges followed: Hudson County Community College in 1974, Warren County Community College in 1981, and Sussex County Community College in 1982. Clearly New Jersey embraced the community college concept by selecting a town in each county for its main campus.⁴⁵

Phase Two of the Master Plan for Higher Education started in 1974. Its main objectives were: 1) to increase educational opportunity in the State of New Jersey and 2) to provide greater flexibility and diversity in the state's institution of higher learning.⁴⁶ Growth was

⁴⁵ Ibid, 9.

⁴⁶NJ Higher Education Department, *A Master Plan for Higher Education in the State of New Jersey, Phase II* (Trenton, NJ: State of NJ, 1974), 40.

the main reason behind the Master Plan in that half of New Jersey graduates attended four-year colleges but only half or (1/4 of total high school graduates) went on to college in New Jersey (capacity issue).

As part of the Master Plan, the two-year public county colleges in New Jersey have the following missions:

- a. provide academic programs equal to the first two years of the baccalaureate.
- b. be at the forefront of offering occupational and vocational programs and certificates to high school graduates and create a state-wide network of occupational education.
- c. have “open-door” admissions policies. This will allow those who are unsure of their educational interests and strengths to experience a host of occupational and academic programs. Students of all ages should be able to attend a community college to broaden their skills or raise their level of aspirations and go as far as they can take them.
- d. provide the bulk of the state’s part time undergraduate and continuing education courses (general interest).
- e. be a major provider of cultural offerings, academic courses and formal and informal educational programs to the local community. They should also pay particular attention to the needs of inner city and minority groups, older adults.
- f. overall, the A.A. and A.S. degree should be limited exclusively to the community college (except in the rarest of cases) in order to avoid duplication of programs and facilities.⁴⁷

⁴⁷Ibid.

The state, through its Master Plans for Higher Education, became the overseers of community college policy and development. By offering these programs to virtually all aspects of the population ensured their persistence. Understanding the evolution of the community colleges nationally then at the state level prepares us to discuss the scope and rationale for this study.

It is important to have a firm understanding of the evolution of American Higher Education through the development of the community college as we commence our individual research on each county in this study. Many of the different stakeholders who influenced other educational institutions also played a significant role in the development of the community college. Some of the more prominent ones were: politicians, trustee boards, school boards, clergy, union officials, the media, and civic groups. Each played a role in swaying the decision that ultimately located each county's community college.

Let's now begin this political history in Essex County where student boycotts, faculty strikes, and resigning presidents are just the tip of the iceberg in this very New Jersey story about county college site selection.

Chapter II: Essex County

Essex County's population was undergoing dramatic shifts in the 1960s. Newark's black population was one third of the total city population in 1960 but increased to over half by 1970. (see Appendix I-Table I). Many blacks continued to migrate northward from the southern states for higher paying jobs and a better way of life. At the same time, New Jersey whites fled to the suburbs throughout the 1960s but this number increased dramatically after the 1967 riots. The undercurrents of racial tension, however, were palpable way before that year. The public officials in the county were aware of them as they considered creating the newest postsecondary educational reform, the community college, in Essex County.

The Study Commission

The concept of Essex County College started in 1963. The Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders at its regular meeting on December 12, 1963 appointed a Study Commission on the Need for a Two Year County College in Essex County with a budget of \$25,000. The committee was chaired by George J. Haney, a partner in the Newark brokerage firm of Auchincloss, Parker, and Redpath.⁴⁸ There were two vice-chairman: Richard Donovan of Springfield, President of the AFL-CIO Essex-West Hudson Labor

⁴⁸ The Study Commission on the Need for a Two Year County College in Essex County. *The Need for a Two Year County College in Essex County*. June 1964, 3.

Council, and Dr. Arthur C. Thornhill of Montclair, a member of the Essex County Welfare Board.⁴⁹

The study commission's report followed a standard Department of Education template that defined what a community college was in layman's terms and its main purposes. They concluded that there was a need for a two year county college in Essex County for a minimum of 700 students. It was submitted in June, 1964. It recommended that the college would offer a transfer curriculum, a terminal degree program meant for students to enter the workforce directly upon completion, and an adult evening continuing education program. The college would enroll only commuters and would not construct dormitories. The study commission recommended an eight acre site of county owned property next to the Essex County Hospital in the Soho section of Belleville. This would save taxpayers money by not having to take additional land off the tax rolls. They recommended a construction format that would allow for further expansion in the future without the need to acquire additional land. One can infer that they meant constructing a high rise building.

In their report, the study commission said they were asked to determine if the issue of the county college could be voted on by a public referendum. They responded that they

⁴⁹ The rest of the study commission included: John F. Kidde, Chairman of the Walter Kidde Company in Belleville; Dr. Jonas Lewis, dentist, and member of the Newark Board of Education; Mrs. Evelyn Lippe of Newark, Civic Leader; Lewis Hermann, Publisher of the *New Jersey Labor Herald*; George Reilly, faculty member, Seton Hall University; Mrs. Grace Malone, member of the Essex County Mental Health Board; Daniel McCormick, President of the McCormick & Schaedel Company of Newark; Robert Simko of Livingston, Principal of Orange High School; Mrs. Howard Hageman, past Vice-President, Newark Board of Education; Mario Guarduci, teacher, South Orange & Maplewood Public Schools; Fred Radel; Past President, Ironbound Manufacturers Association; Dr. E. Lanky Jones of Orange, physician; and Frank Tucker, President of Bethune Savings and Loan Company, Newark. The advisory board members were: Dr. William S. Twichell, Superintendent of Schools, Essex County; Dr. Frank B. Stover, Superintendent of Schools, Bloomfield; Mr. Harry Lerner, Essex County Treasurer; Mr. Arthur J. Bray, Essex County Planning Officer; Mr. Thomas P. Barrett, Essex County Public Information Director; and Dr. George Maxwell of Montclair.

knew of no legal ban to such a vote. Indeed, Essex County could call a referendum as a voluntary action by the Freeholders to muster taxpayer support for the large expenditure. This referendum, if called, would be outside the County College Law and would be non-binding as authorized by Title 19, Chapter 37, Sections 1-5, Laws of 1930.⁵⁰ The study commission further warned that a voluntary referendum should only be executed if it could be done expeditiously. This voluntary referendum differed markedly from one cited in the New Jersey County College Law. It stated that a referendum request can be filed within 45 days of the authorization of the county college by the Board of Freeholders. This request must accompany a petition containing at least five per cent of the county's registered voters. A referendum can also be requested by any municipality within the county that has at least 15% of the county's overall population. The law elaborated that both of these referendum requests can only be filed after the Board of Freeholders authorized the establishment of the county college and submitted a petition for approval from the State Board of Education.⁵¹

It is interesting to note the stark contrast between the two referenda and their implications. The state politicians who crafted the County College Law of 1962 only allowed a referendum for those towns and citizens who would object to the creation of a county college. When we get to the actual process of establishing county colleges here in Essex County (as well as in Middlesex and Mercer County), the freeholders thought that a referendum was important to garner taxpayer support for the new public institution. The

⁵⁰Letter to George Otlowski from Guy Ferrell, Director of Community and Two-Year College Education. April 24, 1963.

⁵¹ New Jersey County College Law, Chapter 41, 1962.

positive notion of inclusion for the taxpayer regarding the referendum at the county level was noteworthy rather than the negative notion of exclusion that was espoused by the politicians at the state level.⁵²

Central to a conversation about community college establishment are the specific steps which lead to the creation of each community college in New Jersey. Under the rubric of the County College Act of 1962, each county's Board of Chosen Freeholders designated an exploratory committee composed of select members of the county's business and education community as well as members of the general public. This group was to conduct a needs assessment to ascertain whether there was a sufficient need to establish a county college. Once the study was complete, the Freeholders formally requested the State Board of Education for approval to launch a county college within their borders. If the county's study was accepted by the State Board of Education, it established its own committee through the Commissioner of Education's office in Trenton to assess their findings. Subsequent to their review, the State Board of Education endorsed or rejected the county's request to establish a county college. Once approved by the state, the county's freeholders introduced a resolution sanctioning the creation of the county college and invited the public to hearings for their input. If the county's citizenry did not petition for a referendum within forty-five days, the Freeholders approved the resolution to create a county college after a second reading.⁵³

⁵² A voluntary referendum was discussed by the freeholders in Essex, Middlesex, and Mercer Counties as a means of garnering taxpayer support. It was only executed in Mercer County in 1965. Clifton, in Passaic County, was the only town to file a mandatory referendum in 1969 questioning the establishment of the county college under the auspices of the 1962 County College Law.

⁵³ NJ Higher Education Department. *New Jersey Two Year Colleges*. 1966, 11.

Immediately following the consent for a county college, the Board of Freeholders selected a nine member County College Board of Trustees. The county college trustees were appointed for a period of four years on a staggering basis to ensure stability. Since trustees were appointed by the elected Board of Chosen Freeholders, they were invariably linked to the sponsoring political party which nominated them. One seat on the Board of Trustees was reserved for the County Superintendent of Schools. Trustees were to be chosen from “all walks of life” as to represent the many constituents and communities the institution would serve. Other provisions for trustees included that they must be United States citizens and residents of the county that appointed them for four years prior to their selection. By-laws governing the board’s duties were created by New Jersey Education Law, Title 18A, Education, of the New Jersey Statutes in 1967, and were amended in 1968. The rules and procedures detailing the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees for the County College were supplemented by the State Board of Higher Education in 1967.⁵⁴

Once the County College Board of Trustees was set up, they appointed a president, chose a site, created curriculum, directed the plant building or renovation process, hired faculty and staff, and secured all local and state funding sources. Once all these steps were complete, students enrolled.⁵⁵

In Essex County, the study commission report contained many copies of the speeches of endorsements from the general public for a county college including:

⁵⁴ Essex County College. *Progress and Self-Evaluation Report. Volume I* . September 1, 1973, 10-11.

⁵⁵ NJ Higher Education Department. *New Jersey Two Year Colleges*. 1966, 11.

1. Robert Weiss, Student Council member, Weequahic High School. He wrote that a tuition free county college would greatly benefit the Negro population who are striving for “social and economic equality”⁵⁶
2. Emanuel Mann, International Representative, UAW Union, AFL-CIO, New Jersey Civil Rights Director, and member of the National Advisory Committee Against Discrimination. He wrote that there is a vacant building on Broadway in Newark that was formerly a State Teachers College (Newark State-now Kean University) that would be a great cost-effective location for about 1,000 students. He added that a county college would “give our heretofore disadvantaged youth a chance at education, a chance to develop, a chance to be a greater asset to our society, and a chance to give them the tools to break the vicious circle of impoverishment.”⁵⁷
3. Bernard L. Moore, national staff member, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He wrote how New Jersey is the largest exporter of high school graduates to attend college out of state. He mentioned that many students desired to attend college in New Jersey but cannot simply because there were not enough available seats. He added that by 1966, the state’s high school graduates will grow by 35%. He cited Newark high school statistics supplied by the Superintendent of Education at Newark Public Schools listing the percentage of students who do not attend college: 42% at Arts High School; 54% at Vailsburg High School; 59% at Barringer High School; 77% at East Side High School; and

⁵⁶Presentation Speech from Robert Weiss to the Survey Committee of the Essex County Board of Freeholders Public Meeting, February 5, 1964.

⁵⁷Presentation Speech from Emanuel Mann to the Survey Committee of the Essex County Board of Freeholders Public Meeting, February 5, 1964.

87% at Central High School. These startling numbers strengthened his argument to “give these youngsters more of an opportunity. They must get a better education.”⁵⁸

4. Reverend Boyd Cantrell, President, Newark Branch of the NAACP, and Pastor, Hopewell Baptist Church, Newark. Cantrell discussed how a county college would help many poor families in Essex County send their children to college and persuade at risk students who would ordinarily drop-out of high school, the incentive to finish and further their education. He said, “As a community leader, I am very much concerned about the present and certainly the future of the local and surrounding communities and it goes without saying that this junior college will promote better citizenship and higher social standards in the community.”⁵⁹

These excerpts were just a few of the discourses that were given by members of the community in support of an urban community college. These speeches were important because of who they were from. The first was a white student in his senior year at Weequahic High School who felt compelled to argue for a community college that would benefit the black population. The other speeches were from a union representative, a NAACP national staff member, and a pastor. Ordinary citizens, as well as members of unions and national organizations [the NAACP], were there advocating for a community college to benefit the city’s disadvantaged groups. Their perspectives were paramount since they underscored the educational deficits experienced by Newark’s blacks and the social mobility that a new community college could provide.

⁵⁸ Presentation Speech from Bernard L. Moore to the Survey Committee of the Essex County Board of Freeholders Public Meeting, February 5, 1964.

⁵⁹ Presentation Speech from Rev. Boyd B. Cantrell to the Survey Committee of the Essex County Board of Freeholders Public Meeting, February 5, 1964.

The State of Board of Education determined that a need existed for a county college in Essex County at its meeting on February 3, 1965 when it released its report.⁶⁰ It was projected that Essex County College's possible future enrollment would be 10,000 full-time students but the initial building capacity would be for 700 students. The State Board of Education estimated the total cost of construction (campus and furnishings) to be \$4,073,125.⁶¹ It did not endorse the study commission's recommendation of an eight acre site of county owned property next to the Essex County Soho Hospital in Belleville as the main campus for the county college. In its report, the state recognized the unique challenges of locating available land in counties that were densely populated like Essex. However, it reiterated that at least 45 acres should be considered for the future growth and expansion of the college. It also expressed the desire for the college to be near the geographic center of the county and not the necessarily near the current hub of the county's population.⁶²

⁶⁰ Letter from Commission Raubinger to Mr. Albert Saldutti, Chair of the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders. February 4, 1965.

⁶¹ NJ Higher Education Department. *New Jersey Two Year Colleges*. 1966, 4.

⁶² New Jersey State Department of Education. *A Study of the Proposal To Establish and Operate a County College in Essex County*. (Trenton, New Jersey, February, 1965).

Table 2-1⁶³

Population Data
Essex County Municipalities
1930-1960

<u>Municipalities</u>	<u>Area In Sq.</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>
<u>City</u>	<u>Miles</u>				
Newark	24.14	442,337	429,760	438,776	405,220
East Orange	4	68,020	68,945	79,340	77,259
Orange	2.2	35,399	35,717	38,037	35,789
<u>Town</u>					
Irvington	2.8	56,733	55,328	59,201	59,379
Bloomfield	5.4	38,077	41,623	49,307	51,867
Montclair	6.2	42,017	39,807	43,927	43,129
West Orange	12.1	24,327	25,662	28,605	39,895
Belleville	3.3	26,974	28,167	32,019	35,005
Nutley	3.4	20,572	21,954	26,002	29,513
<u>Township</u>					
Maplewood	4	21,321	23,139	25,201	23,977
Livingston	14	3,476	5,972	9,932	23,124
Millburn	10	8,602	11,652	14,560	18,799
Cedar Grove	4.5	4,793	5,208	8,022	14,603
Caldwell	10.4	989	1,392	1,906	3,310
<u>Borough</u>					
Verona	2.8	7,161	8,957	10,921	13,782
Glen Ridge	1.3	7,365	7,331	7,620	8,322
West Caldwell	5.3	2,911	3,458	4,666	8,314
Caldwell	1.2	5,144	4,932	6,270	6,942
North Caldwell	2.9	1,492	1,572	1,781	4,163
Roseland	3.5	1,058	1,556	2,019	2,804
Essex Fells	1.3	1,115	1,466	1,617	2,174
<u>Village</u>					
South Orange	2.7	13,630	13,742	15,230	16,175

⁶³ New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development. *Population Trends in New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: The Department, July 1961), 27 as cited in *A Study of the Proposal To Establish and Operate a County College in Essex County*. (Trenton, New Jersey, February, 1965), 15.

Table 2-1 shows the population trends and square miles of each Essex County municipality from 1930-1960. Table 2-2 shows the actual and projected population growth for Essex County from 1940 through 1980. It projects a 17 % growth for the entire county from 1940-1980. These tables and data were certainly considered by the Essex County College Board of Trustees as they reviewed possible county sites for the state's latest educational reform. It shows that Newark decreased in population by 8.4% over a thirty year period while the city of Orange remained relatively flat. East Orange grew at a rate of 13.5 %. Conversely, the population growth exploded for the same period in the towns of Bloomfield, West Orange, Belleville, Nutley, Livingston, Milburn, Cedar Grove, Caldwell, Verona, West Caldwell, North Caldwell, Roseland, and Essex Fells.

Many stakeholders looked at charts like 2-1 and 2-2 and saw that the growth in Essex County for the period 1930-1960 was in the suburbs. One might think that this would be clear and convincing evidence to place a county college in the suburbs. However, charts like these did not tell the story of urban decay or despair in the hearts of black breadwinners as cities like Newark experienced white flight and industrial abandonment. Politicians had to consider the families and the races of these families who were represented by these numbers and not just the trends. County colleges were not just for poor people but for all those citizens who wanted a low cost post secondary education. If that were the case, the suburbs probably would not have wanted a county college in their town. How could they justify it with their middle class incomes? Appendix I- Table A-1 shows that less than nine per cent of the county's black population lived in the suburban towns of Essex County in 1960. Over 90 percent of the county's poor, black population lived in Newark, East Orange, and Orange at the time. The cities made the argument that

they needed the county college since there was demand. The suburbs did not (and could not) make that argument.

Table 2-2⁶⁴

Projections of Population Growth 1970-1980					
Locality	Year			Estimated	
	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>
<u>U.S.A</u>	131,669,275	151,325,798	179,323,175	214,222,000	259,584,000
<u>New Jersey</u>	4,160,165	4,835,329	6,066,782	7,431,370	8,491,780
<u>Essex County</u>	837,340	905,949	923,545	951,251	979,789

The Davis Committee Report

While politicians in Essex County celebrated the state's approval of the county college concept, the Freeholders appointed C. Malcolm Davis to chair a committee composed of local citizen volunteers on August 26, 1965 to gather pertinent information and costs pertaining to the next step: the actual creation of a county college. In 1966, the Essex

⁶⁴ New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development. Research and Statistics Section, "New Jersey Estimated Population Projections" (Trenton, NJ: The Department, July 1961), (mimeographed) as cited in *A Study of the Proposal To Establish and Operate a County College in Essex County*. (Trenton, New Jersey, February, 1965), 16.

County College Cost Fact-Finding Committee issued a final report. It was the follow up report to the 1965 Interim Report of the County College Cost Fact- Finding Committee of the Essex County Board of Freeholders. It is sometimes referred to as the Davis Report. The final report reiterated a favored site through its county wide survey of eleventh grade parents (that was listed in the Interim Report). It was implied that a 45 acre site for the college (following the state's mandate) that would be centrally located within the county would be in the Prospect Avenue/Route 280 interchange area in West Orange. The county wide survey found that 62% of those who would attend a county college would use public transportation which would need to be supplied. For the Newark respondents, 78% said they planned to use public transportation and would be willing to commute up to five miles to attend a county college. Others said they would be willing to travel up to six or seven miles to attend a county college.

The West Orange suburban site named in the Davis Report was definitely within those parameters. The site committee computed a theoretical "center of preference" site for the college based on the responses from its survey. The computation of this point produced an ideally central location at the East Orange Station of the Lackawanna Railroad. Since no 45 acre site was vacant in that locale, a compromise was made to endorse the West Orange Prospect Avenue suburban site that was within acceptable commuting distance to Newark families as well as those in the central and remote sections of the county.⁶⁵ This showed that the Davis committee took what the state wanted (which was a 45 acre site in the center

⁶⁵ Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders. *Final Report of the Essex County College Cost Fact Finding Committee*. 1966, 36.

of the county) and compromised. Their local survey results justified their recommendation of a West Orange site.

As a response to the Davis Committee recommendation on site, several West Orange residents protested the idea that the county college would be located on 50 acres in their backyards. Some did not want the college under any circumstance. Their reasons were: 50 acres was too much land to use for the college. Their argument was that 20 acres was being planned at the time for the combined new home of Rutgers Newark and the Newark College of Engineering (NCE) [now New Jersey Institute of Technology]. It would also take tax ratables off the books making it higher for the rest of the taxpayers in West Orange to pay for services. They also cited that they sent such a small amount of students to Rutgers Newark and NCE. However, the county college site committee felt West Orange was an ideal location because it would be accessible from all parts of the county and educate, amongst citizens from other towns, residents of West Orange.⁶⁶

Figure 2-3 shows Essex County and each town's geographic location. Visually, West Orange appears to be more of the center of the county than East Orange. It also shows that Newark is in the southeast corner of the county but contained more people than any other municipality. Newark is a proximal to two other cities, Orange and East Orange. The map makes it easy to see where the almost 500, 000 people lived in Essex County in 1960. It also makes sense why the county college planners proposed a western campus location that could eventually serve that part of the county which, on the map, was far from the proposed site of downtown Newark.

⁶⁶ Editorial, "Locating the College," *Newark Evening News*, April 25, 1966.

Figures 2-4 and 2-7 are 1970 US Census maps of the Newark and Verona campus locations. The corresponding tables, 2-5 and 2-6, show that the demographics of each neighborhood. The Newark neighborhood for the county college site was predominantly black. The college now sits near the corner of Market and High Streets (now King Boulevard) shown in Tract 83 on Figure 2-4. Conversely, the Verona site shows a suburban community with less than a four percent black population. The sanitarium was located not far from the former Overbrook Hospital in Tract 210 near the Cedar Grove border. Both tables show that Newark had many more children under age 18 than Verona.



Figure 2-3⁶⁷

Essex County New Jersey with Municipalities

⁶⁷ Map of Essex County New Jersey. Retrieved from: <http://www.townsinbergencounty.com/nj/essex/> Accessed on March 3, 2013.

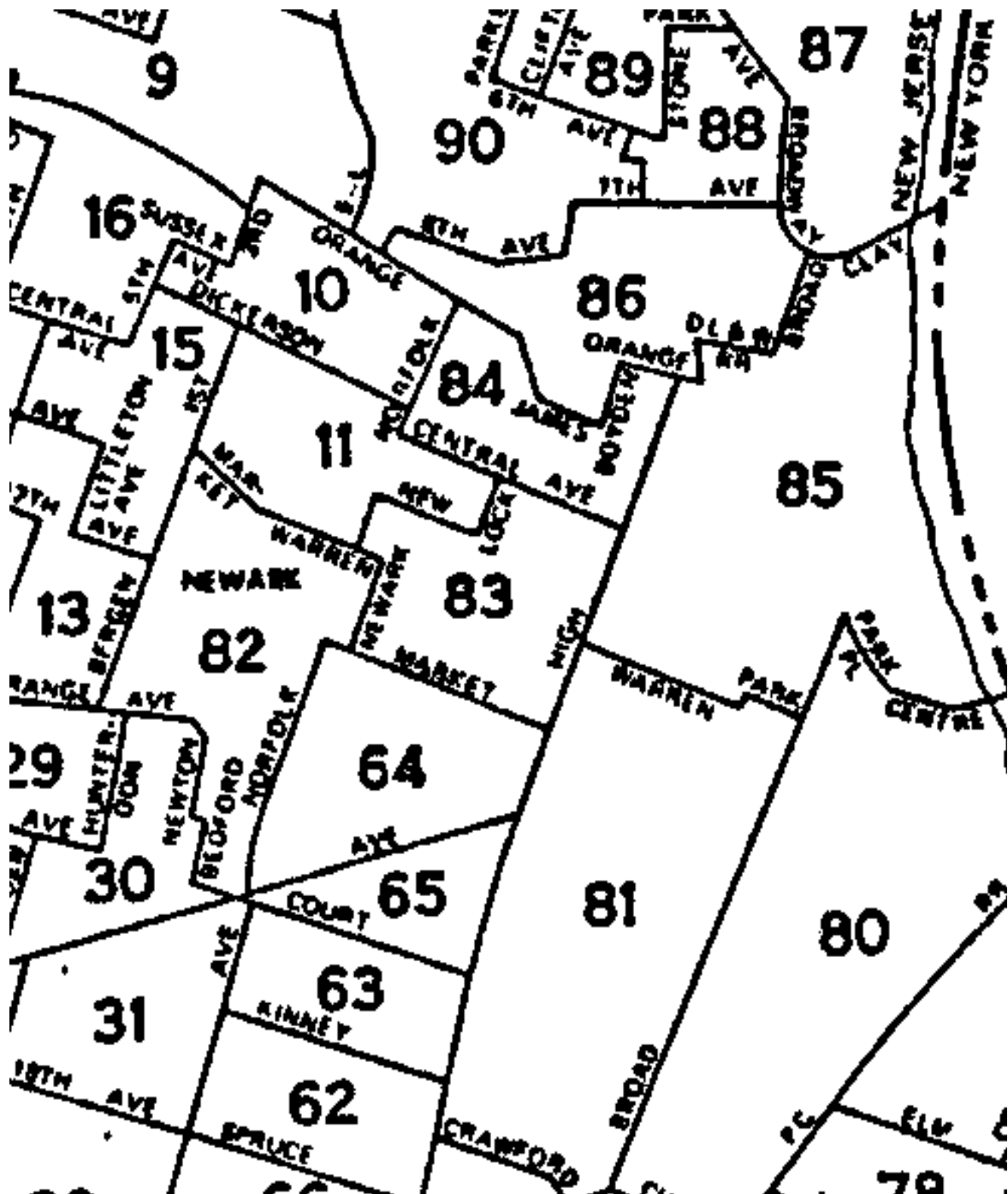


Figure 2-4⁶⁸

1970 Census Tract Map of Newark Showing University Heights Location

⁶⁸ United States Census Bureau. "Map of Newark Census Tracts in the SMSA," 1970 Census.

Table 2-5⁶⁹

1970 Census Demographics of Area Surrounding the University Heights Site in Newark

Tract	Total Persons	White	Black	Children < 18
10	2090	766	1324	884
11	956	130	826	433
13	3568	526	3042	1424
15	2279	390	1889	895
29	3947	480	3467	1862
30	2187	64	2123	852
64	2563	106	2457	948
65	4980	189	4791	2675
80	1752	569	1183	694
81	2956	832	2124	668
82	1569	171	1398	610
83	2361	384	1977	536
84	4496	1415	3081	1883
85	2704	2040	664	514
86	5255	2832	2423	2552
90	2597	2128	469	921

Table 2-6⁷⁰

1970 Census Demographics of Area Surrounding the Verona Sanitarium

Tract	Total Persons	White	Black	Children < 18
210	5311	5284	27	1701
211	5438	5233	205	1457
212	4267	4264	3	1299

⁶⁹ United States Census Bureau. 1970 Census Tracts. Information for selected tracts between 10 and 90 from "Map of Newark Census Tracts in the SMSA," 1970 Census.

⁷⁰ United States Census Bureau. 1970 Census Tracts. Information for tracts 210 to 212 from "Map of Newark Census Tracts in the SMSA," 1970 Census.

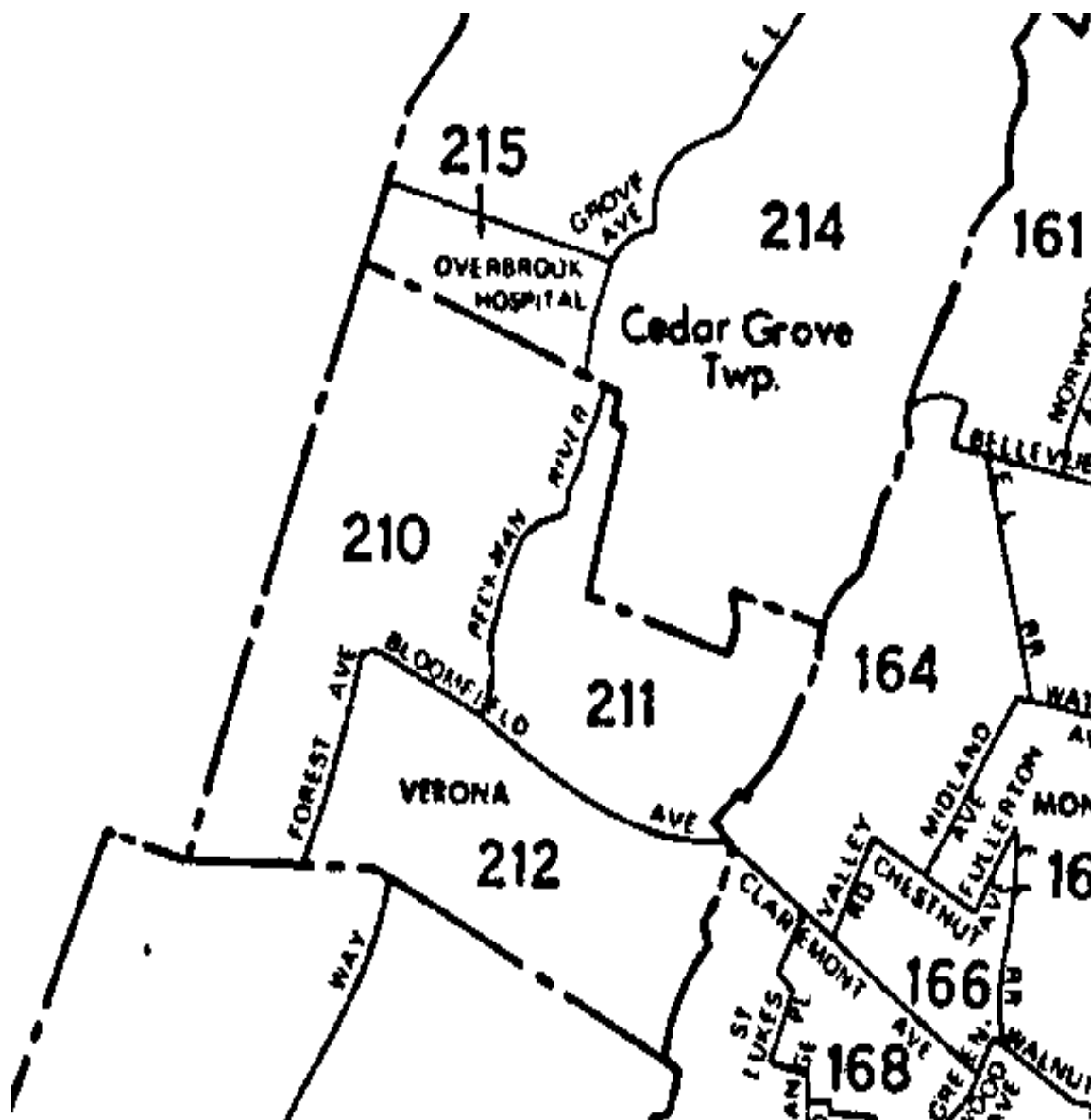


Figure 2-7⁷¹

1970 Census Tract Map of Verona Showing Verona Sanitarium location

⁷¹ United States Census Bureau. "Map of Newark Surrounding Areas- Census Tracts in the SMSA," 1970 Census.

The County College Trustee Board

On November 10, 1966, the names of the nine proposed trustees of Essex County College were published. They were to be sworn in the following week. The editorial board at the *Newark Evening News* remarked the folks named were from towns that make up 20% or 190,000 people of the county's 1960 census population for Essex County of 923,000. In the Board of Chosen Freeholders meeting to ratify the appointments of the college's Board of Trustees, Essex County Freeholder Earl Harris pointed out that none were from the city of Newark or the county's three next largest municipalities, East Orange, Irvington, or Bloomfield. Harris, who was African American, pointed out that the college would have to be paid for and sacrificed by all of the county's taxpayers. The editorial aptly highlighted that in an age of equal representation, why couldn't the board be comprised of a few citizens who comprise 80% of the taxpayers?⁷²

On November 17, 1966, at the first meeting of the Board of Trustees of Essex County College, nine individuals were sworn in by Superior Court Judge Ralph L. Fusco in the office of Essex County Clerk Nicholas Caputo.⁷³ The site committee appointed: Dr. John B. Duff as chair. Other members of the site committee were Dr. William Brown and Dr. Edwin Albano. They were charged with reviewing the Cost Fact-Finding Committee's

⁷² Editorial, "Unbalanced," *Newark Evening News*, November 11, 1966.

⁷³ They were: Dr. William Twichell, County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. John B. Duff, Livingston; Robert R. Ferguson, Verona; [one year term], James McHugh, Montclair; Beatrice Maher, West Orange; [two year term], Justice William Wachenfeld, Orange; [three year term] Dr. William Brown, Montclair; and Dr. Edwin Albano, Short Hills [four year term]. Sam Klein of South Orange was sworn in at a later date for a three year term. The board elected Robert B. Ferguson, president of National State Bank in Newark as Chairman of the Board and elected Dr. John B. Duff, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Seton Hall University as Vice-Chairman.

Report (Davis Committee) and investigating sites for the temporary and permanent homes of Essex County College.⁷⁴

During the week of November 20, 1966, Dr. Duff met with Newark Mayor Hugh Addonizio to discuss his interest in having the college in the city. Mr. Louis Danzig, Executive Director of the Newark Housing Authority, also attended this meeting along with members of the Essex County College Cost Fact-Finding Committee.⁷⁵

The Essex County College Board of Trustees continued to meet to set up the college. On February 7, 1967, the Board invited Dr. Joseph P. Cosand, President of St. Louis County Junior College in Missouri, to speak about his experience in establishing a community college in a similarly diverse environment. He recommended that an urban and a suburban tract should be acquired for a two campus system. He said:

Twin campuses, one city, and one county, must have equal stature. Both must offer technological and remedial courses. They will cost more than one single campus, but the number of students from Essex, with one million people, will probably require two campuses; since one would be too large (over 5000 students). Teachers may commute between campuses in some instances. Fifty acres is adequate for any one site. St Louis may acquire another ten acres to its thirty seven acre downtown site. Five story construction is used. It is easier to deal with one owner, rather than with several, [to acquire land] and become involved in litigation.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Essex County College Board of Trustee meeting minutes, November 17, 1966.

⁷⁵ Essex County College Board of Trustee meeting minutes, December 15, 1966.

⁷⁶ Remarks by Dr. Joseph P. Cosand to the Essex County College Board of Trustees, February 7, 1967.

Dr. Cosand was an expert in his field and gave advice to the Essex board that they had not heard before. He enlightened them that maybe a “one campus fits all approach” may not be feasible.

Dr. Cosand elaborated that his college, which is 40 percent Negro in student population, made these decisions by the Board of Trustees. They felt that tuition should be charged so students had a sense of commitment and sacrifice. Paying at least a small part of the tuition would discourage students from dropping out. He also felt that the college should not use the term “trade school” in any form. At his college, expenses were paid for by students for one-third; the state another third; and the balance came from other sources. Other advice Dr. Cosand gave the Essex County College trustee board was: offer high level technical programs such as nursing and electronics; create temporary consultative boards; have a strong public relations campaign that promotes the college as an esteemed institution; alternate portions of the trustee meetings-half private and half public; and create an open admissions policy with placement tests required for all students.⁷⁷

On February 16, 1967, the board invited another speaker. This time it was Dr. Robert Kirkwood from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. He said, in terms of site selection, it should not only be based on the trustees’ views but on those of the community. Additionally, he stated:

There are demands from many factions that want it located in their backyard. Here again, I remind you that your plans are being made for the long range future. The site must be chosen with the thought in mind- will it be satisfactory for today, or will it serve

⁷⁷ Ibid.

the needs of its community-which is the greater responsibility? This decision is a heavy responsibility and must be taken with a great deal of seriousness.⁷⁸

Kirkwood's advice seemed to reinforce the census projections that put most of the county living in the suburbs by 1985. He seemed to also subliminally reinforce Cosand's guidance that a two campus solution might be optimal.

At that same meeting, Dr. Duff reported that he and his site committee met with Louis Danzig from the Newark Housing Authority to discuss the availability of urban renewal land. The site committee also met with the Board of Trustees to discuss their philosophy concerning site selection: urban v. suburban; vertical v. horizontal building, etc.⁷⁹

After hearing from several authorities on community college site, the Board of Trustees finally reached their philosophy on site selection on April 20, 1967 at an Executive Meeting of the Board of Trustees. It recommended that two campuses would be established. The first campus would be built in Newark and the second should be constructed on land acquired immediately in the western part of the county in the suburbs. The question as to whether the second campus should be developed at the same time as Newark would be handled by the college administration. Dr. Robert McCabe, the President of Essex County College, felt two sites were necessary since suburban students would not drive into Newark and the Newark students would have difficulty in getting to a campus in suburbs. Dr. Brown, a member of the site committee, added that while he could not see this college in Newark (everyone kept alluding to Bergen Community College acquiring a 150 acre golf course), the situation at hand in Essex County was markedly

⁷⁸ Essex County College Board of Trustee meeting minutes February 16, 1967.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

different than Bergen's. He said, "These are the realities. In 1950, the Newark minority population was 75,000 and in 1960, it was 156,000, more than a 100% increase of lower class uneducated folks. I do not see how these folks will be able to travel to the suburbs to attend the college."⁸⁰

The Essex County College Board of Trustees assured the public that they would vary the courses and activities that will require suburban students to come to Newark and vice-versa. The Board of Trustees tried to make the decision they thought would be the least controversial. They tried to satisfy both urban and suburban interests. They also treaded lightly since they were affected by the recent University of Medicine and Dentistry College Campus controversy with Newark residents and the land clearing issues it raised. The Board was still going by the State Board of Education recommendation of 45 acres for a community college site. At the meeting, Dr. Duff announced that Mr. Danzig from the Newark Housing Authority offered twenty acres as a site in the city for the college. While they were grateful for the Newark Housing Authority's offer of 20 acres, the Board urged Dr. Duff to try to get more land from him to meet the state's forty five acre mandate.

Essex County College trustee, Sam Klein, felt that they should not worry about students from the suburbs. His advice was to just get the college started in Newark. Dr. McCabe, the president, remarked how a 20 acre site in Essex Heights in Newark would be okay as one of the two campuses, but worried about the parking. Board Chairman Ferguson still wanted Newark Mayor Addonizio to come up with 40 acres. If he could do that, Ferguson felt, then that's where classes would start. Others said to beseech Newark for the largest

⁸⁰ Essex County College Board of Trustees Executive meeting minutes, April 20, 1967.

tract they can provide that would prevent them from land-locking themselves down the road.

Several Board members cited the Davis Committee report as evidence that a two campus system was needed. It cited the responses of 2048 Newark parents stating they would send their child to a community college while 4000 suburban parents said the same. A discussion followed that mentioned in other community colleges throughout the nation, middle-class families make-up most of the students at the colleges. It was also noted that the Newark Parent-Teacher Association helped out the uneducated parents of Newark a lot with this survey. There were vested interests of Newark versus those who live in the suburbs. It was felt that if you put the college in the suburbs, the underprivileged would feel more so. The board felt there was a responsibility to put up a college that all people would attend so the only way to solve it was to have two campuses.⁸¹

Community Influence

The response to the two campus idea was not warm. Editorials in the local newspapers felt that the doggedness of the state for forty-five acres for an Essex County College campus in Newark was ridiculous. They noted that the new Rutgers Newark was being built with adequate facilities on half that amount of acreage. They went to say that if Essex County College was having trouble acquiring that much land then maybe it should follow the example of Miami Dade Junior College and build vertically!⁸²

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Editorial, "A Second Campus," *Newark Evening News*, April 25, 1967.

Others editorials remarked how a second campus would escalate the taxpayers' bill and that costs were getting out of hand. The college, they said, started out very humbly in 1964 when the citizen's group recommended eight acres in Belleville for a county college to accommodate 700 to 1,000 students at a cost of \$4 million. Then in 1966, another committee recommended a 50 acre urban track for 4,000 students at a cost of \$20 million. Almost a year later, the Board of Trustees added a second campus with another 100 acres for a total of 150 acres in two locations at a cost of \$25 million. They felt that plans and costs were skyrocketing monthly. The newspaper asserted that they were doubtful if the Board of Trustees could keep to the quoted price and believed that the actual cost would be much higher than forecasted.⁸³

At the Board of Trustees public meeting on May 25, 1967, several citizens spoke about the two campus idea. Mr. Harold Ashby, President of the Newark Board of Education, said he and his Board thought it would create "de facto" segregation. "De facto" meant actual segregation regardless of the law. This differed from "de jure" segregation which meant that it would be achieved by law. He added how the site committee acknowledged how few Newark students would travel to a suburban location. Mr. Bruder of 19 Lyons Avenue in Newark also felt that two campuses would create "de facto" segregation. He informed the public in attendance and the board that the state did not require 45 acres but recommended it. He felt the board should investigate high rise building construction on smaller acreage in Newark.

Mrs. Maggie Lytle of the Newark Parent Teacher association agreed with Mr. Bruder's comments and said her board expressed the same sentiment. Mr. Harry Wheeler of

⁸³Editorial, "As Feared," *Newark Evening News*, May 19, 1967.

Montclair echoed the same and included a comment that Newark was the only commonsense place to locate this college. He also said that there should be free tuition. Matthew Grum of Florham Park offered a different perspective in saying he wanted a suburban site and that people in the suburbs would like an integrated college. Mr. Andrew Washington, Chairman of Congress on Racial Equality's (CORE) Newark-Essex Education Committee, spoke how two campuses would espouse "de facto segregation" and placing it Newark would benefit more people. He stated how there was only one black person on the Board of Trustees and no one from Newark. He argued for free tuition and said that blacks must be hired for high paying construction jobs in building the college. Moreover, he felt there should be more media (other than the two newspapers, *The Newark Evening News* and *The Star Ledger*) to alert the public of meetings.

Other members of the Newark community spoke out in favor of Newark site. Steven Adubato of the Newark Teachers Union, 59 Tiffany Street, Newark, remarked positively how the Board of Trustees rejected the Davis Committee's recommendation of one suburban campus for the whole county in order to place one in Newark [one of the two campuses to be built]. He felt there would be no prejudice in admissions to the college and that the board should not commit to just one campus so as to allow for future expansion in other parts of the county, if necessary. Dr Brown, a Board of Trustee member, said the curriculum would decide whether or not students from Newark would attend the college and not the location. He reminded everyone that the board was worried about the educational needs of the residents of Newark and rejected the Davis committee recommendation for one suburban location. Dr. Duff, the site committee chairman for the Board of Trustees, closed the meeting by stating that he and the board were undertaking

their duties most prudently for all of the citizens of Essex County with particular focus on those in Newark. He was upset that the board was accused of being segregationist.⁸⁴

Newark dailies, like most city newspapers around the state, supported urban settings for the community college either through editorials or feature stories. *The Newark Evening News* editorials recommended that Essex County College should build one college location at a time. It mentioned how some folks speculated that it would produce two segregated campuses. Their advice was to step back and take a breath. One editorial implored that using common sense, Newark was the logical place to start a county college. However, there would probably be a need for a suburban location down the road. The trustees decided on this course of action after much consideration. College officials planned to alter different courses on each campus requiring students to travel to the other campus for certain classes. This would thus create a constant fusion of urban and suburban students. It was added that a second campus location in the suburbs in the future would put the college in closer reach of more of the county's projected population. If an expansion was needed at some point, it would not require Newark to lose any more of its tax ratable land since it had a large enough tax burden already.⁸⁵

In June of 1967, an additional three acres of property was identified that could be combined with the 20 acre tract of land currently offered by the Newark Housing Authority. In August 1967, the site committee recommended to the Board a 23 acre site in downtown Newark which was to be acquired from the Newark Housing Authority. Since it was a slum area, the money could be acquired using Urban Renewal Funds. This decision

⁸⁴ Essex County College Board of Trustees public meeting May 25, 1967.

⁸⁵ Editorial, "One at a Time," *Newark Evening News*, June 12, 1967.

was reached after many meetings with representatives from business, local community, and educational institutions.⁸⁶

Decision on the Main Campus Site

On August 31, 1967, about five weeks after the Newark riots,⁸⁷ the Essex County College Board of Trustees passed a resolution to acquire a Newark campus site on land from the Newark Housing Authority. They accepted that Essex County College would have two campuses with the other one in the western part of the county on land that should be purchased right away. The reason for the site selection of two locations was for it to be within reach to all inhabitants of Essex County. In the resolution, it was noted that historically, county colleges have urban and suburban locations. When fully expanded, they enroll one to one and a half full-time students for every 100 persons living in the county. Therefore, the potential of the student body was between 10,000 to 15,000 students. Adding in the part-time enrollment, the total population could near 25,000 students in the future. In the resolution, Newark was chosen for these significant reasons:

1. Availability of low-cost mass transportation (busses, subway, trains) by urban, low-wage earner families. This commitment to make quality post secondary education to the most disadvantaged was paramount to reversing social and economic problems.

⁸⁶ Essex County College. *Progress and Self Evaluation Report, Volume I* Prepared for the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, (Newark, NJ, September 1, 1973), 1.

⁸⁷ The Newark Riots occurred from July 12-17, 1967.

2. Newark was listed as New Jersey's largest city and home to many businesses, organizations, and corporations. These companies could provide many adjunct professors who were current in their field and could recommend the latest training programs to keep their firms current. Additionally, these corporate partners would provide a great deal of adult evening students seeking advancement in their careers in a location proximal to their jobs. The students who would attend as daytime students could also seek part-time employment at these corporations.
3. A Newark campus would benefit substantially from the artistic reserves that already occupy the city such as: the Newark Museum, the Newark Library, Symphony Hall, and the New Jersey Historical Society.
4. Since the new institution would be adjacent to the new Rutgers-Newark and the Newark College of Engineering, many cooperative relationships could be readily established that would benefit all of the institutions involved and maximize taxpayer dollars.

All of these reasons were listed in the Board of Trustee minutes so there would no confusion why the site was selected.⁸⁸

Many felt that a Newark inner city site would have to striking enough so as not to be substandard in looks or appearance to the other county college campuses that were being planned for Morris, Bergen, Mercer, and Camden Counties. These counties chose sites that ranged in size from 137 acres next to a golf course (Bergen) to 291 acres of former parkland (Mercer). Originally, one of the provisions from the state for a county college location was a minimum of 45 acres. This urban site of almost 23 acres in Newark was

⁸⁸ Essex County College Board of Trustees. A Resolution: Acquisition of Newark Campus Site. August 31, 1967.

approved by the Office of Two Year Colleges at the State Department of Education since it was situated near the hub of the mass transportation network. It would feature an innovative building design to enroll 5,000 full-time equivalent students.

In the original proposal to the site committee for the 23 acre lot, it contained a 9.3 acre parcel of land that was not currently part of an urban renewal project. It was land set aside for the mid-town connector highway project, the NJ 75 Freeway (also called the Newark Midtown Freeway). It contained two schools and residential housing. These 9.3 acres along with the 13.3 acres (two lots) which was divided by Market Street would have made a campus site of 22.6 acres. Ultimately, the NJ 75 highway would have connected Route 21 with Interstate Routes 280, 78 and Newark Airport. It was never built.⁸⁹

Since the 9.3 acre lot had an irregular shape and whose acquisition might create discord amongst the local community, the site committee identified another tract of land east of the 13.3 acres (actually two lots) on Market Street. It was a 9.4 acre lot that was non-residential, eligible for urban renewal funding, and was already cleared. Along with the two lots of land comprising the 13.3 acres, this 9.4 acre parcel located in the Essex Heights section of Newark created a total of 22.34 acres and presented the city with a site capable of realizing the college's mission and objectives.

Tract one had an irregular shape and contained 11.1 acres. It was adjacent to High Street (now Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard) on the east, Raymond Boulevard on the north, Wickliffe Street on the west, and a realigned Market Street on the south. Tract two featured 2.2 acres and a triangular shape. It was adjoined by a realigned West market Street

⁸⁹ Roads of Metro New York City. "New Jersey 75 Freeway (unbuilt)." Site content by Eastern Roads. Site: <http://www.nycroads.com/roads/NJ-75/> Accessed: December 2, 2012.

on the northeast, Howard Street on the west, and the northerly property line of the Essex County Hall of Records land on the south. Tract one and two united totaled 13.3 acres and were commonly referred to as one lot even though they were actually two separate lots. Tract three was rectangular in shape and held 9.4 acres. It was contiguous to Plane Street (now University Avenue) on the east, to Academy Street on the north, to High Street on the west, and to Market Street on the south.⁹⁰

The jockeying for land was very important. In the city where every square inch counted, many stakeholders treaded lightly so as not to cause any more disenfranchisement with the local community. In the month following the board's recommendation of the Newark Housing Authority site, the local newspaper editorials were abuzz. One wrote how the county college now had a 20 acre site in Newark for its permanent home rather than the impossible 45 acre initial request from the state. They felt it was a good choice since it would be adjacent to Newark College of Engineering (now New Jersey Institute of Technology) and the Newark campus of Rutgers.

Moreover, it would not require any loss of tax ratable land since it would be built on territory already cleared by the Newark Housing Authority. It would require no dislocation of residents and there were plans to build new housing developments in surrounding neighborhoods. Some newspaper editorials mentioned that Essex County College planned to build a second location in the suburbs which concerned several in the community who felt Newark would become an all black campus and the suburban location all white. Conversely, if the college site at ECC in Newark were to be expanded, it may require the dislocation of residents which was a thorny issue for black residents in Newark. Any school

⁹⁰ Essex County College Board of Trustees. A Resolution: Acquisition of Newark Campus Site. August 31, 1967.

or location for a suburban campus would have to make public transportation a major consideration for day students.⁹¹

The Board of Trustees for Essex County College decided on establishing a temporary location for the county college in downtown Newark on November 6, 1967 while plans went ahead for a permanent site. At that meeting of the Board of Trustees, Essex County College bought the old Seton Hall Building for \$800,000 at 31 Clinton Street as a temporary residence for Essex County College until a permanent site was selected and the buildings were completed. It was a twelve story building that was vacated in January 1968 when Seton Hall moved its undergraduate college to their South Orange campus. Seton Hall's price was \$1.2 million but Bishop Dougherty lowered it to \$800,000 during the negotiation process. He considered the \$400,000 a donation to higher education that would benefit the county's youth.

President McCabe thought that the building with renovations would cost another \$360,000 would be ready for classes by the fall of 1968. With year round scheduling, it was predicted to accommodate 2,100 full time equivalent (FTE) students in the first year, 3,600 the second year, and 4,000 FTE in the third year. Academic programs were to be half transfer and half career. Another possible site considered for the temporary home of Essex County College was the Essex House at 1050 Broad Street which was favored by Sam Klein, Miss Beatrice Jane Maher, and Dr. Edwin Albano, college trustees.⁹²

On November 20, 1967, H. Frederick Holmes, the director of the Two Year College Program for the State Department of Higher Education, wrote a memo to Chancellor

⁹¹ Editorial, "The First Campus," *Newark Evening News*, September 23, 1967.

⁹² William Doolittle, "Essex College to Buy Site," *Newark Evening News*, November 7, 1967.

Dungan recommending approval of the Essex County College request to acquire the 22.34 acre downtown Newark site for its permanent campus. It was inspected and approved by the State Bureau of Construction. The bureau noted that the \$844,352 to \$1, 055,440 ballpark price was somewhat below the current rate for neighboring parcels of property.⁹³

All throughout the planning stages of the Newark campus site, the administration of Essex County College kept the state abreast of its progress. A phone conversation between Robert McCabe and Theodore Streibert from the Office of Two Year Colleges at the Department of Higher Education on January 3, 1968 indicated that plans were going full steam ahead for purchase of the land in Newark for a permanent site for about \$850,000. It was pending final approval of building site by the New Jersey Department of Higher Education. He [McCabe] felt it would be hard to maintain a curriculum for the college that was half transfer and the other half for career programs. McCabe felt career programs would eclipse the transfer programs in initial enrollment. The college president felt the buildings on the Newark campus should accommodate 5, 000 full time day students starting in the fall of 1971. He said that the site committee of the Board of Trustees wanted to consider spots for the West Essex campus during 1968. His rationale was to select one for purchase before the real estate prices became too high and all of the optimal sites were taken. He indicated that if it were located near Routes 46 and 23, it might be able to serve the Paterson area and could become a joint West Essex-Passaic Community College. This would have been contingent on the county chargeback system being put into place.⁹⁴

⁹³ Inter-office memo from H. Frederick Holmes to Chancellor Dungan, NJ Department of Higher Education. November 20, 1967.

⁹⁴ Transcript of phone conversation between President Robert McCabe and Theodore C. Streibert at the NJDHE. January 3, 1968.

In 1968, the local media continued to cover the development of Essex County College. In June, an editorial in the local newspaper said that the Board of Trustees was considering a suburban campus in Verona on the site of the current Essex County Sanitarium. Following the experiences of many other large metropolitan areas, Essex County College would probably outgrow the 22 acres in Newark before long. The Board of Trustees was using foresight by acquiring the site now. A choice that was already owned by the county which would not incur any loss of tax ratable land would put the college in fine shape for years to come. The newspapers kept repeating the “de facto” segregation issue. They speculated that this issue might be forgotten once the Newark campus was built. It could very well turn out that many white and black students would choose to study in Newark (instead of Verona) out of convenience.⁹⁵

All of these events in Essex County, the selection of the permanent site, the choice of a temporary campus site, and the decision to have two campuses all happened prior to the opening day of the college in its temporary campus in 1968. You might think that the controversy over the site selection would now be over. On the contrary, it was just the beginning. The contention and resentment that caused the simmering cauldron in Newark to bubble over in July of 1967 with the riots was still there. Troubles at the new college began boiling almost immediately after its opening in 1968 and when serious talk of acquiring a suburban campus came up in 1969, the caldron blew up.

⁹⁵ Editorial, “Looking Ahead,” *Newark Evening News*, June 22, 1968.

Opening of the Temporary Campus

Essex County College opened its temporary campus at 31 Clinton Street on September 30, 1968 to 2300 full-time students. Another 1,000 part-time students signed up for evening classes. This was way above and beyond the projections of the 2,100 students that the college expected. It was also the largest opening day enrollment of any junior college in the country at that time. Essex County College had an “open door” admissions policy with applications that were received on a first-come, first-served basis. While classes met at the temporary main campus, the college acquired the Albano Center, a Nursing and Allied Health Center near Newark Beth Israel Hospital.⁹⁶

Less than two months after the college opened in downtown Newark, Essex County College President Robert McCabe resigned on November 12, 1968. McCabe cited personal reasons including the passing of his father the previous year in Florida to help him reach a decision. Others reported that college controversies significantly expedited his departure. McCabe disagreed with several members of the Board of Trustees over their decision on the location for the temporary campus. He and some Board members wanted the old Seton Hall building while others preferred the former Essex House structure. In the end, McCabe’s vision prevailed.

The first president had also been in heated discussions with the Essex County Vocational Board over their threat to take away some of the land promised to the college from the Newark Housing Authority. Other tribulations McCabe faced were the defacement of school property by students and several major student remonstrations.

⁹⁶ William Doolittle, “Essex County College Opens Tomorrow, Enrollment Sets Record,” *Newark Evening News*, September 29, 1968.

McCabe felt strongly that the college should be located near the people it served and ensured that a third of the college's staff and student population was Negro.⁹⁷ After he resigned, it was believed that Robert Zimmer, president of Kankakee Community College in Kankakee, IL would be named the next president. Kankakee Community College had a student population of about 300 students while Essex County College had over 3,000.⁹⁸ Zimmer would later be named the founding president of Passaic County Community College in Paterson, New Jersey.

Dr. Ellis White was appointed the second president of Essex County College by the Board of Trustees on January 28, 1969. He said he was "committed to urban education, for opening up the doors of higher education to the disadvantaged."⁹⁹ White was the former chair of the department of higher education at New York University. He also functioned as an advisor to the Essex County College Board of Trustees prior to and all through McCabe's short term as the college's chief executive.¹⁰⁰

It was learned shortly after the appointment of White that the Board of Trustees considered one of the country's leading black educators, Dr. Samuel Dewitt Proctor, Vice-President of the University of Wisconsin, as president of Essex County College. Proctor never officially applied for the job but did have a lengthy conversation with the presidential search committee. At the end of that discussion, he withdrew his interest to be considered. A group of black students at Essex said Dr. Proctor was "passed over" for the presidency for a white man. Essex County College's student population was one third black at that

⁹⁷ William Doolittle, "College Head Quits," *Newark Evening News*, November 13, 1968.

⁹⁸ William Doolittle, "Zimmer Seen As College Head," *Newark Evening News*, November 14, 1968.

⁹⁹ *Newark Evening News*, "White Heads College," January 28, 1969.

¹⁰⁰ Don Prial, "Essex College Head Resigns," *Newark Evening News*, February 7, 1970.

time. The students were upset that out of the 35 administrators at Essex County College, only two were black. They were: J. Harry Smith, Executive Vice President, and Dr. Hazel Blakeney, Director of Allied Health Professions.¹⁰¹

Less than two months after White's selection, racial tensions at the college erupted. A student group at the college made demands that four key white administrators should be fired and replaced with blacks. They called themselves the "Concerned Students at Essex County College." Dr. Ellis White immediately met with several of the group's student leaders. The inter-racial group was comprised of 200-300 students out of a total of 3,164. The majority of demands were for the black students. Five or six of the petitions would have applied to the whole student body. The staff they wanted fired was: Dr. George Barton, Dean of Student Affairs; Paul Stubbs, the Registrar; Richard Downs, Dean of Academic Affairs; and Joseph Burns, Director of Student Affairs. The students felt that Barton had an "apparent biased attitude." Burns and Stubbs had already submitted their resignations. Downs ouster was demanded since he did not set up a transfer program to four year colleges and a career program "relating to blacks."

They also wanted positions created for an executive vice president, an associate dean of student affairs, an associate dean of academic affairs, and a recruiter to attract black faculty and students. They expressed that all of these positions were to be filled by blacks. In the preface to their demands, they said: "It is obvious that the administration is doing little or nothing to prevent blind racism, bigotry, and general incompetence." The main demands from this group included:

1. Reduce prices for food in cafeteria

¹⁰¹ William Doolittle, "Negro Eyed for College Job," *Newark Evening News*, February 2, 1969.

2. Allow students to freely disseminate brochures
3. A free tutoring center with paid tutors
4. Student representation on the academic dismissal committee
5. \$5,000 to renovate/decorate the student lounge¹⁰²

A week later, students took over a portion of the twelfth floor for about an hour. Black students sought the termination of Dean George Barton. They went to his office on the third floor and cracked the glass on window but did not get inside. Dr. White, the college president, agreed to meet with three of the student leaders. Students also took food from the cafeteria and threw it on floor, down the staircases, and out of the windows. They insisted on the ouster of Barton whom they called a racist and wanted to know how a \$15 activity fee was spent. [Barton resigned in May 1969 to accept a post as the dean overseeing a Hillsborough Junior College campus in Florida.]¹⁰³ The students also complained that the building's elevators were constantly breaking down, too frequent fire alarms, and an insufficient fire escape that was too small for the building. The college formed a three person committee to investigate the students' demands.¹⁰⁴

In June of 1969, President Ellis White wrote an introductory paper on a Five Year Master Plan for the college. In it, he cited that since the board advocated a philosophical "open door" admissions policy since its inception and that exceeded its predicted full-time

¹⁰² David Gunter, "Essex College Astir," *Newark Evening News*, March 14, 1969.

¹⁰³ William Doolittle, "Essex College Dean Resigns Post," *Newark Evening News*, May 22, 1969.

¹⁰⁴ William Doolittle, "Essex Students Seize Office," *Newark Evening News*, March 20, 1969.

equivalent (FTE) student projections.¹⁰⁵ For fall 1968, a 2,000 FTE population was predicted. The actual number was 3,400 FTE. For fall of 1969, a 3,000 FTE figure was forecasted but he wrote that it will be closer to 4,000 since the current space configuration would allow a few more. Given the enrollment projections, he wrote that an additional 250,000 square feet of instructional space was needed by fall 1970 to accommodate the 7, 040 projected FTE . He recommended the acquisition of another large, centralized campus instead of having several scattered buildings in a decentralized fashion. He pointed to all the complaints the Allied Health students were having at the building located at Newark Beth Israel hospital to support his argument (even though it was only a few miles away). White's recommendation of a second centralized facility was consistent with the board's 1967 resolution of a two campus (urban and suburban) concept.¹⁰⁶

No Verona Campus

All throughout 1969, the board went ahead with plans for identifying a location in the western part of the county that could ease the overcrowding at the temporary main campus at 31 Clinton Street. One possible site in western Essex that was mentioned since mid-1968 was the Verona Sanatorium. In August 1969, two freeholders suggested the sanatorium might be available for students as early as fall 1970. The health care facility had less than 200 tuberculosis patients. This number was down significantly from its

¹⁰⁵ One FTE typically equals 15 credits of student coursework. One full time student taking 15 credits equals one FTE. Two part-time students taking 6 and 9 credits respectively also equal one FTE.

¹⁰⁶ Interoffice memo from President Ellis White to the Essex County College Board of Trustees regarding a five year master plan for the college. June 11, 1969.

heyday of over 1,000 patients. Additionally, it was on county owned land which meant that the town would suffer no loss of tax ratable land. One of the freeholders, Wynona Lipman, said that the 200 tuberculosis patients cared for at Verona Sanatorium would have to transfer out over a three and a half year period and not the six to nine months that the other freeholders mentioned. She further elaborated that there were currently 350 county employees who had expressed concern about their future when it was announced that Essex County College would occupy the sanatorium for fall of 1970.

When pressed, Essex County College trustee chair Ferguson clarified by saying “he hoped to get some of the land by next year.” Lipman, the only black freeholder, voiced her apprehension. The 200 tuberculosis patients at the sanatorium and most of the nearly 350 county employees who worked there were black. In a subsequent closed door freeholders’ session, Lipman, a democrat, was furious over the situation and accused two republican freeholders, C. Stewart Hausmann and Hymen Mintz, of promising Ferguson he could have the building for the college the following year. Lipman claimed the promise was a “broadside attack” by Hausmann and Mintz. Mintz cited the pressure to get more land for a second campus for Essex County College created a misunderstanding that blew way out of proportion.¹⁰⁷

On December 3, 1969 the Essex County College Board of Trustees passed a resolution to acquire the Verona sanatorium to meet the fall 1970 enrollment projections. As part of the resolution, it declared that while this acquisition was taking place, it would not hinder the construction of the proposed 23 acre Newark site.¹⁰⁸ The Freeholders announced it

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Rosenberg, “Sanitarium Transfer Rumor Believed Misunderstanding,” *Newark Evening News*, August 7, 1969.

¹⁰⁸ Essex County College Board of Trustees Resolution. December 3, 1969.

would give the Board of Trustees permission to use up to three buildings at the sanatorium in Verona to relieve some of the overcrowding at the current temporary home of Essex County College at 31 Clinton Street. It was bursting at the seams with 3,500 students. The Verona Sanitarium land could hold three five-story pavilions and could be on hand for the college to occupy by fall of 1970. These buildings, along with about 10 temporary buildings, which would need to be erected, could significantly address the overcrowding at the Newark campus. The project could be done in six months or so at a cost of \$1.5 million that would be shared equally by the county and the state. If the county sold the land to the state, the Essex portion of the bill would be substantially lower. The Verona sanatorium had 19 buildings on 210 acres at that time.¹⁰⁹

The student population and many members of the college community did not take the news well that the administration was looking at placing an up county campus at the Verona site. This fact, combined with overcrowding at the Newark temporary campus, created hostilities between the administration and the faculty and students. At first, it started out as a protest in early January, 1970. About 300 students comprising the People's Council insisted on the resignation of Dr. Ellis White for his lack of leadership. The college had 4,000 full time day students and 1,200 night students at that time. The students sent registered letters to the freeholders informing them of their ten demands. If their demands were not met, the group said they would take a drastic measure like "closing the place down." They developed their own manifesto which stated that Essex County College was perpetuating class inequality for students and faculty alike. Below is an excerpt from their introduction, "The Necessity for Change":

¹⁰⁹ *Newark Evening News*, "Essex College Gets Use of Buildings," December 17, 1969, 45.

Life in America is a bitch. If you are black or brown it's always been a bitch since American History has been written with the blood of people of color. If you're white, young, and born of working parents, America has also always been a bitch since this country was built on and maintains itself through the oppression of the working class by the rich cats that control. . . . So the man creates racism to divide black and white people. He tries to send many of us to 'Nam to help make the world safe for his business investments. As the leaders of corporations keep getting richer, our dollars buy fewer and fewer eggs. They give us just enough schooling to fuck up our minds and "make us safe for America" and then they offer us their "skilled" jobs to keep the corporations producing their plastic products.¹¹⁰

It goes on to say how many of the college's policies were ridiculous and created solely for the business world to produce workers for them. They cited how the chairman of the board of trustees was also the president of one of New Jersey's biggest banks. These students were angry and perceptive! I can only imagine how frustrated they were. Comparing this group to today's activist movement like "Occupy Wall Street," the former group from 1970 seems way more disenfranchised and disgusted.

The ten points listed in their political policy statement were:

1. No Verona campus. More facilities should be in Newark to maintain the open admissions policy.
2. Student-faculty groups will hire and fire faculty.
3. Let up on graduation requirements. Anyone with 60 or more credits should be able to graduate at their own discretion.

¹¹⁰ The People's Council. *Essex County College Manifesto and 10-Point Program*. Unpublished document. January 8, 1970.

4. Launch a day care center for children of staff and students.
5. Offer more urban-oriented programs including a minority recruitment department that focuses on inner-city, at-risk youth.
6. Become a Four-Year College right away.
 - a. Hire a transfer counseling staff to deal with transfer issues.
7. Resignation of the Board of Trustees to be replaced by a new board of 5 students, 3 faculty, 2 staff, and 2 members of the community. This new board would have transparent meetings to reorganize management of the college.
8. Resignation of President Ellis White and Vice-President, J. Harry Smith.
9. A student faculty review panel to evaluate all courses and scheduling at the college
10. Create a union for non-faculty members¹¹¹

All of these demands were straight forward and were meant to intimidate the administration. In the short time that the college was open, the students became frustrated that their needs were ignored. They feared a Verona campus would be the one that received more resources and like the K-12 educational system in Newark, it would become inferior to its suburban counterpart.

Some of Essex County College's professors were watching the controversy that took place very closely. The faculty support of the People's Council was led by Professors Stephen Block and Raymond Proctor, former president of the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE). Proctor was told a few weeks prior to the protest that he would not be reappointed for the following year. Proctor then wrote a letter to President White accusing him of being replaced by another black faculty member on a recent WNDT interview

¹¹¹ Ibid.

program concerning the black studies major at Essex County College. He signed the letter to President White “blacker than you can stand.” The faculty association voted 103-0 to reprimand White for failure to display strong-minded management of the institution.¹¹²

A week went by and with no resolution to any of the demands by the People’s Council, the climate at the college became almost untenable. On January 21, 1970, 350 students boycotted classes to support a strike called for by the People’s Council. The boycott was called primarily because the students and faculty opposed building at the Verona campus since the construction of the permanent home of the Newark campus had not even started yet. They charged that Essex County College would have two segregated campuses with one white one in the suburbs at Verona and a campus for black students in Newark. About 150 students and faculty demonstrated in front of the building carrying signs “Hell No, We Won’t Go To Verona”; “Support the People’s Council”; and “Boycott All Classes.”

On the same day as the boycott, Dr. William N. Brown resigned from the Board of Trustees. Brown was only one of two members of the Board of Trustees who was black. Brown, an associate professor at Rutgers, was against the Verona campus and disagreed with the Board of Trustees chairman, Robert Ferguson, on several issues. J. Harry Smith, Vice-President of Essex County College, said that two faculty members of the People’s Council were not selected for re-appointment for next year. Smith added that he felt that Verona was not the real issue at all for the work stoppage.¹¹³ The administration kept the college closed for a few days to protect all of the students and staff. Three days after the

¹¹² William Doolittle, “Essex College Student Group Wants President to Resign,” *Newark Evening News*, January 14, 1970.

¹¹³ Chester Coleman, “College Hit by Boycott,” *Newark Evening News*, January 21, 1970.

walkout began, the Board of Trustees agreed to delay construction of the Verona campus until after the Essex Heights one in Newark was complete.¹¹⁴

The next day after the Trustees agreed to postpone the campus at Verona, the County Freeholders hacked the budget appropriation to Essex County College for the following year by \$400, 000. Stunned, the chair of the trustees, Robert Ferguson, said that the money was still necessitated to uncover other facilities to accommodate the approximately 1,700 additional students expected to enroll for the fall 1970 term. The Board of Trustees strongly endorsed an open admissions policy and cited that the temporary college facility at 31 Clinton Street would not be able to handle the great influx of new and returning students for the fall term. While the Freeholders agreed with the open admissions policy, they said that the Board of Trustees could come back for an emergency appropriation at a later date as long as additional space was found in the city of Newark. At the time, there were currently 2,000 students attending Essex County College at 31 Clinton Street and the building had a maximum capacity of 3,200. Another 1,400 or so students were projected to enroll for fall, 1970. More than 1,500 would have to be turned away unless there was a change to the open admissions policy which no one fancied. Ferguson and White mentioned that if the open door policy was suspended, it would have a detrimental effect to the black student enrollment. They said that historically, white suburban students send in their admissions applications right away to a community college.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ *Newark Evening News*, "Essex College is Closed Again," January 23, 1970.

¹¹⁵ Michael J. Hayes, "College Slashed \$400,000," *Newark Evening News*, January 24, 1970.

Later that same week, the faculty association voted to strike to support the student demands of those in the People's Council.¹¹⁶ The vote to strike was not received warmly by the administration at Essex County College. They had Superior Court Judge, Ward J. Herbert, issue a court order on January 27, 1970 to restrain the faculty from walking out on their jobs. A sheriff's officer served copies of the injunction to the acting chairman of the faculty association, Frank Vergentino, and Mrs. Antoinette Kuzma, secretary. The college remained closed for many days while the faculty strike and the student boycott continued.¹¹⁷

At the start of the following week, five of the six department directors signed an appeal to champion White's resignation as president of Essex County College. The signers were: Prof. Joseph Zubko, humanities; Roger Miller, social sciences; John K. Sieben, evening division; Dr. Hazel Blakeney, head of the Allied Health Division; and Miles MacMahon, applied sciences.¹¹⁸ The sentiment among faculty and students was that White did not consult faculty or students in vital decisions concerning the college. The plan to open a Verona campus compounded this anxiety. While the striking faculty and students were happy that the Board of Trustees overturned its own decision about Verona, they did not have faith in the president or the Board of Trustees. Reasons for the enormous strain in human relations at the college were:

1. Young faculty-mostly black and non-tenured
2. White and black faculty familiar with arranging demonstrations
3. Not enough trust between the races

¹¹⁶ *Newark Evening News*, "Faculty Votes Supporting Strike," January 26, 1970.

¹¹⁷ William Doolittle, "Faculty Eyes Court Order," *Newark Evening News*, January 28, 1970.

¹¹⁸ *Newark Evening News*, "Revolt Grows Against White," January 31, 1970.

4. Congestion in an old structure
5. Generation gap between students and the administration and the young faculty with the administration.¹¹⁹

The mood at the college was still hostile with each group wary of the other. Student and faculty frustration fed off of each other and were united against the administration. A step back was sorely needed as well as a huge dose of common sense.

The resignation request for J. Harry Smith, the college's black vice-president, was not only from white faculty members. In a separate vote, black faculty members persisted on his resignation as well as Dr. White's. One faculty member mentioned that Smith's position was created as a result of the students' strike the year before where one of their demands was the establishment of a vice-president's position to be filled by a black person. Since Smith agreed with Dr. White and the Board of Trustees in the design of the Verona campus in an "obviously racist move," they felt he was accountable to the black community for his deeds.¹²⁰

Since Freeholder Lipmann found out that it would take several years to close the Verona sanitarium along with the student and faculty objections, Verona was no longer viewed as an option to ease the overcrowding at the Newark campus. Newark Councilman at Large Calvin D. West suggested that Essex County College use the old federal office building (now vacant) at 1060 Broad Street as additional space to assuage the excess numbers. He felt the county would save money and "preclude the freeholders fussing about with questionable projects such as the construction of a new campus in Verona instead of

¹¹⁹ William Doolittle, "Faculty joins Student Rebels at Essex College," *Newark Evening News*, February 1, 1970.

¹²⁰ *Newark Evening News*, "Some Classes at Essex College," February 2, 1970.

Newark.”¹²¹ The black community in Newark rallied to support J. Harry Smith against attacks by black faculty and staff at the college. Mr. Harry Van Dyke, president of the Newark Club of Frontiers International, a group of black business and professional men, praised Smith for his dazzling record as an administrator and for his sponsorship for the enhancement of education for the black community.¹²² The faculty strike finally ended after ten days on February 4, 1970.

Even though the Verona campus was off the table, all of the blame for the chaos at Essex County College fell squarely onto its second president, Dr. Ellis White, who resigned on February 9, 1970. The College Board of Trustees then selected J. Harry Smith as temporary “chief executive officer.”¹²³ In his letter, Ellis wrote that he chose to resign “in an effort to restore harmony and order as quickly as possible, and in the best interest of the students and all other interested parties of Essex County College.”¹²⁴

Later that month, the Essex County Board of Chosen freeholders implemented a motion backing the College Board of Trustees to not contemplate another campus in the suburbs until the Newark campus was complete. While the resolution was meant to buttress the decision by the Board of Trustees to terminate the Verona campus, three republican Freeholders abstained in the vote: C. Stewart Hausmann, Vincent Corrado, and Alan Augenblick. Augenblick said, “Anybody in his right mind would have to begin considering a second campus long before construction on Newark was finished.” He was alluding to the wording in the resolution that said “no consideration” would be given for a

¹²¹ *Newark Evening News*, “Would Use Building for College,” February 4, 1970.

¹²² *Newark Evening News*, “‘Frontiers’ Back Smith at College,” February 9, 1970.

¹²³ Don Prial, “College Post to Smith,” *Newark Evening News*, February 10, 1970.

¹²⁴ *Newark Evening News*, “Review Due on Dr. White,” February 8, 1970.

second college site at this juncture. The freeholder director countered that the resolution was necessary “for the sake of harmony and good faith.”¹²⁵

After a nationwide search for its next president, Essex County College named J. Harry Smith on May 6, 1971.¹²⁶ He was the assistant to the first president, Robert McCabe, and was Vice-President under Dr. Ellis White, the college’s second president. Smith oversaw the expansion of the student body throughout the 1970s and, along with the Board of Trustees and many politicians from around the county and state, held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new three block long mega structure on June 21, 1972. The oversized edifice, with its unique architectural features, was set on a 22.34 acre lot and was constructed to have a capacity of 8,000 students. Essex County College occupied the building in April, 1976 and dedicated it in September, 1976.¹²⁷

Summary

The events that lead to the creation of downtown Newark as the main campus for Essex County College were anything but boring. Two resigned presidents and a new trustee chair in a three year period created lots of interesting news stories...and plenty of *struggle*. The black and white communities of Essex County watched the events surrounding the creation of their community college with bated breath. Many civil rights, labor, and civic groups attended the public trustee meetings that very often turned into shouting matches. Each

¹²⁵ Michael J. Hayes. “Campus Plans Delay Pledged.” *Newark Evening News*. February 27, 1970, 18.

¹²⁶ James Weinstein. “Smith Heads Essex College.” *Newark Evening News*. May 6, 1971, 9.

¹²⁷ Michael J. Hayes. “Speeches Launch Essex College Site.” *Newark Evening News*. June 21, 1972, 9.

was adamant about their viewpoint. Everyday citizens and members of state and local organizations were concerned where the college would be located and how it would affect their children's futures. Education and access to education were, and continue to be, contentious issues in the years following *Brown v. Board Education*. And rightly so, we should always make sure that all of our children have access to the very best education that is humanly possible.

Essex County College's board of trustees tried very diligently to create a campus for the entire county. They ultimately decided there would be two campuses. Race certainly became a crucial factor as they deliberated where to site the county college campuses. Given the tension in Newark, the county, and the state over discrimination and racism, the trustees were crisply aware of the race issue and attempted to avoid further confrontation by placing the temporary and main campus in downtown Newark. They did not expect turmoil to erupt when the Verona campus was seriously discussed. Nor did they expect the charge that they would purposely create "de facto" segregation by adding a suburban campus. Robert Ferguson, the Board of Trustees chairman, sounded hurt and beleaguered in his letter of resignation to the Freeholder Chairman.

The trustees looked earnestly at the census data projections, the high dropout numbers in Newark, the effects of "white flight," and heard advice from top community college experts. They then came up with a two campus plan which they thought was the best solution for their county. They had the survey results of students from the cities as well as the suburbs. They knew the city students were willing to commute and that the suburban students would travel to the city. While West Orange said they did not want a community college in the early planning stages, there was not a lot of vocal support from ordinary

citizens advocating for a suburban site. That support seemed to come from the politicians and officials and did not get significant mention in the media.

In the end, Newark's mega structure became the main campus for Essex County College. There were no "winners" or "losers" in the true sense of the meaning. Race played a major role in the debate over where to locate the community college. It was rooted in fear. Fear of getting an inferior school that wasn't as nice as the suburbs. Fear of "separate but equal." All of those apprehensions evaporated once the state of the art campus was built, academic majors were developed, and students enrolled.

In hindsight, the Newark campus was a good choice and so was the West Essex campus that serves the western part of Essex County. It opened in 1978. Both are diverse centers of learning that provide access to the community. It did not become the white and black campuses that were projected. Some of the 1970 recommendations of black faculty and staff were heeded and the campus gradually saw a large increase in the enrollment of black and Latino students from the urban areas. The Newark campus of Essex County College now embodies all the traits predicted by advocates of an urban location. It is close to the downtown businesses and corporations for students to have part-time jobs or internships, close to the city's cultural institutions and four year colleges, near several modes of mass transportation, and most importantly, gives unprecedented hope to the community it serves.

Chapter III: Mercer County

Like Essex County, Mercer County in the 1960s was home to a large city that was experiencing a loss in manufacturing and a shift in its population. The famous sign on the Lower Trenton Toll Supported Bridge, “Trenton makes, the world takes” which still stands today, is only a faded memory of its position as a leading American industrial center. “White flight” took place in Trenton in Mercer County which had a 22 percent black population in 1960 that grew to 37 percent by 1970. The corresponding losses in whites for Trenton seemed to match the white population gains for its suburban towns. Mercer County was chosen along with Essex County as the centerpieces for this historical research study since both shared a similar characteristic. They each had a major city and several suburban towns as possible locales for its community college. Each county experienced civil unrest and riots in the 1960s. We will see that what happened in Mercer County played out much differently than it did in Essex County.

While several of the stakeholders were the same (politicians, city mayors, civil rights and civic groups), their relationship to each other and to the press was much different. We should pay attention to the relationship between the city politicians and the board of trustees. Like the Essex County College Board of Trustees, this board was also keenly aware of the role that race played in their decision to site a community college. This board, more than the Essex one, relied on several consultant reports to do its heavy lifting. While the struggle between the city and the suburbs was the same in Mercer County, it was less

contentious than what transpired in Essex County, mainly because of the personalities of the stakeholders.

At the dawn of the community college movement in the 1960s, Mercer County was the only county in New Jersey that already had a publicly funded junior college. The School of Industrial Arts in Trenton had been in operation under several names, including the Evening Drawing School, since the 1890s. It had received taxpayer support from the city's citizenry since 1926. In 1947, the trustees changed the name to Trenton Junior College and School of Industrial Arts.¹²⁸ By the 1960s, its facilities were antiquated and too small for its growing population. Once there were discussions to erect a community college for the entire county in 1962, the Board of Trustees of Trenton Junior College agreed to merge their faculty and holdings with the new, fledgling institution. Both the Study Committee to Assess a Need for a County College in Mercer County as well as the state response made the same recommendation.

The Study Commission

The Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders appointed a study committee to investigate a need for a county college in Mercer County in late 1962.¹²⁹ It was composed of Dr. Simon Marcson, Chair, Dr. Richard Beck, Mr. Donald E. Chafey, Monsignor John E. Grimes, Mr. Albert B. Kahn, Esq., Mrs. J. Robert (Peggy) McNeil, The Reverend A.D. Tyson, Mr. Anthony Zuccarello, and Mr. Jack Twitchell, ex officio. Mr. Twitchell was the

¹²⁸ *Trenton Times*, "City Would Enlarge Site for College," December 9, 1966.

¹²⁹ The Mercer County Freeholders for 1966-67 were: Richard Coffee, Director; Arthur R. Sypek, Deputy Director; Frank J. Black, Charles Kovacs, Clifford W. Snedeker, George J. Sutch, and Karl Weidel, III.

Mercer County Superintendent of Schools. Dr Marcson was a Fulbright Fellow and a professor of sociology at Rutgers University. He was also a research fellow at both Princeton and Columbia Universities.¹³⁰ Mr. Kahn was a Trenton based attorney who served on various civic and community boards. Monsignor Grimes was a Roman Catholic prelate who was the rector of St. Mary's Cathedral in Trenton. Mrs. J. Robert (Peggy) McNeil was President of the *Trenton Times* Newspapers and daughter of the late James Kerney, a prominent Trenton philanthropist and tabloid owner. Mr. Donald Chafey was the Secretary of the Greater Trenton Chamber of Commerce. Reverend A.D. Tyson was a minister at the Mt. Pisgah Methodist Episcopal Church in Princeton. Dr. Richard Beck was the Superintendent of Schools for Trenton. Mr. Anthony Zuccarello was the International Organizer for the United Auto Workers, AFL-CIO.¹³¹

They released their report in July 1964 to the Freeholders and it indicated an overwhelming need for a county college to be erected within its borders. The report recommended that a college in Mercer should be built to accommodate 1,500 day students and 3,000 evening students. Its curriculum would feature courses that would be one third liberal arts, one third to one half business and technical courses meant to prepare students directly for the workforce, and the balance would be short-term and remedial curricula for adult and returning students.

¹³⁰ "Fulbright Won," *Town Topics*. Princeton Periodicals. 15 March 1959. Accessed: January 13, 2013. <http://libserv23.princeton.edu/princetonperiodicals/cgi-bin/princetonperiodicals?a=d&d=TownTopics19590315-01.2.49&e=-----en-20--1--txt-IN----->

¹³¹ *A Community College for Mercer County*. [A Brochure To Support a Yes Vote in the 1965 Referendum]. (Trenton, New Jersey, September, 1965), 10.

The study committee identified four possible sites for the permanent campus of Mercer County Community College in their statement:

- a. A site next to the Assunpink Creek in a 2000 acre park in West Windsor which was under deliberation by the county as part of its Green Acres Initiative. It was a farm tract and was 10 miles from downtown Trenton. The land was located between Princeton Borough and Hightstown. The committee noted that the Green Acres project was still in development and title to the land could be a few years away. Utilities and mass transportation lines would need to be instituted if this site was chosen.
- b. A 116 acre lot that was currently owned by the State of New Jersey. It was located on the north side of Stuyvesant Avenue in Trenton and extended into Ewing Township. It was near the State Hospital and just past Cadwalader Park. The State Hospital occupied 41 acres while the State Home for Girls had 75. The land was currently employed as a farm and was labored on by prisoners at the state reformatory. There was a possibility that the state might end the farm project and would need approval by the State Hospital and the State Home for Girls that their extra land would no longer be needed. There would be more county and state red tape involved in acquisition of this site and it was not guaranteed.
- c. A 9.4 acre lot across from City Hall in downtown Trenton. This site would need vertical construction to accommodate 2,500 students. Land would be purchased through the federal Urban Renewal program and be available in a few years. Both the mayor and the city planning director strongly endorsed this site.

- d. Sixteen acres of air rights over the Clinton Street Station of the Pennsylvania Railroad in Trenton. Its purchase price was \$320,000 or it could be rented at a cost of \$100,000 per year.¹³²

The State Board of Education received a request from the Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders on October 7, 1964 to establish a county college in Mercer County. The state then published its own study in April 1965. It projected Mercer's possible enrollment would be 3,000 full-time students but the initial building capacity would be for 1,500 students. The State Board of Education estimated the total cost of construction (campus and furnishings) to be \$6,982,500.¹³³ It commented on the site committee's work that 100 acres was a national average and a national consensus for new community college sites in the United States. However, they would consider a site as little as 45 acres. They also added that their experience was that the ratio of students to cars was almost one to one. Each acre could hold about 100 cars. Hence, 15 acres would be needed for students' cars alone. They recognized the planning committee's identification of four possible sites, two were in downtown Trenton. They wrote:

- A. The area should provide adequate space for the college's immediate and long-term requirements as defined in a 'master plan' for its future growth and expansion;
- B. Environmental surroundings should be appropriate to an institution of higher learning. It should provide aesthetic surroundings removed from commercial-industrial areas;

¹³² Study Commission to Determine the Need for a County College in Mercer County. *A Report to the Board of Chosen Freeholders of Mercer County*. Trenton, New Jersey, July 1964, 24-5.

¹³³ NJ Higher Education Department. *New Jersey Two Year Colleges*. 1966, 6.

- C. The topography should permit economical construction of buildings and provide maximum utilization of land;
- D. It should be accessible by established routes of travel, and to a lesser degree, convenient to public transportation;
- E. It should be geographically located near the present center of the county rather than near the present center of the population;
- F. The quality of the soil conditions should be appropriate to campus needs;
- G. It should be accessible to needed utilities.¹³⁴

All of these items were meant as general recommendations to the counties as guides in selecting a site for their county college. None of them were set in stone and the state used some flexibility when reviewing the sites suggested by each county.

The Mercer County Freeholders sought the support of the county's citizenry for the community college through an advisory referendum in the November 2, 1965 general election. They put together a pamphlet that was sent out by mail to all of the county's homes in September of that year. It stated that a study committee had demonstrated there was a need for one in Mercer County and that the costs would be low while the benefits to the community would be numerous. It stated that the curricula offered at the county college would be 35 percent for business studies; 28 percent for liberal arts studies for transfer to a four year college; 23 percent for engineering science studies; 12 percent for health sciences while two percent would be general in nature that would be a terminal program. The actual ballot question was "Shall a county college be established in Mercer

¹³⁴ New Jersey Department of Education. *Committee for the study of the proposal to establish and operate a county college in Mercer County: A study of the Proposal*, April 1965, 52-54.

County pursuant to ‘An act concerning the establishment and operation of county colleges and providing for the method of financing and raising necessary funds therefore?’”¹³⁵

The Trenton branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) urged the freeholders to put the community college in the city of Trenton earlier in the year on the grounds that it would be accessible to the largest number of students. However, with the referendum on the November ballot, they urged everyone to support its passage. A spokesman for the branch stated, “the minute it passes, if it passes, we will present arguments for a city location.” Related to the NAACP endorsement was the recommendation to reject the county college referendum by the Trenton-based Citizens Action Council. They said they would almost favor a defeat of the referendum unless there was a guarantee from the County Freeholders that the college would be located in Trenton. The freeholders responded that the decision where to site the college was in the hands of the Board of Trustees, not them.¹³⁶

While a referendum was not necessary, there was nothing prohibiting it. The freeholders insisted on a ballot question since they wanted to make sure they had the public’s approval in spending the largest single expenditure project in the county’s history. This was a brilliant move on their part. It showed concern for the taxpayers and if it passed, ensured their buy-in. If it did not pass, no one could blame the freeholders. Genius. The referendum estimated the total cost of the county college to be around \$7 million and the taxpayers share around \$2.2 to \$3.5 million depending on the amount of federal funds that could be secured under a new formula. This voluntary referendum was non-binding as authorized by Title 19, Chapter 37, Sections 1-5, Laws of 1930. Ultimately, the taxpayers

¹³⁵ *A Community College for Mercer County*. 9.

¹³⁶ *Trentonian*, “NAACP Urges ‘Yes’ Vote on Referendum,” October 22, 1965.

approved the referendum on November 2, 1965 by a vote of more than two to one. 43,871 votes were cast in the affirmative to 20,019 votes in the negative.¹³⁷

The County College Trustee Board

After the state completed their study, they approved the petition to create a county college in Mercer County on January 4, 1966. On January 11, 1966, the Board of Chosen Freeholders of Mercer County passed the motion to create Mercer County Community College and guaranteed the mandatory monetary resources.¹³⁸ The next step was the selection of the Mercer County Community College Board of Trustees by the Freeholders.¹³⁹ The site committee was chaired by Dr. Richard Pearson. Other members of this committee chaired by Pearson were: Albert Kahn, Anthony Zuccarello, and Jack Twitchell.

Dr. Pearson was also President of the College Board in Princeton at the time he was site committee chairman. Dr. Harold Dodds was past president of Princeton University. Alan Bowers was the Executive Vice-President and Director of the Trenton Trust Company. He was also a trustee of the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and the Greater Trenton Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. J. Robert (Peggy) McNeil was President of the *Trenton Times* Newspapers and daughter of the late James Kerney, a prominent Trenton

¹³⁷ Mercer County Community College. *First Annual Report*. Trenton, New Jersey, November 1, 1967, 2.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 1.

¹³⁹ They were: Alan W. Bowers, Chairman; Dr. Harold W. Dodds, Vice Chairman; Mrs. Peggy Kerney McNeil, Secretary; Albert B. Kahn, Esquire, Treasurer; Dr. Henry Chauncey, Henry N. Drewry, Dr. Richard Pearson, Jack B. Twitchell, and Anthony Zuccarello.

philanthropist and tabloid owner. Mr. Twitchell was the Mercer County Superintendent of Schools. Mr. Kahn was a Trenton based attorney who served on various civic and community boards. Mr. Anthony Zuccarello was the International Organizer for the United Auto Workers, AFL-CIO. Four members of the founding board of trustees of Mercer County Community College were also on the Study Commission to Assess a Need for a County College in Mercer County. They were: Peggy McNeil, Albert Kahn, Jack Twitchell, and Anthony Zuccarello.

The makeup of the trustee board was important, particularly for Mercer County. Dr Pearson, as chair of the site committee, probably brought his perspective of what a college should look like from his years as chief executive of the College Board. After all, this was the same organization that created and sponsored the SAT (the former acronym for the Scholastic Aptitude Test). These tests were used by selective college and universities that typically had expansive campuses whose rolling hills and top rate athletic fields dotted the landscape. Dodds was also president of Princeton University which was often seen as a model of what a traditional college campus should look like across the nation.

The College Board of Trustees held their first meeting on January 21, 1966. The administration established a temporary location at 28 West State Street in Trenton. In May 1966, the Board of Trustees released criteria it wanted for prospective sites for the main campus. At the end of the month, the Board hired Dr. Richard K. Greenfield as President of MCCC. He started office August 15, 1966. The trustees said they presumed the college would enroll at least 1,500 full-time day students in the first year with an approximate 3,000 full-time students anticipated within five years. Additional projections forecasted upwards of 5,000 full-time students by 1980. Hence, the board stated that one site would

need to be chosen that would be large enough for the ultimate student population at the college or two tracts.

The board announced that it was willing to accept a lot of land as small as nine acres within the heart of downtown Trenton or 100 acres in another part of the county. The Mercer County College Board of Trustees issued a complete list of conditions in May 1966 for consideration for the main campus site. They were:

- a. Size and location.
- b. Accessibility to the present and future population of Mercer County. Evidence on this point should include reference to the population within the immediate vicinity of the proposed site, availability by public transportation, and availability by car.
- c. Estimated cost to acquire the site.
- d. Estimated date the site would be available.
- e. Potential to provide parking for up to 2,500 cars.
- f. If buildings are on site already, a detailed description of the buildings must be provided.
- g. Description of the land topography and its suitability for the low cost construction of the buildings.
- h. Availability of utilities.
- i. Availability of police and fire protection.
- j. Description of surrounding locale, with particular reference to recreational facilities, public buildings, restaurants, book stores, shopping facilities.

k. Discussion of the particular advantages and disadvantages of the site.¹⁴⁰

These criteria roughly matched the state guidelines on site for all county colleges to follow.

In response to the site criteria request released in May, the mayor of Trenton, Carmen Armenti, wrote to Dr. Pearson, Chairman of the MCCC site committee, in July 1966. He reiterated his advocacy for a center city Trenton site for the main campus of the community college. He cited that Trenton had the largest population of people of any municipality in Mercer County including the most amount of people living below the poverty line and the largest number of minority groups. In terms of educational attainment, Trenton's adults had the lowest levels of schooling attained as measured against other towns in Mercer County. The over 18 age group in Trenton had an average of nine school years completed as judged against the 10.5, 11.4, and 11.9 figures for adults in the adjacent communities. Mayor Armenti added that 82 percent of the county's population could travel to center city Trenton by car in 20 minutes or less. Trenton had bus service that connected to all parts of the county, making it convenient for suburbanites to get to the city. Students who needed housing accommodations could easily stay at the local Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) or the Young Women's Hebrew Association (YWHA) in downtown Trenton. The city was also home to many museums, libraries, parks, and bookstores that were accessible on foot to any center city college site. Lastly, all utilities and police and fire protection were already in place in downtown Trenton.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Mercer County Community College Board of Trustees. "Information Needed on Prospective Sites for the Mercer County Community College: A report." Trenton, New Jersey, May 11, 1966, 2-3.

¹⁴¹ Correspondence from Mayor Carmen Armenti to Dr. Richard Pearson. Document is from the New Jersey State Department of Education Mercer County Community College File at the New Jersey State Archives. Trenton, New Jersey, July 11, 1966.

Another response to the Board's May 11, 1966 request for sites for the main campus of Mercer County Community College discussed the Hoch Farm in Hopewell Township. It offered 330 acres of land with 250 acres located north of Route 546 and 78 acres located to the south. The area was located about two miles west of the Pennington Traffic Circle and seven miles north of Trenton. While it was not in the center of Mercer County, it was within 10 miles of the county's most inhabited municipalities. There was no public transportation in place at the time but the farm was located on a main road so it could be easily arranged. Each acre was \$2,000 and since there was only one owner, the sale could have been negotiated in an expedient manner. The site could have easily handled thousands of cars for parking, sporting events, conferences, etc. The land contained just a few buildings with the rest of the land open and ready for construction. The landscape had gentle slopes and the soil was easy to move with no large shale formations. In terms of utilities, there were three electric poles owned by Central Jersey Power and Light on the 78 acres south of Route 546 and the tract was located just about 100 yards from the Natural Gas Line from Texas that ran underneath the ground. There were no sewer utilities in place at the time but the town hoped to have them in place in the near future.¹⁴²

In looking at Figure 3-1 on the next page, the reasons that the college trustees and Freeholders may have discounted the Hoch Farm submission as a possible site for the college may have been several. First was geography. Hopewell was located at the northern end of Mercer County that contained only three percent of the county's total population in 1960. While it was the largest township in Mercer County at 58 square miles, it was not located near the geographic center of the county nor near its largest cluster of inhabitants in

¹⁴² "Hoch Farm Submission Report." Document is from the New Jersey State Department of Education Mercer County Community College File at the New Jersey State Archives. Trenton, New Jersey. Undated.

Trenton. Those were the two main characteristics that the Board of Trustees looked at when considering a site.



Figure 3-1¹⁴³

Mercer County Map with Municipalities

¹⁴³ Map of Mercer County New Jersey with Municipalities.
<http://www.state.nj.us/counties/mercer/visit/towns/map.html> Accessed on: February 3, 2013.

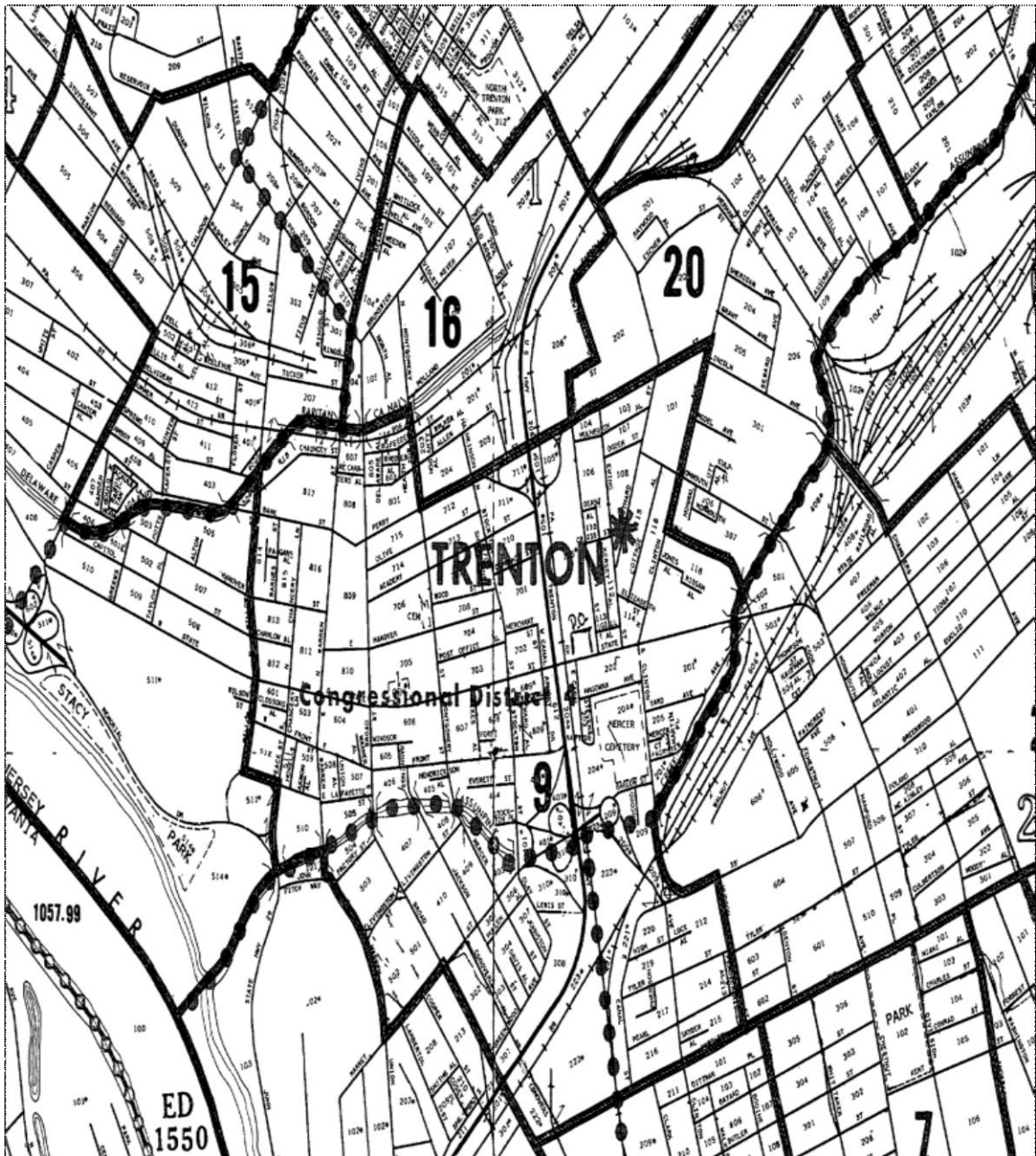


Figure 3-2¹⁴⁴

1970 US Census Map of Areas Surrounding Showing Perry Street, Trenton Location

¹⁴⁴ United States Census Bureau. Tracts and Blocks. "Map of Trenton and Urbanized Areas-map 4," 1970 Census. Philadelphia Trenton Area.

Table 3-3¹⁴⁵

1970 Census Demographics of Perry Street Area in Trenton

Tract	Total Persons	White	Black	Children < 18
9	7049	4300	2749	2115
15	4907	589	4318	1914
16	1790	143	1647	698
20	2912	300	2620	1398

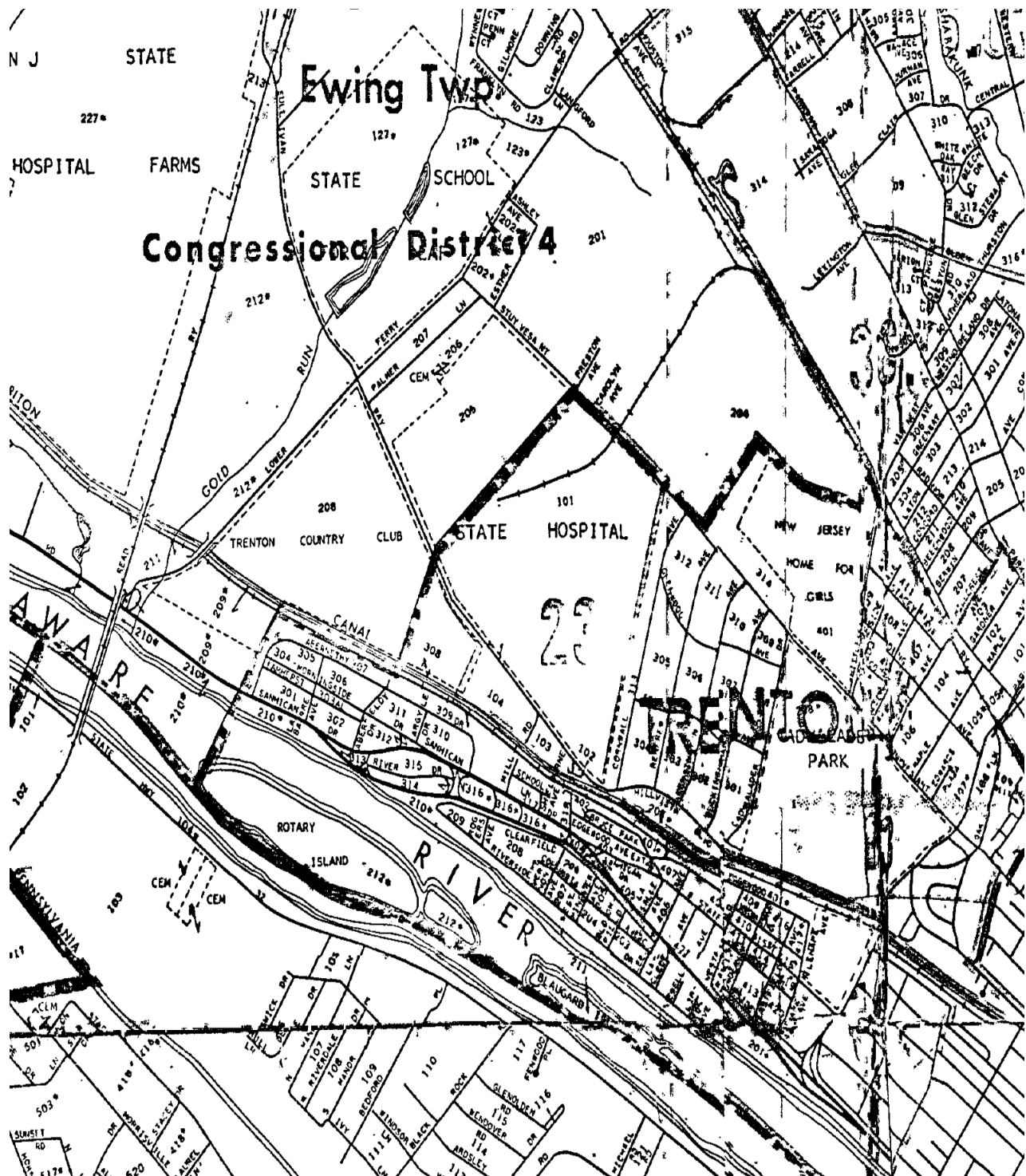
Table 3-4¹⁴⁶

1970 Census Demographics of Stuyvesant Avenue Site in Trenton/Ewing Townships

Tract	Total Persons	White	Black	Children < 18
13	3816	3205	611	1107
23	2307	1799	508	138

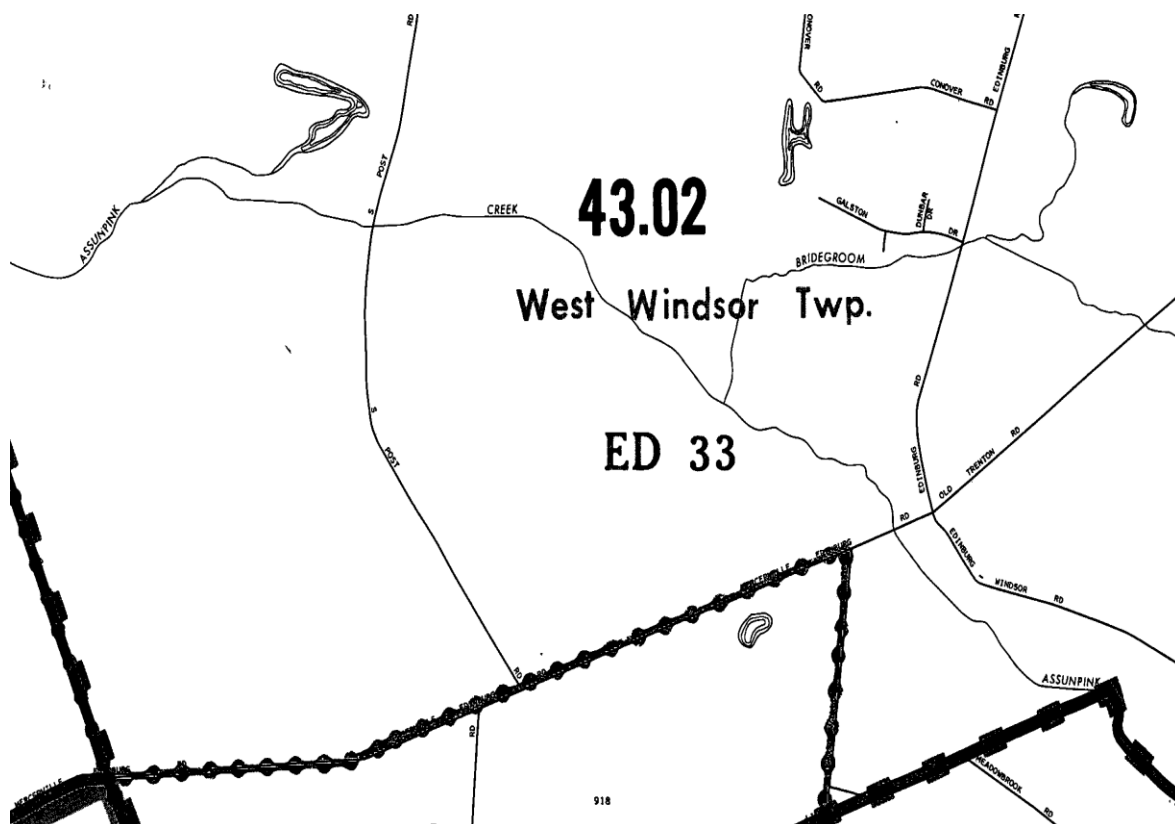
¹⁴⁵ United States Census Bureau. 1970 Census Tracts. Information for Tracts 9,15,16, and 20 from “Map of Trenton and Urbanized Areas-map 4.”

¹⁴⁶ United States Census Bureau.. 1970 Census Tracts. Information for Tracts 13 and 23 from “Map of Trenton and Urbanized Areas-map 5.”

Figure 3-5¹⁴⁷

1970 US Census Map of Trenton/Ewing Showing Stuyvesant Ave. Site

¹⁴⁷ United States Census Bureau. Tracts and Blocks. "Map of Trenton and Urbanized Areas-map 5," 1970 Census. Philadelphia Trenton Area.

Figure 3-6¹⁴⁸

1970 US Census Map of West Windsor showing land next to Assunpink Creek in the proposed Assunpink Park

Table 3-7¹⁴⁹

1970 Census Demographics of proposed Assunpink Park Area

Tract	Total Persons	White	Black	Children < 18
43.02	223	223	0	83

¹⁴⁸ United States Census Bureau. Tracts and Blocks. "Map of Trenton and Urbanized Areas-map 4," 1970 Census. Philadelphia Trenton Area.

¹⁴⁹ United States Census Bureau. 1970 Census Tracts. Information for Tract 43.02 from "Map of Trenton and Urbanized Areas-map 4."

Figures 3-2, 3-5, and 3-6 show the possible locations the trustees considered for the main campus of Mercer County Community College. All three images are portions of the 1970 US census maps showing tracts and blocks for their respective sites. Figure 3-1 shows the entire county and their proximity to each other. West Windsor seems to be located near the geographic center of the county which was one of the state's recommendations. The Trenton locations were clustered near each other and were hindered by their lack of immediate acquisition.

On figure 3-2, the college site on Perry Street is in the upper left hand corner of Tract 9 and is above the word, Trenton. On figure 3-5, the Stuyvesant Avenue site is located on land adjacent to the New Jersey Home for Girls and the State Hospital. It shows that parts are located in Trenton and Ewing Townships. It is located on Tract 23 just past Cadwalader Park in blocks 201, 204 and 401 respectively. Lastly, in Figure 3-6, it shows the Assunpink Park location in West Windsor. The land is located west of South Post Road bounded by Old Trenton Road to the south. On the map shown in Figure 3-6, the college is now located on land in the lower left corner.

Tables 3-3, 3-4, and 3-7 show the demographic information for each site. Not surprisingly, the farm land area surrounding the West Windsor locale had no black inhabitants. The Stuyvesant Avenue site had about a 15-20 per cent black population while some tract areas near Perry Street had a 90 per cent black population according to the 1970 census. Trenton did not become a city with a majority black population until 1990 as shown in Table A-2 in Appendix I. In the early 1970's, most of Trenton's inhabitants were white. This explains why there was not as much controversy over an urban college site from Trenton's citizenry as there was from Newark's.

These figures and graphs enhance our understanding of what the trustees were looking at in weighing their decision about a county college site. While the trustees took into account the growing black minority population residing in Trenton at that time, the map also highlights how small the city was at 7.5 square miles as compared to the huge towns of West Windsor and Hamilton Townships at 26.8 and 39 square miles, respectively. Also, detractors of an urban site pointed to the lack of available acreage for future expansion and the high costs associated with inner city construction. It is important to note that the West Windsor site was the only suburban site considered by the trustees. That tract could be paid for with Green Acres funds and had plenty of room for expansion. These maps do not take into account the social justice issues of equity or access for Trenton's large black population that would find it difficult to travel to a suburban campus if low cost public transportation was provided.

Consultant Reports

Consultant reports played a significant role in the decision process for the trustees at the county colleges. The board had no problem in allocating funds to produce the documents. At Mercer County Community College, the two independent reports seemed to counter the report filed by the City of Trenton's planning office. No surprise there. It seems that if the heart was willing, then the pen and funds followed. The City of Trenton report only discussed the Trenton site which it felt would best serve the largest amount of people who had the lowest educational levels in the county.

The Board of Trustees had two separate sets of consultants evaluate the three possible sites for the main campus. Additionally, the city of Trenton submitted its own report

independent of the other two in July 1966 to the Board of Trustees at Mercer County Community College called “A Community College in the Community Core” which only discussed the advantages of selecting the 15.5 acre Perry Street site in Trenton. The two other reports sanctioned by the Board were submitted by Dr. Cleve O. Westby, the Director of School Building Services of the State Education Department, and the Consulting Engineering and Landscape Architecture Firm of Clarke and Rapuano, Incorporated of New York. Westby’s report was submitted to the Board of Trustees in September, 1966 while the Clarke and Rapuano firm’s report was filed in December, 1966 right before the board’s vote on the site location for the college.

The City of Trenton Department of Planning and Development in their report, “A Community College in the Community Core,” proposed that the new community college should be located on a 15.5 acre plot on Perry Street. It was located next to the main business district in downtown Trenton. It was bordered by Perry Street, North Broad Street, the Delaware and Raritan Feeder Canal, and the Trenton Freeway (now Route 29). It had several pricing and acreage scenarios regarding the site. One model involved a nine acre site with its apportioned costs. Another variation estimated the reduced costs if Urban Renewal Funds were secured. For the 15.5 acre parcel, if the college purchased the land outright, it approximated the cost of the land and demolition of the former buildings to be about \$2.5 million. It also accounted for the widening of certain streets surrounding the property. If only nine acres were bought by the college directly, then the projected price would have been \$1.9 million. If Urban Renewal funds were utilized for the 15.5 acre plot, it would cost about \$1.865 million. Lastly, it guesstimated the nine acre section of land to be \$1.3 million if Urban Renewal funds were applied.

The site was close to all of downtown's amenities and proximal to mass transportation. The tract was accessible by most of the county's populace with a significant number of students living within walking or biking distance of the college. It stated that the land would be available immediately if purchased by the college outright. If Urban Renewal funds were involved, the acquisition process could lengthen by an additional 12-18 months. While the original request from the Board of Trustees asked that each site contain 2,500 parking spots, the city's report contended that the Perry Street location would not require that many since scores of the students would either walk, bike, or take mass transit to class. Most of the edifices that were already on the tract contained shops and apartment buildings made of brick or stonework. The soil conditions were conducive to construction and the land was fairly level. Utilities were readily available at this site with the requisite public safety departments also well established.¹⁵⁰

In September 1966, Dr. Cleve Westby, Director of School Building Services for the State Department of Education, submitted his report to the Board of Trustees. He said he reviewed three sites for the consideration as the permanent campus of Mercer County Community College. They were: the fifteen and a half acre Perry Street site in downtown Trenton, the ninety three acre Stuyvesant Avenue site in Ewing and Trenton, and the two hundred and fifty acre plus lot at Assunpink Park in West Windsor Township. He assessed each locale to accommodate the projected six thousand student enrollment by 1972 and an approximate 8,000 member student body by 1977. He prefaced his comments by saying, "a college with 3,000 to 8,000 students, with a program of preparation for a large number of vocations, as well as general education for those

¹⁵⁰ City of Trenton Department of Planning and Development. "A Community College in the Community Core," Unpublished report, 1966.

intending to transfer to senior colleges, obviously means space, and space for a college means land.” The report estimated that the Perry Street site would have to find spaces for at least 1,000 cars to handle both the faculty and student parking needs. This was reduced from the West Windsor figure of 1,500 spaces since it was assumed that many students would take mass transit to the Perry Street location. Parking at Perry Street would probably be in a parking garage that would cost about \$3,000 per stall. Ground level parking in West Windsor would only require paving a level field which was estimated at \$175 per stall. Parking information for the Stuyvesant Avenue site was not given.

Since Mercer County was projected to grow according to census forecasts, Westby was leery if extra land could be acquired in the future near the Perry Street lot for expansion. If land was attained, its price would be substantially higher per acre than either the Stuyvesant Avenue or Assunpink Park places. His report was consistent in terms of the other two sites. He stated that if the college expanded to 10,000 students by the end of the century (2000), then additional land would need to be purchased at the Stuyvesant Avenue site but not in Assunpink Park. The 93 acres at Stuyvesant Avenue did not have the capacity, in his opinion, for 10,000 students in modern facilities. Moreover, he questioned whether the state would release the land at the Stuyvesant Avenue property. After he explored the issue with his colleagues at other state offices, he felt it was not probable that the Department of Institutions and Agencies would sell territory it may require at some point in the years ahead. Conversely, he deemed Assunpink Park’s site of over 250 acres as being more than adequate in terms of space for all forecasted student needs.

Westby felt that access to the Perry Street locale would be difficult. While some faculty and staff would use public transportation, many would still drive to campus each

day on already heavily travelled roads of those workers commuting in and out of Trenton. The roads surrounding the Assunpink Park and Stuyvesant Avenues locales were both not that clogged at any time during the day. For those who desired bus service to the two latter sites, he felt that could be easily arranged. The Westby Report refuted the notion of mileage for those two sites as well. He said that the difference of a few extra miles was negligible for students to drive if the roads were comparatively free of traffic. He also questioned the argument that a campus should be built in Trenton to serve the largest number of people. He referred to census projections that estimated Mercer County's population of 370,000 people by 1980 would have only about 120,000 people residing in Trenton. The balance (the majority) of 250,000 people would be in the suburbs. While the cultural amenities proximal to the Perry Street location were valuable, they did not offset the potential of the many outside leisure activities for students that open, unobstructed space could provide at Assunpink Park.

Like most things in life, money played a vital part in the decision process. It was one of the key factors the trustees scrutinized when considering sites. Westby provided estimated costs of acquisition per acre to the Board of Trustees. He estimated the 15 acre Perry Street site to cost \$124,333 per acre or a total amount of \$1,865,000. The 93 acre Stuyvesant Avenue site was predicted to cost \$5,000 per acre for a total sum of \$465,000 while the 200 acre lot at Assunpink Park would have a price tag of \$2,000 per acre or \$400,000. Westby's report endorsed the Assunpink Park site as the main campus for Mercer County Community College for the following reasons:

1. Could handle all future space needs of the college.
2. Land was least expensive to acquire.
3. Level, flat terrain ready for erecting buildings.

4. Easily reachable by car from all parts of the county.
5. The land was open and free of pollution and smog.
6. The vicinity around the property was safe and had virtually no crime.
7. Had the capability to create athletic facilities on site and the use of available fields at the neighboring Assunpink Park.
8. Had the potential to be a very attractive campus that would please Mercer County residents.
9. Parking and production costs were significantly lower than at the other two sites.¹⁵¹

While objective in nature, Westby's report seemed to be the death knell for a center city Trenton site.

At the same Board of Trustee meeting on September 7, 1966 when Westby discussed his report, Mr. Kahn recommended the college acquire the Stuyvesant Avenue site as the main campus for the college. He said that the availability could be settled on after the board ratified it. He wanted to vote on it that night but was persuaded to hold off until the entire board could consider the issue. At the same meeting, the Board invited Mr. Gregory Farrell, Executive Director of United Progress, Incorporated, the Anti-Poverty Program of Trenton, and a member of the Governor's Task Force on Adult Literacy, to speak. He mentioned how less than half of those aged 25 and older in Mercer County had ever attended high school. Many could not read or write and had no tangible workforce skills. Farrell cited the mammoth need for a community college to serve this population, many of whom live in Trenton. He advocated locating the college in the city which

¹⁵¹ Cleve O. Westby. "Site Evaluation Report." Department of School Building Services, New Jersey State Department of Education, Trenton, New Jersey, September 7, 1966.

would assist this population the most.¹⁵² I wonder if it was coincidental that Farrell and Westby presented at the same meeting. Not likely. Each seemed to be a poster child for the both sides of the urban campus argument.

At the November 2, 1966 Board of Trustees meeting, President Greenfield announced that the Perry Street site which was about 15 acres was too small for future expansion. The second Trenton city site, the Stuyvesant Avenue site, was 2.5 miles from center city and only had 93 acres as compared to the 290 acres at Assunpink Park which had ample room for expansion. The Stuyvesant Avenue site was seen as not having all of the center city advantages that the Perry Street location had. It was far from local businesses and government agencies that could hire part-time students and far removed from the libraries and museums in downtown Trenton.

After that Board of Trustees meeting, Trenton's City Council issued a proclamation favoring a center city site. However, the county's other municipalities, excluding Princeton Borough, had all sided for the Assunpink Park location, along with the county park administration. At that time, only Princeton Borough had not commended any of the three locations. There were several onlookers who thought that a Trenton site for the college was never seriously regarded by the trustee board because of the various problems troubles associated with an urban setting (crime, lack of parking, and high construction costs). The consultants working on the assessment of college sites were told to keep looking for a larger site downtown.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Mercer County Community College Board of Trustee minutes. September 7, 1966.

¹⁵³ Don Craig, "2 City Sites Ruled Out For Community College," *Trentonian*, November 19, 1966.

The third report evaluated by the Board of Trustees was submitted by the engineering and landscape architecture firm of Clarke and Rapuano in New York City. An interim report was presented to the Board of Trustees at the November 2, 1966 meeting by Mr. Thomas J. Kane and Mr. Peter W. Grunner from the firm.¹⁵⁴ The final report was submitted in December, 1966, shortly before the board made the final decision on site. The Clarke and Rapuano firm had access to both the City of Trenton's report advocating the Perry Street lot as well as Dr. Westby's analysis.

While Clarke and Rapuano's report had a lot in common with Dr. Westby's findings, some were dissimilar. Their general findings are listed here. Their report used a formula of .65 cars per student to arrive at the total number of parking spots needed. Using a figure of 2,000 students, they estimated that the college would need to provide spots for 1,300 autos for the Stuyvesant Avenue and Assunpink Park sites. They felt that public transportation routes amply served the Perry Street lot and due to its population density, would allow a great number of students to walk to campus. They said less than 1,300 stalls would be needed for the center city Perry Street site. If the student rolls exceeded 2,000 students, then the consultants advised that additional land would need to be purchased at the Perry Street locale. Athletic grounds were not possible at the Perry Street site due to space constrictions. Stuyvesant Avenue can afford additional parking stalls to handle 3,000 students but at the expense of the athletic fields. Assunpink Park provided enough space for both cars and fields.

Traffic congestion and the availability of utilities was another factor considered by the consultant's reports when assessing sites. Clarke and Rapuano's account recorded how

¹⁵⁴ Mercer County Community College Board of Trustee minutes. November 2, 1966.

the Stuyvesant Avenue and Assunpink Park sites did not have adequate sewer systems in place that could handle the estimated student population projections. Additionally, water and other utilities would need to be created for the Assunpink Park parcel. Perry Street had available utilities but had the many shortcomings that typify any inner city site. It had congested roads and a high level of noise emanating from too many cars and the nearby railroad. The Stuyvesant Avenue site had similar urban issues confronting it but did not provide the cultural amenities that Perry Street did. Additionally, the former was located in an industrialized part of the city that was not necessarily conducive to learning.

Aesthetics were also regarded by the consultants when evaluating sites. Open space that contained rolling hills or a sweeping vista was often regarded most positively by the consultants. What Assunpink Park lacked in cultural access, it was off-set by the tranquility of its natural surroundings. In terms of costs, the Stuyvesant Avenue property would be the least expensive to acquire and build at \$13.5 million but had no relationship to the overall future plans for the county. It did not add to the county's green space nor invigorate downtown Trenton. Plus, for only a million dollars additional at \$14.5 million, the college would get 200 extra acres in Assunpink Park that could accommodate any future space need. Perry Street's price tag came in at \$17.5 million for only 15 acres. This was mainly due to the high expenditures related to building a parking garage for 1,300 cars or 2,000 students. Extra money for land and parking facilities would be required at Perry Street once the college enrolled more than 3,000 students.

The Clarke and Rapuano firm concluded their report by recommending three strategies. First, acquire the Assunpink Park site as soon as possible for the main campus. Second, it recognized that the City of Trenton could benefit greatly from a campus there which would bring about an urban renewal that had the potential to turn lives around

through education and hope. They recommended that the college acquire an urban site right away that was almost double the size of the Perry Street parcel (15 acres) so as to offer adequate athletic fields, parking and green space for students that would complement the city's many cultural institutions. Third, given the population projections in Mercer County, they suggested a third campus might be appropriate in the Pennington area by the end of the century.¹⁵⁵

Comparing all three reports was relatively straight forward. The City of Trenton's report was biased and not considered as seriously by the trustees as the other two. Since the Trenton report only evaluated the one site, it could not be viewed objectively. The other two reports were comprehensive since they used the same rubric to assess all three sites. Like the Westby report, Clarke and Rapuano's report also favored a West Windsor location but was considerably more muted. The latter accounted for social justice and humanitarian needs noting the necessity of post secondary education to Trenton's educationally and financially impoverished neighborhoods. Again, there was no winner here with a capital "W." Moreover, the New York City based consulting firm did not want Trenton to "lose." While it felt the site was superior in the suburbs for a main campus for reasons they stated, it also emphatically championed a need for some type of institution to be built in the inner city. The voice of reason was finally spoken....*out loud for the first time!*

¹⁵⁵ Gilmore D. Clarke and Michael Rapuano. "Report on the Selection of a Site for the Mercer County Community College." New York, December 7, 1966, 1-11.

Community Influence

The various stakeholders in the Mercer community continued to attend the open meeting and read the consultant reports. The trial of public opinion played out weekly in the newspapers. What we are about to see next is different than what happened in Essex County. We are about to discuss the various reactions from different groups in the community on both sides of the suburban campus argument. Race was not discussed as openly as it was in Essex County. It was implicit in every argument. First, Mercer had more consultant reports, two compared to only one in Essex which primarily only looked at costs (the Davis committee) and not the geographic and environmental implications each site would have. While the debate was more subdued in Mercer County, it was no less important. Pleas for access and equity were drowned out by those calling for a first rate facility that would that would have plenty of room for parking and future expansion.

Some politicians went on record with their opinion for the county college. Those in favor of an urban location were generally more vocal. All throughout the fall of 1966, while the debate was taking place as to where to locate the main campus, United States Congressman and Trenton native, Frank Thompson, Jr. from NJ's Fourth Congressional District told the NAACP he supported their feeling that Mercer County College should be in Trenton. NAACP education chair, Dr. Leon Frasier, and NAACP President, Mrs. Catherine S. Graham, voted in 1965 at their NAACP local branch meeting to encourage officials to have the college in Trenton.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ *Trentonian*, "Thompson Supports City Site for County College," October 20, 1966.

Trenton East Ward Councilman Gerard S. Naples charged that MCCC officials were never “honorable in their efforts to locate (the college) in Trenton.” The consultant firm of Clarke and Capuano was told to look for 40 acres in Trenton but that was too much ratable land to give up according to Naples. The consultants knew this so it would be easy to blame Trenton for not being able to locate it in the city.¹⁵⁷ In a related statement, the city councilman said that the current Trenton Junior College “proved that a community type college which emphasized learning could be a reality on much less than 93 acres.” He further emphasized how the Assunpink Park site was designed for the instructive embellishments associated with the middle class. He said that the college site committee claimed it needed 40 acres of prime downtown space but that 93 acres on Stuyvesant Avenue was too far. He alleged that they were using “phony logic.”¹⁵⁸

The area newspapers followed the debate over the college site from the beginning and issued several editorials on the matter. As the announcement of the exact site drew near, one newspaper stated that the reasons college officials turned down the Stuyvesant Avenue site of 93 acres was unclear. Despite this bad news, Trenton should not give up its quest to locate the college in the city. The editors cited:

The great advantage of a community college is that it enables students to live at home and, if need be, to hold part time jobs. A Trenton location would make the most of this advantage. It would be a walk or a short bus ride away from the county’s greatest concentration of college age youths, including those whose income level would make it hardest for them to get anywhere else. It is more accessible by car or bus than

¹⁵⁷ *Trenton Sunday Times Advertiser*, “Naples Hits County College ‘Honesty’ In Search for Site,” November 20, 1966.

¹⁵⁸ *Trenton Times*, “Naples Again Hits College Site,” November 21, 1966.

anywhere else in the county. It has shops restaurants, libraries, bookstores, and utilities that are already in place. No location is obviously perfect and the other contender has ‘elbow room and ivy.’ Its shortcomings, inaccessibility, absence of utilities, and other services have been noted by the consultant and our columns here.

On balance, Trenton continues to be the best place.¹⁵⁹

The Trenton media routinely favored a Trenton site. It viewed the current Trenton Junior College and School of Industrial Arts favorably (it had been in Trenton since 1897) and saw no reason why the new county-wide facility could not remain.

The mayor and city council in Trenton went on the offensive. Trenton Mayor Carmen J. Armenti called for a special meeting on November 23, 1966 to marshal support for a community college in Trenton. It was held at 8pm in the City Council Chambers and was open to all citizens of Trenton who desired the college to be located in the state’s capital. “We will fight all the way” he said. Some onlookers said Trenton could not afford to give up 45 acres of commercial land that would be removed from the tax rolls. Trenton City Council President Peter W. Radice mentioned he had a site of about forty acres in mind but would not reveal its location. He added that it would not take too much taxable land off the books.¹⁶⁰ Maybe if Radice shared its location and things worked out, MCCC’s main campus would be in downtown Trenton today.

Another editorial written that same week by a rival newspaper expressed a similar sentiment, “Trenton is up against the fact that the Assunpink Park seems to have been favored from the beginning, despite its obvious disadvantage that it would make

¹⁵⁹ Editorial, “Still the best location,” *Trenton Times*, November 21, 1966.

¹⁶⁰ *Trentonian*, “Mayor Calls Meeting to Weld City College Support,” November 22, 1966.

automotive travel virtually mandatory.” The center city location offered easy access by many different routes and modes of transportation. “This factor should be the primary one and every effort should be made to keep the college in Trenton”¹⁶¹

What the media implied here is very clear. The Mercer County freeholders, by their choice of trustees which included the chairman of the College Board and a former Princeton University president, clearly leaned towards the suburbs from the start. Also, the relationship Dr. Greenfield had with Trenton Mayor Armenti did not seem as collegial as the one Newark Mayor Addonizio had with Trustee chair Ferguson and President McCabe in Essex County. What we are about to see in Mercer County was also different than what happened in Essex. Newark’s attitude was, “this is the land we have and we’re going to make it work for the county college.” The Essex County College Board of Trustees bought it. Trenton’s mayor tried a similar approach with the Perry Street locale but the Mercer County College Trustee Board consistently said, “No, bring us an offer with more land.” And the Trenton mayor’s office backed down. In both cases, the loser blinked first.

After the mayor’s meeting took place, the media noted 200 plus people attended with over 30 agencies and organizations represented. Clifford Snedeker and Karl Weidel attended. They were both republican freeholders-elect and had not made up their minds yet about a county college location.¹⁶² A few days after the November city council meeting to rally support for the county college to be located in Trenton, the mayor

¹⁶¹ Editorial, “Trenton the Ideal Location,” *Trentonian*, November 23, 1966.

¹⁶² *Trentonian*, “Big Response to Mayor’s Plea,” November 26, 1966.

announced the make-up of the committee.¹⁶³ The names of the Executive Committee were also released. Pasquale Maffei was elected chairman. He was the mayor's committee representative from the Fermi Society and the Principal of the Franklin Elementary School, Trenton. The Vice- Chair was Rosalie Dietz, and the secretary was Victor Walcuff. Others executive committee members were: Albert DeMartin, Jules Aresty, Dr William Walker, Dr Leon Fraser (NAACP), and a representative from the Greater Trenton Council and the Chamber of Commerce.¹⁶⁴

The make-up of the committee was meant to send a message which was “we care about city and education is the key to its bright future.” There were many civic, religious, and educational organizations in and around Trenton that insisted the college be placed there to serve the greatest need. But, the suburbs were not silent for long. After almost 60 years of junior college in Trenton, they wanted a change and they wanted in the suburbs!

To counter the large committee that was formed in support of a center city Trenton site, the Mercer County Citizens Committee of 1000 emerged to support putting the college in Assunpink Park in West Windsor. The general chairman, William Stuart, was also a West Windsor Township Committeeman. He lived in Princeton Junction and was the Associate Registrar at Princeton University. Mercer County's twelve other municipalities joined this “united fight” against having the college located in Trenton. The municipalities represented in this Citizens Committee of 1000 were: East Windsor Township, Ewing

¹⁶³ They were: Mayor Carmen J Armenti, City Council President Peter W. Radice, South Ward Councilman George M Pegg, Anthony Pacera, President of Trenton Council of Civic Associations, Edward Meara III, executive director of the Greater Trenton Council, Dr. Leon Frasier, Trenton branch, NAACP, William D Walker, Trenton Public Schools, Barry Dancy, Trenton Council of Churches, and representatives from the following other organizations: Trenton Federation of Teachers, Jaycees, Knights of Columbus, League of Women Voters, Polish American Congress, Trenton Junior College Alumni Association, and the Trenton Senior Citizens Organization.

¹⁶⁴ *Trentonian*, “City College Committee Makeup Announced,” November 25, 1966.

Township, Hamilton Township, Hightstown Borough, Hopewell Borough, Hopewell Township, Lawrence Township, Pennington Borough, Princeton Borough, Princeton Township, Robbinsville Township, and West Windsor Township.¹⁶⁵ Basically, the suburban jurisdictions in Mercer County all joined forces to say they wanted the college in the suburbs and not inner-city Trenton. The politicians noticed since the taxpayers of those towns put up a united front stating where how and they wanted their hard earned dollars to go.

Trenton Councilman Gerard Naples reached out to freeholders who all but abstained from joining either partisan committee and were staying neutral. Only one outgoing freeholder, Benjamin Palumbo, stated that he supported a Trenton location. Very predictable, his election days were over so he did not have to feign caring about the suburban vote. Trenton's percent of equalized valuation was 22.8 percent of the county but its tax levy represented 37.2 percent of the county's revenue stream. But that meant 62.8 percent of the tax stream came from the suburbs, the lion's share. It seems that the suburbs had a bigger stick that they readily waved at the county politicians. Naples felt that more students would be coming from Trenton than from anywhere else plus he said, "Add to this the overriding consideration that a community college is meant to educate those middle and lower class citizens who can afford no other types of education."¹⁶⁶ While a noble point, Naples could not counter the majority of the county's taxpayers who rallied together against supporting a site in his city.

¹⁶⁵ *Trentonian*, "More Opposition for Trenton," December 3, 1966.

¹⁶⁶ *Trentonian*, "Naples to County: Aid City in College Fight," December 2, 1966.

Table 3-8¹⁶⁷

Population Data
Mercer County Municipalities
1930-1960

<u>Municipalities</u>	<u>Area In Sq.</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>
<u>City</u>	<u>Miles</u>				
Trenton	7.5	123,356	124,697	128,009	114,167
<u>Township</u>					
East Windsor	15.6	922	845	1,284	2,298
Ewing	15.13	6,942	10,146	16,840	26,628
Hamilton	39.38	27,121	30,219	41,156	65,035
Hopewell	58	3,907	3,738	4,731	7,818
Lawrence	21.87	6,293	6,522	8,499	13,665
Princeton	16.25	2,738	3,251	5,407	10,411
Washington	20.07	1,347	1,365	1,843	2,156
West Windsor	26.84	1,711	2,160	2,519	4,016
<u>Borough</u>					
Hightstown	1.23	3,012	3,486	3,712	4,317
Hopewell	0.75	1,467	1,678	1,869	1,928
Pennington	0.99	1,335	1,492	1,682	2,063
Princeton	1.76	6,992	7,719	12,230	11,890

¹⁶⁷ New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development. *Population Trends in New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: The Department, July 1961), 31 as cited in *A Study of the Proposal To Establish and Operate a County College in Mercer County*. (Trenton, New Jersey, April, 1965), 14.

Table 3-8 shows the population trends and square mileage for each Mercer County municipality from 1930-1960. Table 3-9 shows the actual and projected population growth for Mercer County from 1940 through 1980. Table 3-8 reveals that Trenton had the largest populace with almost 43 percent of the county's total inhabitants in 1960. This was down 13 percentage points from the 1950 census that revealed Trenton had 56 percent of the county's population. This shrinking number concerned county politicians who felt that the future population growth of Mercer County was in the suburbs. Table 3-9 projected a 44 percent growth for the entire county from 1940-1980. These tables and data were certainly considered by the Mercer County College Board of Trustees as they reviewed possible county sites for the state's latest educational reform. Overall, it showed that Trenton had a net decrease in population by 7.4 percent over a 30 year period while Ewing, Hamilton, Lawrence, and Princeton saw their populations explode. Ewing's population almost quadrupled while Hamilton's more than doubled in the same timeframe.

Many politicians looked at tables like 3-8 and 3-9 and saw that the growth in Mercer County for the period 1930-1960 was clearly in the suburbs. This data was used as strong evidence to place Mercer County College in Assunpink Park in West Windsor Township. The experience and overcrowding at Trenton Junior College and Rider College in downtown Trenton reinforced the notion that the county college should locate in the suburbs. They were convinced that the suburbs and its open space could provide a quality environment that would foster each student's maximum learning potential. They felt that the additional acreage would also handle the enormous projected population growth from the baby boomers. The public officials felt that if they had some type of adult/outreach

learning center in downtown Trenton that it would satiate any static from the suburban naysayers.

Table 3-9¹⁶⁸

Projections of Population Growth
1970-1980

Area	Year				
	Estimated				
	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>
<u>U.S.A</u>	131,669,275	151,325,798	179,323,175	214,222,000	259,584,000
<u>New Jersey</u>	4,160,165	4,835,329	6,066,782	7,431,370	8,491,780
<u>Mercer County</u>	197,318	229,781	266,392	306,000	352,000

In the weeks leading up to the decision on site for the county college, the local newspapers were abuzz with articles. One article mentioned how the democratically controlled Philadelphia City Council recently approved a 10 acre site in nearby center-city Philadelphia at a cost of \$30 million. It also noted that Rutgers Camden enlarged its urban location that was close to mass transit alleviating the need for additional parking facilities.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development. Research and Statistics Section, "New Jersey Estimated Population Projections" (Trenton, NJ: The Department, April 1961), (mimeographed) as cited in *A Study of the Proposal To Establish and Operate a County College in Mercer County*. (Trenton, New Jersey, April, 1965), 15.

¹⁶⁹ *Trenton Times*, "Other Area Cities Prove It Can Be Made to Work," December 6, 1966.

Other articles speculated on the rumors that the City of Trenton could offer an urban site with Urban Renewal funds for up to 25 acres. The actual site was never named. One disadvantage to Urban Renewal funds was the time it took to secure. The largest site in center city Trenton at the time was the Perry Street site which was 15.5 acres. The newspapers predicted that the Trustees would probably pick the Assunpink Park site as the main campus and build an urban branch at Perry Street by the mid 1970s. They were pretty close to the mark. Back in early 1965, plans for the Green Acres location of Assunpink Park had plans including putting the college in the park. The issue sharply divided the county. The chairman of the Mayor's Community College Committee, Mr. Pasquale Maffei, said "Our commitment [to Trenton] is obvious...we have a big stake in this kind of facility and we want and need it in the city."¹⁷⁰

On the other side of the argument was a poll by the current students at Trenton Junior College who said they would rather study at a suburban site. This poll was most fascinating and was a blow to many urban campus supporters. The student population who currently attended the college in Trenton was very diverse. They were comprised of older students as well as the traditional 18 year old crowd. No longer was it just the black students who wanted an urban campus while the white students wanted a suburban one. They both wanted the suburbs. Reasons for this may have been that the building the college currently used was old and too small for the burgeoning student body. This was further proof that decision on site selection wasn't all about race. Some in the community made it appear that way but to the students who actually attended a junior college in Trenton already, it wasn't. I surmise that the students thought a suburban campus would

¹⁷⁰ *Trenton Times*, "City Would Enlarge Site for College," December 9, 1966.

be new, wide-open, and not packed. Who can blame them? Who doesn't like new and fresh? All the adults in the political parties and civic and religious groups were speaking for the children. However, when the students were actually asked, they gave an answer that shocked the community groups. This was more proof that the issue over community college site was not "cut" and "dry" or "black" and "white" (no pun intended). As this poll showed, this story had so many shades of gray.

Those in favor of keeping the college in Trenton cited the recent decision of the New Jersey Committee of the Regional Planning Association that the new University of Medicine and Dentistry be located in Newark. It strengthened their claim that Mercer County should put its central campus in Trenton.¹⁷¹ Other supporters of keeping the college in Trenton interviewed by the local press shortly before the Board of Trustees made their decision on site location were United States Congressman Frank Thompson from the Fourth Congressional District¹⁷² and Raymond Steen, President of the Greater Trenton Council. Thompson said to erect the campus in Trenton first and the suburbs could always be built later. Steen said that the matter of site should be put on a referendum and let the people decide.¹⁷³

Decision on the Main Campus Site

All of the hullabaloo in the press came to a crescendo in mid December, 1966. The meeting to select West Windsor as the main campus was voted on by the Board of

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² *Trenton Times*, "Thompson Favors City Site for Start of County College," December 15, 1966.

¹⁷³ *Trentonian*, "GTC President Backs Vote on College Site," December 15, 1966.

Trustees on December 16, 1966 and passed by a vote of 7-1. Mr. Bowers, the board chair, excused himself at 5:15 for another appointment and was not present at the vote. Before leaving, he went on record as saying he did not want to make a decision on site that day.

It is no surprise Mr. Bowers was absent the night of the vote on location. Alan Bowers was a lifelong banker and had many ties to the city. He was the Executive Vice-President and director of the Trenton Trust Company. He was also a trustee of the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and the Greater Trenton Chamber of Commerce (that organization publicly endorsed the college). His obituary read that, “he was noted for his kind humility and strong moral values.” He was the past president of the advisory board of St Francis Hospital in Trenton and a member of Heart of Trenton Businessman’s Association and belonged to numerous civic organizations in Trenton.¹⁷⁴ The only vote of dissension on the choice of the Assunpink Park site was from Trustee Mr. Albert Kahn. He went on record as favoring the 93 acre Stuyvesant Avenue site in Trenton. Kahn was a founding partner of the law firm, Kahn, Schildkraut, and Levy. He, too, had strong civic ties to Trenton and served on the lay advisory board of St. Francis Hospital in Trenton and was a founding member of the Trenton Jewish Federation.¹⁷⁵ Kahn also served on the James Kerney Foundation. We will soon see how his key involvement with this organization will ultimately benefit Trenton and the college.

After the choice of West Windsor was ratified, Trenton Mayor Armenti vowed to go to the State Board of Education meeting in January and appeal the decision. MCCC president Greenfield said when the college moves to the park after it is built, the college wanted to

¹⁷⁴ *Trenton Times*, “Services Saturday for Noted Banker,” February 14, 1968.

¹⁷⁵ Obituary of Albert B. Kahn, *New York Times*, April 27, 1983.

have a branch in the city for part-time adult and extension programs. Greenfield quoted state regulations that call for a site of at least 45 acres of land and that Trenton could not guarantee expansion of the Perry Street site. Three reasons the trustees cited for choosing Assunpink:

- a. Ease of acquisition of land
- b. Size of land available
- c. Land in geographic center of small county- within 30 minutes travel time from all parts of the county.¹⁷⁶

What was not mentioned were all the things Trenton was perceived to be: cramped, built-up, expensive, polluted, old, and crime-ridden.

In the resolution that approved the Assunpink Park site as the main campus on December 16, 1966, the trustees made a provision that public transportation had to be made available to students from around the county at a nominal or no cost. The college would also continue to offer part-time classes and community outreach to the local population. The trustees also added that they would conduct a study to assess the need for educational offerings at a possible future downtown Trenton location.¹⁷⁷

The Assunpink Park site was approved by the State Board of Education on January 4, 1967. On the same day, the Mercer County College Board of Trustees approved a master plan for a 450,000 square foot campus at West Windsor. Trenton groups did not stay silent for long, however, and were steadfast in their pleas for a permanent urban campus to serve the county's only city and many poor inhabitants.

¹⁷⁶ Herb Wolfe. "Park Chosen for College Site - Branch Possibly in City: Trenton To Appeal Decision," *Trenton Times*, December 19, 1966.

¹⁷⁷ Mercer County Community College Board of Trustee minutes, December 16, 1966.

Changes at the State Department of Education

In the meantime that all these events were taking place in Mercer County, there were significant changes taking place at the state level with the newly created Department of Higher Education. Dr. Fred Raubinger, the State Department of Education Commissioner for 14 years, announced his resignation in May 1966 over the governor's proposal to create a new department of higher education which became effective July 1, 1967. His successor was Dr. Carl Marburger, the former assistant commissioner for education in the federal bureau of Indian Affairs and a former assistant superintendent of education in Detroit's program for educating the disadvantaged.¹⁷⁸

Following the appointment of Marburger, the governor selected Ralph A. Dungan, President Johnson's Ambassador to Chile and one of President John F. Kennedy's closest aides, to direct the newly formed State Department of Higher Education. He was appointed to lead New Jersey's most ambitious college expansion drive which included the community colleges. At that time, New Jersey was referred to as the "cuckoo state" in college admissions offices across the state. It earned the name since the cuckoo liked to drop its young into the nests of other birds to escape the task of feeding them. New Jersey warranted this derogatory moniker since about half of its 130,000 students attended colleges out of state after graduating high school. New Jersey, the country's sixth richest state, ranked forty-sixth nationally in per capita expenditures on higher education in 1966.

¹⁷⁸ *Trenton Evening Times*, "Gov Nominates Marburger," April 3, 1967.

One of Chancellor Dungan's first tasks was to oversee the transition from state teachers colleges to liberal arts institutions.¹⁷⁹

Meanwhile, the state also selected a new chairman, Edward E. Booher of Cranbury, for the new State Commission for Higher Education. He was the president of McGraw-Hill Book Company. Six other public members who were also sworn in were: C. Douglass Dillon, ex-US Commerce Secretary, Far Hills; John T. Connor, New Vernon; William O. Beker, Morristown; John Seabrook, Salem; Dr. Deborah Wolfe, Cranford; and Mrs. John H. Ford, Cresskill. No representatives were selected from any of the urban areas around the state that represented minority groups' interests.¹⁸⁰

With all of these alterations taking place at the state level, Dr. Robert F. Goheen, Chairman of the Citizens Committee for Higher Education in New Jersey and President of Princeton University, said he would continue to support the new system of higher education that took effect July 1, 1967. He said he fully endorsed Ralph Dungan as the new Chancellor.¹⁸¹ While high ranking university officials were supporting the changes at the state level, the media took the liberty of identifying the major issues confronting the newly appointed leader and the Board of Higher Education. They listed one of the major problems in society at that time was the lack of amalgamation amongst blacks and whites. They cited the main issue for this was the segregation in housing trends which created homogenous schools. They also questioned how the state would pay for its college

¹⁷⁹ *New York Times*, "Hughes Appoints Head of Colleges," June 15, 1967.

¹⁸⁰ *Hightstown Gazette-Mercer County*, "Cranbury Man Heads Jersey Education Board," July 6, 1967.

¹⁸¹ *Trentonian*, "Continue Assistance," July 14, 1967.

expansion and construction phases. New Jersey was also severely deficient in the amount of college seats it provided for high school and now community college graduates.¹⁸²

The press paid close attention to what was taking place at Mercer County Community College and the state as a whole. Many newspaper editorials called for an end to segregation in education. One local Trenton reporter wrote, “One of the obvious needs in American Society is for complete integration of the races. Yet, because of housing patterns and grouping practices, many NJ classrooms remain, in fact, largely segregated.” The article also mentioned that there was a dearth of college spaces, and a severe deficiency in college construction. The state wanted to spend \$150 million two years ago to address the college seat capacity issue as well as student housing shortage but never consigned the funds. One of the few bright spots, according to the article, was the hiring of Heller Associates of Cleveland to commence a Master Plan for Public Higher Education in New Jersey.¹⁸³

Folks who favored putting the main campus in Trenton never really forgave or forgot the people who pushed for and won with West Windsor. Republicans candidates for the Trenton-Ewing District Philip A. Levy and Dominick A. Iorio accused the Democrats in Mercer County of using their political muscle to site the community college in Assunpink Park despite arguments by Trenton’s politicians, civic leaders, and the newspapers. “The decision to locate the college in Assunpink Park was a gross mistake.” The local Republican Party then wanted a guarantee so they could set aside enough land for the branch campus in Trenton.¹⁸⁴ Then, in March 1968, the state dropped the 45 acre

¹⁸² Editorial, “New Era in Education Confronting NJ,” *Trentonian*, August 30, 1967.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ *Trentonian*, “Put College Branch in City: GOP,” October 10, 1967.

minimum for community college sites. Trenton officials hoped the MCCC Board of Trustees would re-consider their earlier decision.¹⁸⁵ In making the announcement about the acreage adjustment, Chancellor Dungan said, “he want[ed] to make college education more accessible to the state’s ‘sizable poverty population.’”¹⁸⁶

Yes to a Trenton Center

True to its commitment to the Trenton community and its fondness for consultant reports, the MCCC Board of Trustees hired two groups of professionals to assess the need to establish a campus in Trenton. One consultant team was headed by Dr. Michael Brick who produced a report titled “Mercer County and the Community College: Needs and Recommendations” which he submitted in May, 1970. The other was submitted by the architectural firm of John Diehl and Associates of Princeton in August 1971. That document primarily outlined the physical needs of the campus and assigned suitability values to the actual properties it investigated.

The Brick Report discussed the many social and philosophical issues concerning the education of urban youth in 1970s America. It used census data to document the “white flight” syndrome that took place in Trenton from 1960-1968. In those years, Trenton’s white inhabitants declined by 26.3 percent while the non white population soared by 40.7 percent. Dr. Brick and his team of consultants cited lots of data from the Model Cities federal initiative that was taking place in Trenton at that time. Trenton was one of the 150

¹⁸⁵ Harry Blaze and Sandra Cluston, “College Site Review Unlikely,” *Trenton Times*, March 14, 1968.

¹⁸⁶ Herb Wolfe, “MCCC Back in Trenton? Radice to seek Relocation,” *Trenton Times*, March 7, 1968.

cities nationwide selected to participate in the Model Cities Program. Created in 1966, it was part of President Johnson's Great Society and War on Poverty social agenda. Brick cited the high dropout rates in Trenton's Model Cities public high schools and the below average median incomes for Trenton's black and white families.

He included comments from the Model Cities administrators who were:

...opposed to the move of Mercer County Community College to West Windsor, for they feel that the community college is the type of educational facility most appropriate to meet the educational needs of many Model Neighborhood residents. Model cities officials feel that by 'by moving to a suburban location, Mercer County Community College will forfeit to a substantial degree any possibility of providing a significant educational resource to that portion of the Trenton community most needing its services.¹⁸⁷

The short answer there was that people in Trenton noticed. Those who are not in power feel oppressed by those who are in power. More on that topic will be discussed in Chapter V.

The Brick Report did not recommend the formation of another campus on the same scale as West Windsor. He felt if that was attempted, the end result may very well have been two average campuses. He advocated building an excellent urban center that students would want to attend. It had to contain an ambiance conducive to learning and be aesthetically pleasing to the eye. The Trenton center was projected to enroll 3,100 full-time students by 1977, many of whom would be minority students. This would be done through significant outreach initiatives to the local community. Many urban

¹⁸⁷ Michael Brick. "Mercer County and the Community College: Needs and Recommendations." A report submitted to the Mercer County Community College Board of Trustees. March 1, 1970, 60, 113.

dwellers felt, however, college was not for them. While the West Windsor campus was only six miles from Trenton, it may well have been 60. Many inner city minority youth felt they might not fit in at a suburban white campus and that it was “another place to suffer failure rather than achieve success.” In order to attend college, students needed to be near their families and work. Many Trenton students did not have cars and could not afford an hour or 90 minute commute back and forth by bus to the West Windsor location.

A Trenton campus would also be a promise kept by the Board of Trustees and could greatly assist the urban neighborhoods in reversing the misery and despair that permeated much of that city. Many felt a Trenton campus would create “de facto” or actual segregation. Brick’s team warned that the college must do everything it can to create programs that would create a diverse student body. They did not promise to vary the courses by term like those in Essex County did. The center would be open from 8am to 10 pm daily and offer traditional liberal arts, business, and vocational based curricula. The Trenton center would need to offer regular counseling services as well as vocational counseling programs to serve the traditional as well as the adult student population. It should also have a day care center so young mothers would be able to attend college full-time. Many of the students attending the campus may be high school dropouts in need of a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or transfers from other colleges. Special efforts would need to be made to grant these students every opportunity to succeed academically.

Above all else, the Brick report brought up controversial topics that no one else dared to speak of. It had a pulse on what was actually going on in counties like Mercer where urban and suburban needs and agendas clashed daily. This document centered on the

development of the community and truly advocated for the urban students' needs. The written document ended by stating:

In its plan for development and expansion, Mercer County Community College must give special attention to the problem of attracting increasing numbers from depressed areas of Trenton. A substantial portion of Mercer's social and economic problems lies within its most severely depressed areas. High percentages of unemployment, low income, low educational achievement, and low college-going rates are found together. One of the primary purposes of the community college is to use every possible measure to break the vicious cycle. Mercer County Community College could easily fill all its places with candidates from the better social areas; in fact, it will be subject to heavy pressure from increasing numbers of qualified applicants. It is important, however, that Mercer County Community College do everything possible to remain faithful to its stated written purpose.¹⁸⁸

This was welcome news to those who were severely disappointed that West Windsor was chosen as the main campus.

While the Brick report discussed the philosophical and community needs of a new urban center, the Diehl Report discussed the physical location and space requirements. It listed the population projections, academic programs, and space constraints including recreational and parking considerations. It also provided drawings of what the inside layout of the buildings should look like. The new campus should accommodate 450 full time equivalent day students and over 800 evening students. The Diehl report researched eight properties in Trenton as possible homes for the inner city branch campus. It

¹⁸⁸ Brick, 122-130.

assigned numerical values to various categories to arrive at a suitability index. Some of the categories were: site, location, configuration of the land, price, surface conditions, utilities, availability of title, accessibility via foot traffic and public transportation, traffic patterns, community influence, access to the main campus, area crime rates, and type of neighborhood (industrial or residential). The higher scores would have a greater probability as being suggested to be the Trenton campus.¹⁸⁹ The report listed a numerical value next to each property and assigned the highest scores in both suitability and cost to the former Moose Hall properties and the Trenton Technical Building of MCCC and adjoining lots.¹⁹⁰

The trustees appointed a Trenton Center advisory commission that reviewed both the Brick and Diehl documents and met on a regular basis concerning its creation. They consulted with members of the business, political, and neighborhood communities. Additionally, the mayor of Trenton, Arthur Holland, formed his own task force on the issue and attended public forums on the topic. The community was very interested in where the center would be located and needed the freeholders' support to guarantee funding. The property that was discussed the most was the Perry Street site which was the former home to the Perry Street bus terminal. Several stakeholders felt that if it

¹⁸⁹ The eight Trenton properties reviewed by the firm were: the Mercer County Administration Building and parking lot at 640 South Broad Street; the Trenton Technical Building of MCCC and adjacent property at 21 Capital Street; Mercer County Drug Program Center (the former Perry Street Bus Terminal) at 132 Perry Street; the Borden Plant and surrounding property at 230 North Broad Street; the site of the future Mercer County Administration building at South Warren Street between Market Street and Livingston Street Extension; the Trent Theatre, Lincoln Theatre and contiguous lots at 19 North Warren Street and 5-17 West Hanover Street; the Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSE & G) property on North Willow Street between Chauncey and Bank Streets; and the former Moose Hall and bordering properties at 403 East State Street.

¹⁹⁰ John Diehl and Associates, Architects. "Development, Program, and Feasibility Analysis-Trenton Center, Mercer County Community College" (Princeton, New Jersey, August 1, 1971), 35-47.

combined with the former Borden-Castanea dairy plant on North Broad, there would be plenty of land for a Trenton campus. Some folks commonly referred to this parcel as Perry and Broad.

As with many contentious topics that were debated publicly, these forums dragged on for lack of consensus. The year long stalemate occurred because several college trustees said the Perry Street neighborhood had too much crime and seedy establishments that contained bars, gambling, drugs, and prostitution. No one could come to a compromise on the site. The most vocal trustees against the Perry and Broad site were Albert Kahn and Anthony Zuccarello who felt a college should not be established in the midst of scandalous activity. Urban Renewal funds that were already secured from the federal government would be used along with state, city, and county dollars to help pay for the project.

Some community members including Mrs. Katherine Graham, president of the Urban League, were frustrated with the impasse and suggested that a separate group should be formed to furnish a solution. Possible actions the group could take to secure a solution would be to circumvent the college trustees and go right to the freeholders and state higher education officials. Another possibility would have been to file a law suit that would assure the center's creation.¹⁹¹ Another community member who voiced his frustration was Carl Johnson, president of the Model Cities Policy Committee. He said, "Yours is out there" which referred to the main campus in West Windsor. He added, "Once again, we're sitting here fighting about what's going to be left for the black

¹⁹¹ Ramona Smith, "MCCC City Site Vote May Come June 13," *Trenton Times*, May 23, 1972.

folk.”¹⁹²

Since August of 1971 when Diehl submitted his report through July of 1972, the controversy over the Trenton site endured and played out in the local press. Then in August 1972, the James Kerney Foundation informed the Mercer County Community College Board of Trustees of its intention to donate \$300,000 to the college for a Trenton campus to be named after their founder in perpetuity at the corner of North Broad and Academy Streets. This site was not one of the ones investigated in the Diehl Report and happened to be around the corner from the Perry-Broad site. The property included a row of stores from 118 to 150 North Broad Street, two lots at the rear of these stores facing Academy Street, and lots 110, 112, and 114 on Hanover Street. While this offer shocked the community, no one really objected to the site. The trustee appointed site commission and the Trenton mayor’s office quickly approved the new location.¹⁹³

Mr. Kahn was an attorney and Secretary for the James Kerney Foundation. He drafted the legal offer and its stipulations offering the huge monetary donation to the college. The Kerney Foundation felt that the site’s distance from the Perry site was far enough to make a difference. On November 28, 1972, the MCCC Board of Trustees passed a resolution approving the James Kerney Foundation donation and all of its conditions for the Trenton branch campus. Mr. Kahn, a trustee of the Kerney foundation and Mercer County Community College, abstained from the vote. The college trustee board also received assurances from Mayor Holland’s office that the city was dedicated to making various improvements in the neighborhood of the proposed campus.¹⁹⁴ Groundbreaking

¹⁹² Sam Earle, “MCCC City Site Progress Indicated,” *Trentonian*, May 23, 1972.

¹⁹³ Sam Earle, “MCCC City Site Okayed,” *Trentonian*, November 29, 1972.

¹⁹⁴ Mercer County Community College Board of Trustee minutes, November 28, 1972.

ceremonies were held on August 23, 1974 for the James Kerney Campus and dedication ceremonies were held on May 21, 1975.

Summary

Mercer County's debate over where to site its community college was less intense than the one that took place in Essex County. There were many reasons for this phenomenon. Even though they took place at roughly the same time and were located only fifty or so miles apart, their cases were substantially different. The founding of Essex County was mired in a sea of disagreement and outrage. Shouting matches at the trustee meetings, a student boycott of classes, a faculty strike, and two presidents and one board of trustees chairman resigned. Mercer had none of that. While there were newspaper articles about black students who were unhappy with some of the conditions at Mercer, they said they would not resort to violence or the destruction of property. This was the opposite of what happened in Essex County where angry students threw food and other items out of windows from the higher floors and tried to break into an administrator's office.

Another major difference was that Mercer County used many consultant reports throughout their whole decision making process. Did that make it unbiased? No, but it made it seem more impartial. By using consultants, the trustees were given the information they wanted to hear but did not have to explicitly own. When someone else says what you are thinking, they are the ones who are attributed, not you. You then seem intelligent for hiring them and citing their well researched reasons and findings. After all, they were the experts, not you.

As stated earlier, the choice of site was definitely influenced by some of the personalities of some of trustee members. It seems most probable that the president of the College Board and the former president of an Ivy League university would endorse a suburban locale. In Mercer County, all the suburbs formed a committee, the Citizens Committee of 1000, to endorse West Windsor. This did not happen in Essex County. No collection of municipalities ever came together to publicly endorse West Orange or Verona. Plus, by the 1960s, Essex County was pretty land locked and the state Department of Education knew it. Essex County did not have the vast array of farms to choose from like Mercer County did. The latter had so much level land that could be used for just about any purpose. Moreover, the suburbs were viewed as prestigious and were the places other counties were choosing their main college campuses. Bergen, Somerset, and Camden all selected sprawling estates or golf courses to site their colleges. On the surface, it seemed that Mercer had to “keep up appearances.” Newark was also three times larger at 24.14 square miles as compared to Trenton’s 7.5. One suburban site supporter noted that Trenton had much less overall land to offer as a county college site.

Essex had three major cities, Newark, East Orange, and Orange that had a sizeable black population at 180,000 people or 20 percent of the county’s total. This differed markedly in numbers from the 30,000 blacks who lived in Trenton, the county’s only city. They only represented 11 percent of the county’s total population. Additionally, Essex County made their decision to site the campus in Newark just five weeks after the deadly riots of 1967 and the controversy caused by the UMDNJ land clearing fiasco. Mercer County made their decision on site almost 16 months prior to the riots that occurred in their city in April 1968 following Dr. King’s assassination.

After reading thousands of pages concerning both counties' site selection, Newark made a commitment to have the county college in their city, no matter what. They were going to get it done. From day one when talk emerged about a county college in Essex County, the mayor's office involved the Housing Authority for help in securing Urban Renewal Lands. This was not true in Mercer County. Mayor Armenti only formed his committee to keep the college in Trenton less than one month before the actual decision on West Windsor was made. By then, it was too late. From early 1965, there was talk of putting the Mercer County College in Assunpink Park even before the land was even acquired. All other proposed properties for the county college were measured against the West Windsor location. None even came close.

The similarity for both case studies was the trustees' awareness of where they located the community college site would affect access for the city's poor and undereducated masses, many of whom were black. Both counties also shared many of the same stakeholder groups that each advocated their respective causes. They were: the parent-teacher groups, religious and civic groups, civil rights groups, the media, chambers of commerce, labor unions, politicians, and even the students themselves. The same factors that were examined in both counties were: census reports, consultant reports, public meetings, the county's study commission report to assess a need for a county college, and the state's response.

The difference was the people and the personalities involved. In Mercer County, the trustees kept asking for 40 or so acres from Trenton in the downtown business district but it never came. Those who supported an urban location could not understand why the 93 acre lot near Cadwalader Park would not suffice. I think all the explanations in the world could not convince Trentonians why it was not selected. Mercer County had white

philanthropists who banded together to eventually site the James Kerney Center in Trenton. These individuals had emotional ties to the city and were committed to giving back. The county college site selection controversy in Trenton was inextricably connected to funding and the philanthropists knew it. Their concern for the poor and underprivileged was nothing short of admirable.

The last commonality Mercer had with Essex County was that there were no winners or losers here, also. While Mercer County's story on site contained far less confrontation and drama than Essex's, it was no less significant. Even though there was no written record of the compromises or back room deals that were most assuredly made regarding site selection, Mercer County's citizenry seem none the worse for wear. Their post secondary public educational needs are in very good hands in excellent academic and recreational facilities at Mercer County Community College.

Chapter IV: Other Counties

The two other counties that will be discussed in this chapter are Middlesex and Passaic Counties. Like Essex and Mercer counties, both Middlesex and Passaic counties had cities and towns within their borders that featured urban and suburban locales as possible sites for their county college. Middlesex chose the suburban site of the former Raritan Arsenal in Edison Township while Passaic County chose Paterson, its largest city, as home to its community college. They are combined in one chapter since one county was in unison over its choice of county college site. These other counties are discussed as a means of comparison for Essex and Mercer Counties. We will soon see how one county validated the storms that took place in Newark and Trenton while the other county had no debate at all.

IV. A. Middlesex County College

Like Essex and Mercer Counties, Middlesex County also had urban and suburban locations as choices for its main campus of the community college. Middlesex County, as a microcosm for all of New Jersey, was changing in the 1960s with its urban populations staying flat or decreasing with “white flight.” At the same time, the suburban towns were exploding in new construction with record surges in their populace. The counties three cities, Perth Amboy, South Amboy, and New Brunswick were once manufacturing dynamos that started to decompose in that same time period. In the post World War II era, county politicians were very concerned about the educational needs of three primary groups: adult dislocated workers, veterans returning home from the war, and all those baby boomers.

Junior College Alumni Association-1939

The effort to found a community college in Middlesex County grew out of the desire from several alumni of the Depression Era, federally funded Middlesex Junior College which operated at Perth Amboy High School from 1933-1942. In March 1939, the Middlesex Junior College Alumni Association was founded with George Otlowksi as the chairman. It garnered support from various local civic, religious, and volunteer organizations to pressure the freeholders to supplement the funds to the flailing junior college. While the freeholders eventually gave \$500 in support of the junior college, it had to close in 1942 due to low enrollment caused by World War II. All of the other

Depression Era junior colleges were closed at this point except Union and Monmouth Junior Colleges. Union ultimately morphed into Union County College while Monmouth eventually became Monmouth State and now Monmouth University. In 1944, some local citizens in Perth Amboy tried to revive the college but were stopped when nearby Rutgers New Brunswick expanded its part time evening division by 1500 students.

The alumni association met regularly and talked about resurrecting their beloved junior college to benefit the county's citizenry. Middlesex Junior College was never far from their collective hearts. By August 1962, two items prompted the Middlesex Junior College Alumni Association to found the Committee to Establish a Junior College in Middlesex County (CEJCMC). One was the County College Law of 1962 that appropriated money to found and operate county colleges. The other was an event that happened the year before. In 1961, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara announced the closing of the 8,233 acre Camp Kilmer and Raritan Arsenal in Edison Township. It would take several years for the entire operation to shut down but it was an irreversible federal decision. These alumni would not rest until Middlesex County Junior College resurrected at the Raritan Arsenal. Their quest was straight forward as they encountered only a few bumps along the way. Not one person objected to the choice of location or its zero cost to acquire. On these grounds, the discussion on Middlesex County did not warrant a full chapter.

But that is not to say that no deals took place in Middlesex County. These Middlesex Junior College alumni were savvy politicians and local influential businessmen in the county. The committee they founded was chaired by George Otlowski who lived and worked in Perth Amboy. He was the owner of the American Publishing Company,

Incorporated. George later became a Middlesex County Freeholder and the mayor of Perth Amboy.¹⁹⁵

In April, 1963 the CEJCMC sent a letter to Mr. Karl Metzger, Director of the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders, and Freeholder Joseph Costa, Chairman of the Public Property subcommittee, about the Raritan Arsenal land. They wrote:

The Raritan Arsenal offers facilities for a community college. Under the federal law, the physical needs for a junior college can be provided with practically no cost to the county. Middlesex County will never get an opportunity like this again. We must take advantage of the land and buildings that are available at the Raritan Arsenal for junior college purposes. To let this opportunity go by would be a mistake that none of us would want to contemplate. If five percent of the Arsenal land cannot be made available for education, we then would have to blame ourselves for shortchanging the people of Middlesex County. We want to urge the Board of Freeholders to do everything possible to acquire the physical needs for a junior college at the Raritan Arsenal.¹⁹⁶

By sending this letter and advocating for a site even before a study commission was appointed, showed incredible motivation on their part!

Before the CEJCMC became aware of the details of the Raritan Arsenal land, Walter Zirpolo and John Fay lobbied local groups as to why Middlesex County needed a junior

¹⁹⁵ Other members of the CEJCMC were Harold Augustine from Perth Amboy; John Fay from Colonia; Stanley Rothman, Speaker's Chairman, from Colonia; Sidney Bey of Perth Amboy; Joseph Clegman, Liaison Chairman to the Board of Chosen Freeholders, from Perth Amboy; Frank Sinatra, Superintendent of Perth Amboy Schools and fund-raising chairman; John Safransky of Perth Amboy; Walter Zirpolo, Mayor of Woodbridge; Mrs. Jeanne Unger, Corresponding Secretary, from Perth Amboy, and Mrs. Gertrude Costello, Recording Secretary, from Woodbridge.

¹⁹⁶ Correspondence from Mrs. Gertrude Costello, Corresponding Secretary, for the Committee to Establish a Junior College in Middlesex County, to Mr. Karl Metzger, Freeholder Director, April 10, 1963.

college and why it should be located in Woodbridge. They wanted the college to be situated on the land that now occupies Woodbridge Center Mall. Other documents referred to an interest in land in Piscataway but no exact location was given. After the committee learned that a portion of the former Raritan Arsenal land could be acquired free of charge if used for educational purposes, they abandoned the Woodbridge Mall location.¹⁹⁷ Later on, after the county secured the Raritan Arsenal land from the federal government on April 30, 1964, Otlowski wrote to Zirpolo. He talked about the State Department of Education figures that projected a possible 10,000 students for a county college in Middlesex County. He felt that Middlesex County College would probably need a second campus in five or six years to accommodate the plethora of students. He wrote, “Woodbridge should have plans, Woodbridge should have land available, and Woodbridge should be in a position to try to prevail upon the county to establish a second junior college in Woodbridge. This is not an idle dream. I know your feelings about this and you know mine.”¹⁹⁸ The only problem with that statement is that Woodbridge and Edison are adjacent to each other and are at the northern end of the county (see Map 4-1). Future sites would need to be considered in other geographic regions of the county.

¹⁹⁷ Thomas A Hawrylko. “Committee to Establish a Junior College in Middlesex County (CEJCMC). December, 1980.

¹⁹⁸ Letter to Mayor Walter Zirpolo from George Otlowski, Chairman of the Committee to Establish a Junior College in Middlesex County. May 20, 1964.

The Study Commission

In November 1962, Middlesex County Freeholders informed the State Department of Education of its intentions to launch an exploratory study on the need for a county college in Middlesex County. The Freeholders appointed a citizens study committee made up of the following individuals.¹⁹⁹ The selection of these regular citizens was not by accident. Many of them were educators who had years of experience developing curriculum and overseeing facilities.

The citizens' committee report, commonly referred to as the Blunt Report, was issued on December 5, 1963. It mentioned that the "Family Housing Area" at the Raritan Arsenal as a "highly desirable" site the county was considering for its main campus. It wrote that it had plenty of acreage for parking and buildings when the college became mature in its student population. The property was centrally located in the county requiring a maximum thirty five minute car ride from the furthest point in the county and was reachable by mass transportation. Additionally, it recommended that the college have a transfer program for 25 percent of its students, an industrial arts technology terminal degree program for another

¹⁹⁹ They were: Robert Blunt, Chairman, Middlesex County Superintendent of Schools; Patrick A. Boylan, Superintendent of Schools, Woodbridge; Dr. William E. Bunney, Vice-President, E.R. Squibb and Sons; Anthony V. Ceres, Superintendent of Schools, Perth Amboy; Mrs. James Chiarra, Vice-President, State Federation of District Boards of Education and Member, Jamesburg Board of Education; Dr. Burr D. Coe, Director, Middlesex County Vocational and Technical High Schools; Frank Marchitto, President, Middlesex County Building Trades Council; Dr. Kenneth L. MacKenzie, Superintendent of Schools, Highland Park; Dr. Lawrence M. Stratton, Assistant Dean, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University; Charles Thompson, Vice-President, Middlesex County Council, P.T.A.; and Dr. Guy Ferrell, Consultant, Director of Community and Two-Year College Education, New Jersey Department of Education.

25 percent of its students while 15 percent would study allied health. The remaining one third of the students would elect a vocational business curriculum as their course of studies.²⁰⁰

Shortly before the Blunt Report was released, the Middlesex County Planning Board released an account titled, “Proposed Plan for County Acquisition and Development of 358-Acre Raritan Arsenal Tract.” It declared that the county could save between \$300,000 to \$500,000 dollars by refurbishing and utilizing the present Arsenal buildings for the community college as opposed to selecting another tract elsewhere in the county. It said that the “Family Housing Area” of the Raritan arsenal contained 180 acres in a park-like setting that would be suitable for a community college. Many of the buildings could be recycled for college usage with minimal costs. The report identified a 50 acre part of the land that would be ideal for the initial construction of the college. Many of the buildings on the site surrounded an open field that was formerly used as the parade grounds. It could be used as an open square or courtyard for the college. Additionally, the buildings were set back a few hundred feet from both Woodbridge Avenue and Millville Road. This feature was found at many collegiate type institutions and would add distinctive charm to the location.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Study Commission to Determine the Need for a County College in Middlesex County. *A Report to the Board of Chosen Freeholders of Middlesex County*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, December 1963. 28-9.

²⁰¹ Middlesex County Planning Board. “Proposed Plan for County Acquisition and Development of 358-Acre Raritan Arsenal Tract.” September, 1963, 13-14.

Table 4-1²⁰²

Population Data
Middlesex County Municipalities
1930-1960

<u>Municipalities</u>	<u>Area In Sq. Miles</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>
<u>City</u>					
New Brunswick	5.5	34,555	33,180	38,811	40,139
Perth Amboy	4.6	43,516	41,242	41,330	38,007
South Amboy	1.3	8,476	7,802	8,422	8,422
<u>Township</u>					
Woodbridge	23.2	25,266	27,191	35,758	78,846
Edison (was Raritan)	30.2	10,025	11,470	16,348	44,799
Old Bridge (was Madison)	37.69	2,566	3,803	7,366	22,772
East Brunswick	21.5	2,711	3,706	5,699	19,965
Piscataway	18.9	5,865	7,243	10,180	19,890
South Brunswick	41.4	2,758	3,129	4,001	10,278
North Brunswick	11.3	3,622	4,562	6,450	10,099
Monroe	41.8	2,894	3,034	4,082	5,831
Cranbury	13.1	1,278	1,342	1,797	2,001
Plainsboro	11.7	1,018	925	1,112	1,171
<u>Borough</u>					
Sayreville	16.3	8,658	8,186	10,338	22,553
Carteret	4.5	13,339	11,976	13,030	20,502
South Plainfield	8.2	5,047	5,379	8,008	17,879
Metuchen	2.8	5,748	6,557	9,879	14,041
South River	2.8	10,759	10,714	11,308	13,397
Highland Park	1.8	8,691	9,002	9,721	11,049
Middlesex	3.6	3,504	3,763	5,943	10,502
Dunellen	1	5,148	5,360	6,291	6,840
Spotswood	2.3	921	1,201	2,325	5,788
Milltown	1.6	2,994	3,515	3,786	5,435
Jamesburg	0.9	2,048	2,128	2,307	2,853
Helmetta	0.8	801	667	580	779

²⁰² New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development. *Population Trends in New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: The Department, July 1961), 32 as cited in *A Study of the Proposal To Establish and Operate a County College in Middlesex County*. (Trenton, New Jersey, May, 1964), 15.

Table 4-1 showed the county's population from 1930-1960. New Brunswick, the county's largest city revealed moderate growth at 16 percent in that 30 year period while Perth Amboy's population went down almost 13 percent. South Amboy's populace stayed relatively flat. The real growth was in the rural parts of the county that gave way to development and created the suburbs. The expansion in those towns was astronomical. Towns like Old Bridge and East Brunswick swelled almost tenfold in residents. By 1960, 60 percent of the county lived in the new suburban neighborhoods. The population projections for the county were supposed to be around 820,000 by 1980 with almost all of the growth in the suburbs. However, unlike Essex and Mercer Counties, there was no discussion or debate over the census data in Middlesex County amongst the major stakeholders regarding site. This was because the Raritan Arsenal land was able to be acquired for free from the federal government.

Table 4-2²⁰³

Projections Of Population Growth 1970-1980					
Locality	Population Totals				
	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970 Est.</u>	<u>1980 Est.</u>
U.S.A	131,669,275	151,325,798	179,323,175	214,222,000	259,584,000
New Jersey	4,160,165	4,835,329	6,066,782	7,431,370	8,491,780
Middlesex County	217,077	264,872	433,856	607,398	819,987

²⁰³ New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development. Research and Statistics Section, "New Jersey Estimated Population Projections" (Trenton, NJ: The Department, April 1961), (mimeographed) as cited in *A Study of the Proposal To Establish and Operate a County College in Middlesex County*. (Trenton, New Jersey, May, 1964), 16.

Other Reports on Community College Site

The Committee for the Establishment of a Junior College in Middlesex County (CEJCMC) commented on the Blunt Report (the Citizens' Committee to Investigate a Need for a County College). It was written by Joseph Klegman and Frank Sinatra and released a few days after the Blunt report on December 18, 1963. It differed from the Blunt Report in a few aspects. The Klegman and Sinatra document stated that the "Family Housing Area" at the Raritan Arsenal was the only logical choice since it presented zero costs to the taxpayer. The Blunt report said it was a possibility. Development and operating costs would also be minimal since many of the buildings already were built and utilities and landscaping were already complete. Based on the federal and state incentives, they felt that the county could have a \$4 million college for about \$200,000 for a preliminary college enrollment of 1,000 students, not the 1,500 figure in the Blunt report.

It also indirectly criticized the Blunt report for recommending that the proposed county college have upwards of 50 percent of its curricular programs in vocational education. It stated that many of these offerings belong at a vocational institute and not at a county college. Liberal arts transfer programs should be emphasized, it continued, with little or no loss of credit upon transfer to a senior institution.²⁰⁴

Another report filed on behalf of the college was titled, "Developing a Middlesex County College at the Raritan Arsenal." It was more commonly referred to as the Laffin Report since one of the principal authors was Charles Laffin, an educational consultant. It was released in January, 1964. Laffin was assisted by William Seidel, an architect, and the

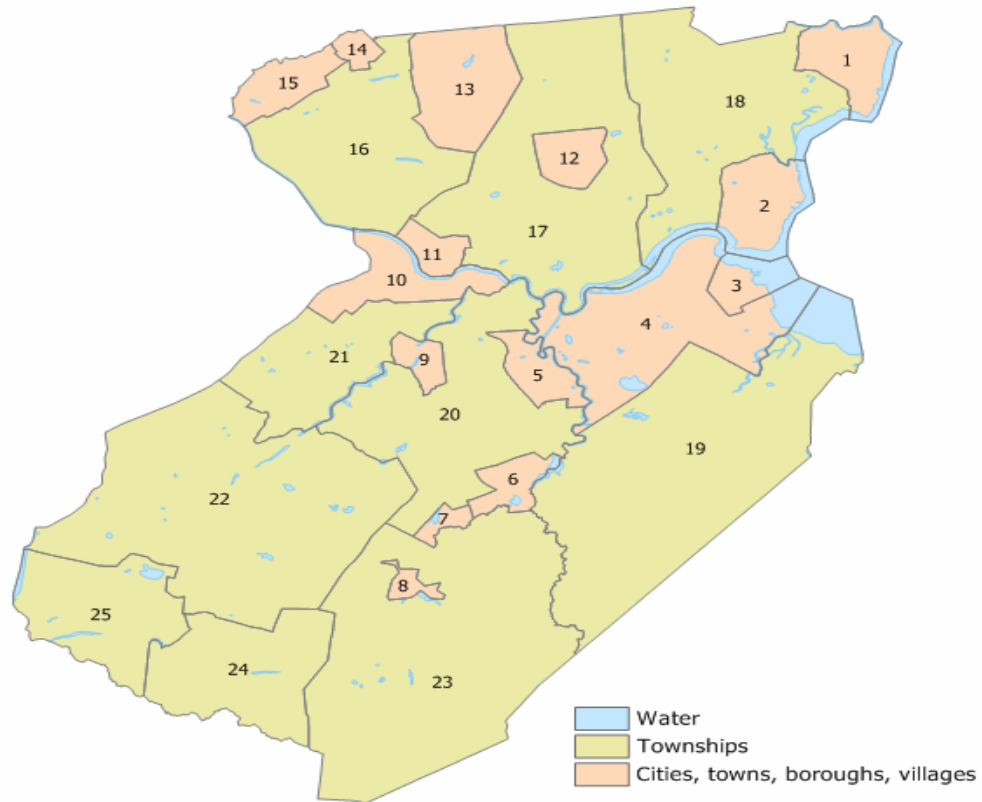
²⁰⁴The Committee for the Establishment of a Junior College in Middlesex County. "A Report on the County Survey Committee's 'The Need for a County College in Middlesex County.'" Prepared by Joseph Klegman and Frank Sinatra. December 18, 1963.

county's planning director, Douglass Powell. These three individuals were appointed in mid-December, 1963 right after the Blunt Report was published. The freeholders wanted a team of professionals to probe and scrutinize the Raritan Arsenal land and its buildings from engineering, instructive, and architectural perspectives. The Laffin Report stated that the buildings already on site at the Family Housing Area of the Arsenal, along with several new structures that were planned, could accommodate up to 3,500 students within 10 years of the college's inception.

Laffin stated that his report would follow the outline of the Blunt Report which was submitted one month earlier. The Laffin account added specific information on each structure that was already on the arsenal's grounds such as square footage and whether it would be suitable for college use. He and his team estimated the space needs for the college at both the 500 student and 1000 student enrollment capacities. He estimated the projected need of instructional areas such as classrooms, science labs, and drafting rooms. His account also included what the configuration and space requirements would be for the library, gym, faculty and staff offices as well as maintenance and general storage facilities. After looking at all the buildings and the lay-out of the property itself, Laffin concluded that the college should have an initial enrollment of 500 students. He recommended that the college build a library, gymnasium, and large science/academic hall right away to supplement the existing structures. He affixed a price tag of about \$2 million for the refurbishment of the present edifices as well as the construction of the three new ones. He softened this blow by adding that the county taxpayer would probably only pay about a

fourth of the total cost since the state and federal government had generous incentive programs in place.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Charles Laffin, William Seidel, and Douglass Powell. "Developing a Middlesex County College at the Raritan Arsenal: A Feasibility Report to the Middlesex County Board of Freeholders." New Brunswick, NJ, January 1964, i-2.



Map Key

1	Carteret	6	Spotswood	11	Highland Park	16	Piscataway Township	21	North Brunswick Township
2	Perth Amboy	7	Helmetta	12	Metuchen	17	Edison Township	22	South Brunswick Township
3	South Amboy	8	Jamesburg	13	South Plainfield	18	Woodbridge Township	23	Monroe Township
4	Sayreville	9	Milltown	14	Dunellen	19	Old Bridge Township	24	Cranbury Township
5	South River	10	New Brunswick	15	Middlesex	20	East Brunswick Township	25	Plainsboro Township

Figure 4-3²⁰⁶ Map of Middlesex County New Jersey

²⁰⁶ Jim Irwin. "Map of Middlesex County New Jersey" Uploaded to Wikipedia Commons File December 27, 2005. Accessed on March 3, 2013 from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Middlesex_County,_New_Jersey_Municipalities.png

Figure 4-3 shows the layout of the towns of Middlesex County. Visually, East Brunswick and South River appear to be the geographic center of the county which is where the state recommended placing the main community college campus. The cities of New Brunswick, and Perth Amboy and South Amboy are located in the northern part of the county while the growth in suburban population was projected for towns in the middle to the southern part of the county that had mostly farms. George Otlowski's letter to Woodbridge Mayor Walter Zirpolo in May 1964 stating that Woodbridge would probably be home to a second campus of the county college by 1970 does not seem credible. Otlowski was probably trying to appease Zirpolo since the two large townships bordered each other. In looking at the map, it seems much more plausible to place a second campus in the southern part of the county five to ten years after the main campus opened.

On February 11, 1964, Middlesex County filed a federal application with the General Services Administration in Washington for 358 acres of the former Raritan Arsenal's 3,000. While most of the land would be for the county's recreational use, 161 acres would be for the county college. The balance of acreage (197) was intended as a park and golf course with 18 acres set aside for county maintenance use. Public officials announced that Rutgers University had plans to petition for 6,000 acres of excess land at Camp Kilmer in the near future to expand its campus. The freeholders wanted the rest of the surplus land at the Raritan Arsenal and Camp Kilmer to be sold and returned to the tax rolls.²⁰⁷

On March 4, 1964, Middlesex County Freeholders submitted a formal request to the State Department of Education to institute and manage a county college. On April 30, 1964, the Federal Government deeded 161 acres and 54 buildings at no cost to the

²⁰⁷ "Arsenal Land Use Plans To Be Drafted by May 1-Timetable Set by GSA at Conference." *Plainfield Courier News*. 1/4/64.

Freeholders of Middlesex County to be used as a community college. It was estimated that the total value of the land was \$922,830. The media called it a very generous gift from their Uncle Sam which gave the county its own junior college. Freeholder Director George Burton said it would prove to be one of the most memorable days in the history of the county.”²⁰⁸

In May 1964, the state released their report on the need for a county college and stated that the “Family Housing Area” at the Raritan Arsenal would be an appropriate site. It approved Middlesex County College to begin courses for an estimated 500 freshmen for September, 1966. Like the Laffin Report, the state felt that the building and the additional facilities proposed for the 161 acre tract could eventually hold up to 3,500 students. It asserted that the Arsenal was centrally located within the county and had established bus line to the county’s three cities, New Brunswick, Perth Amboy, South Amboy, and many of its suburbs. It had all utilities on site except a gas line which could be put in for an additional cost. It also planned to re-use up to 30 of the existing structures for college purposes.²⁰⁹

On July 2, 1964, the freeholders passed a resolution to establish a community college at a two and a half hour public meeting where there was standing room only. There were about 40 speakers but no one objected. It had bi-partisan support for the resolution that was ratified unanimously by the Democratic Board of Freeholders. The college came into

²⁰⁸ “Middlesex Gets Big Gift: 161 Raritan Arsenal Acres.” *Perth Amboy Evening News*. 5/1/64.

²⁰⁹ New Jersey Department of Education. *Committee for the study of the proposal to establish and operate a county college in Middlesex County: A study of the Proposal*, 1964, 73-76.

being 45 days later on August 17, 1964 under the auspices of the 1962 County College law.²¹⁰

The County College Trustee Board

On November 12, 1964, the Middlesex County Freeholders appointed a Middlesex County College Board of Trustees. The standing member was Robert J. Blunt, the Middlesex County Superintendent of Schools. Over 200 names were submitted to the freeholders which were whittled down to 20 names and finally, eight were selected. Only one woman was chosen and no mention was made of any of the trustees' ethnicity. Paige D. L'Hommedieu of Piscataway was appointed to a four year trustee term along with Maurice W. Rowland of East Brunswick. L'Hommedieu was a past president of a Johnson and Johnson subsidiary, Personal Products Corporation, where he was chairman of its international operations. He was elected chairman of the board of trustees of Middlesex County College, also. Rowland was the retired Superintendent of Schools in New Brunswick. Two year term trustees were G. Nicholas Venezia of Colonia and L. Russell Feakes of Piscataway. Venezia was a Woodbridge attorney while Feakes was on the Board of Directors and an assistant treasurer and general controller for Johnson and Johnson. A certified public accountant, he was also director of the People's National Bank in New Brunswick.

The folks chosen as two year trustees to the Middlesex County College Board of Trustees were Joseph Klegman of Perth Amboy and Mrs. Lillian Carman of New

²¹⁰ *Plainfield Courier News*, "Unanimous OK Given to Community College," July 3, 1964.

Brunswick. Klegman was a director for the New York Postal Data Center and an Executive Board Member of the Committee to Establish a Junior College in Middlesex County. He was also an alumnus of the former Middlesex Junior College in Perth Amboy from the 1930s. Carman was a mother of eight and a member of the New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers and President of the Livingston School Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in New Brunswick. One year trustees were Frank Marchitto of Edison and Robert J. Hughes of New Brunswick. Marchitto was president of the Middlesex County Building Trades Council and executive secretary of the County AFL-CIO Council. Hughes owned the James Hughes Company in New Brunswick that specialized in marine transportation and towing.²¹¹ All of these folks were exactly what the freeholders wanted, a cross section of people from all walks of life who could competently establish and run the county college. Shortly after the Board of Trustees was selected, they hired Dr. Frank Chambers as President. He was a native of Newark, New Jersey, and the former dean of faculty at Broome Technical Community College in Binghamton, New York.

On January 26, 1965, the trustees requested approval of the former Raritan Arsenal from the New Jersey State Board of Education. On February 23, 1965, the Middlesex County Freeholders signed over the deed of 156.8 acres of former Raritan Arsenal land and all its buildings to the trustees of Middlesex County College. On April 7, 1965, State Department of Education Commissioner Frederick Raubinger approved the former Arsenal site as Middlesex County College.²¹²

²¹¹ J. Richard Merelo, "9-Member Board Named for College," *Perth Amboy Evening News*, November 18, 1964.

²¹² *Perth Amboy Evening News*, "Arsenal Site Approved for Junior College," April 8, 1965.

Unlike other community college site decisions in New Jersey, Middlesex County's choice was fairly free of turmoil. This may be due to the fact that it was acquired at zero cost from the federal government and already had many usable buildings on an already landscaped lot. However, there was a letter to the editor in the local newspaper before the college opened from Clive Krygar Jr., past Executive Director of the Urban League in Middlesex County, who questioned what the new county college would do for Negro students. Krygar had attended a dinner a few days earlier where Dr. Chambers, Middlesex County College's new president, talked about the college and its commitment to the community. He talked separately about the civil rights movement and the importance of outreach to low socioeconomic groups but did not state specifics. In the editorial, Krygar cited a Rutgers New Brunswick statistic that showed the non-white population was less than one percent at Rutgers and Douglass Colleges.²¹³

The newspaper ran its own editorial piece alongside Krygar's that same day in support of his argument. They wrote that since college requirements became tougher each year, black students and others from low socio-economic backgrounds needed help in preparing for the college entrance tests. They said the need for this type of academic support was sorely needed at a time when out of state colleges were admitting fewer New Jersey students. The editorial encouraged Middlesex County College to create such a program right away since it would be a brand new college and not entrenched in the tradition of perpetuating inequities amongst classes or races.²¹⁴ What we see here in Middlesex County

²¹³ Clive Krygar, Jr., letter to the editor, "Bridging the Gap." *New Brunswick Daily Home News*, March 29, 1966.

²¹⁴ Editorial. "Helping Negroes Enter College," *New Brunswick Daily Home News*, March 29, 1966.

is consistent with the newspapers in Essex and Mercer Counties that championed college access for the poor and uneducated classes.

Middlesex County College Board of Trustees Chairman, Paige D. L’Hommedieu, responded with the efforts the college undertook to assist the educationally, culturally, and financially disadvantaged applicants:

- a. All students who did not meet the entrance criteria were counseled.
- b. Counseling applicants often led them to be admitted to “the Pre-Tech” program. It consisted of year-long remedial courses where students made up deficiencies in order to take college level courses the following year. It seemed to be a forerunner to an EOF (Educational Opportunity Fund) type program. L’Hommedieu said already 70 students were admitted into the pre-tech program for the fall.
- c. Counseling sometimes led an applicant to select another major.
- d. There was a liaison from the county college admissions office to area high schools assigned to work with at risk applicants.
- e. They filed an application for a federal grant to pay for a counselor to work with 9th -12th graders regarding college prep courses at the high schools.
- f. They created a college foundation to help poor students with scholarships.
- g. They filed the federal application for financial aid to be offered at the college through grants, loans, and the work-study program.²¹⁵

²¹⁵ *The Perth Amboy Evening News*, “Chairman Explains County College Stand,” Perth Amboy, April 1, 1966.

While this list was a start, it was by no means comprehensive. It did not address mentoring programs for these students or personnel practices to increase faculty and staff diversity. It also did not feature any outreach to the black or Latino community organizations. It just mentioned the high schools. L’Hommedieu should have offered a proactive approach where college faculty would work with local high school teachers to align the curricula enabling the students to start college level work in their first semester and eliminate the need for remediation.

Middlesex County became the third county to open a campus under the County College Law that took effect July 1, 1963. Ocean and Atlantic Counties opened their campuses on September 20, 1966 and Cumberland County College opened that October. On the first day classes, 704 students showed up at Middlesex County College on September 26, 1966 at the former Raritan Arsenal in Edison. For the evening division, 540 additional students surged in to start their academic journeys.²¹⁶ Unlike other community colleges that had temporary campuses, Middlesex County did not need one since there were so many buildings at the former arsenal that were left in practicable use by the military.

Summary

Middlesex was unique in this study since it was the only county that did not have a debate over where the main campus was located. The Family Housing Area of the former Raritan Arsenal was chosen as the main campus for Middlesex County College. This was due to the government provision that allowed the county to acquire up to five percent of the

²¹⁶ Arnold Markowitz “Middlesex College opens as 704 answer first bell.” *Newark Star Ledger*, September 27, 1966.

total acreage of the former army base for free if used for education. The state department of education looked the other way when the Middlesex County Freeholders broke several rules and procedures to acquire the site first then set up the college later.

Was it only because of the cost savings that the local freeholders and state acted the way they did? This makes me wonder what would have happened if the federal government made land available for free in every county in New Jersey? Would there have been any debate on site selection? What if the land that was given away was only in the cities? Would the outcome have been the same? Or was there only no deliberation in Middlesex County since it was a utopian spot? After all, Edison was in the suburbs and accessible by mass transportation. The former Raritan Arsenal parcel also met many of the state department of education's criteria for a community college site: it was more than 100 acres (actually 156), was cleared, had utilities, and already contained many buildings that could be used by the college. In the four county cases studied in this paper, Middlesex County was unique in that it was given an incredible gift of land by their generous Uncle Sam. The other counties should have been so lucky. Middlesex County graciously accepted, said thanks, and has never looked back.²¹⁷

²¹⁷ There are no tables or charts in Appendix I on Middlesex County for population trends or predictions since there was no debate or controversy over site location.

IV. B. Passaic County Community College

Paterson, Passaic County's largest city, has the distinctive moniker of being the first planned industrial city in America. It can trace its roots to Alexander Hamilton and the Society for Useful Manufacturing (SUM) in 1792. It eventually became home to many production sites and was known as the "Silk City" for its numerous silk mills. Those factories were powered by the Great Falls whose energy was dispersed through a series of water channels. Other industries that were located there were those that made guns, trains, and other fabrics.²¹⁸ As a result, the city grew exponentially over the years as well as two of its neighboring cities in the lower part of the county, Clifton and Passaic. However, by the 1960's, like many other cities in America, Paterson had fallen from grace and many middle and upper class folks left for the suburbs. Those left behind were often poor and unskilled.

The freeholders and politicians in Passaic County paid close attention to the County College Law of 1962. Valuing education, they thought a county college would help re-train workers who were losing their factory jobs at that time. In the 1960s, almost 70 percent of the people in the county lived in one of its three cities, Clifton, Passaic, and Paterson (see Table 4-3). Naturally many folks thought a county college should be placed in its largest city, Paterson, while others advocated for one its suburbs. I will now share

²¹⁸ Helena Flam, "Democracy in Debt: Credit and Politics in Paterson NJ, 1890-1930," *Journal of Social History* 18, No 3, (Spring 1985): 439-462. Oxford University Press. Article Stable URL; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3788050?seq=4>. Accessed on: March 19, 2013.

with you the central events around the story of site selection for Passaic County. This research looks at the site selection of two New Jersey Counties, Essex and Mercer. Passaic and Middlesex Counties are included as a means of comparison. We will see that what happened in Passaic County with its referendum and heated debates (including the resignation of the board of trustees) had to do with site selection and its associated costs.

The Study Commission

On October 20, 1965, a study commission was appointed by the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders to consider whether or not a county college would be viable in Passaic County. The commissioners were sworn into office in early January 1966 and held their first meeting on January 26, 1966. The eighteen member commission was made up of folks from the business and education communities and the public at large.²¹⁹

The site committee was chaired by Morris Shimshak and Edward P. Schinman. The overall report contained the standard format as requested by the state. It contained the

²¹⁹ They were: Peter A. Cimmino, Executive Vice President, Tombrock College; William Deich, Corporate Executive; Rose Fenster, housewife and former school teacher; Helen Foster, manager of the Central Transcribing Department, Manhattan Rubber Company; Martin Gould, Account Executive, John L. Stickley Company; Mildred Gutin, Treasurer, Passaic County Council PTA; Charles Gregory, Tax Assessor, City of Passaic; Erwin O. Kraft, President, First National Bank of Passaic County, Dr. Raymond C. Lewin, Dean, Edward Williams College (now Fairleigh Dickinson University); Peter N. Librizzi, Project Manager, ITT and Company; Kenneth Maso, Vice-President of the New Jersey State Building and Construction Trades Council, Local #143; J. Palmer Murphy, Director of Public Relations, New Jersey Bank and Trust Company; John J. Pasquale, Chairman of the College Committee, President of Liberty Machine Company, Paterson; Ansel Payne, Assistant Secretary, Passaic County Vocational High School; Marye Ruzila Substitute Teacher, Passaic County Schools; Edward P. Schinman, President, Bogue Electric Company; Morris Shimshak, School Teacher, Jersey City; and Dr. Robert Steer, Teacher, Pompton Lakes.

survey that was given to 84 Passaic County area businesses and the high school survey that was given to the county's 4,524 public and parochial school juniors. Almost 70 percent of these juniors (2,927) said they would attend a county college in Passaic County if one were made available to them. The business community was equally favorable for the county college idea. In the business survey, 72 out of 84 companies (85 percent) that were polled revealed that they were in need of employees with skills that could be offered at the county college. They were: engineering draftsmen, technicians, time standard technicians, concrete technologists, chemical technicians, estimators, accountants, nurses, and other corporate staff. In April, 1967, the County College Citizen's Advisory Committee released their report which presented an overwhelming need for a county college in Passaic County.²²⁰

In May 1968, approval was given to the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders to establish a county college by the State Department of Higher Education. The Passaic County College Board of Trustees first meeting was held on January 14, 1970. Phillip Martini was nominated as chairman along with John Pasquale, a lifelong Patersonian. After the vote was taken, Martini garnered more votes and was elected chairman with Pasquale as his Vice-Chair. From the very onset, John advocated for a permanent Paterson location for the college. Pasquale was also chairman of the County College Citizen's Advisory Committee and President of the Liberty Machine Company in Paterson. This pattern was present in the three other counties, Essex, Mercer, and Middlesex. The freeholders selected several people to serve on both the study commission as well as the trustee board. At the February 17, 1970 Board of Trustees meeting, Trustees John Day

²²⁰ Study Commission to Determine the Need for a County College in Passaic County. *A Report to the Board of Chosen Freeholders of Passaic County*. Paterson, New Jersey, 1967, 17.

and Helen Foster were assigned to the site committee. John Day was named as chairman.²²¹

The County College Trustee Board

The Board of Trustees was made up of nine members and was selected by the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Philip Martini, the first chairman, worked for the John Hancock Insurance Company in Passaic and also lived in the city. The acting secretary, Gaetano Dittamo, was a school teacher for Kinnelon High School and made his home in Haledon. John Day was a real estate broker with the Alexander Summer Company in Teaneck and lived in Wayne. Alfred T. De Leasa worked for the Bendix Corporation in Teterboro and lived in Clifton. Mrs. Carril (Helen) Foster was the Manager of the Central Transcribing Department at the Manhattan Rubber Company in Passaic and was also a member of the Citizens Advisory Commission to Investigate a Need for a County College in Passaic County. She and her family lived in West Paterson. Dr. Alan Morehead was a vice president and provost at Montclair State College and lived in Paterson. The eighth member was the superintendent of Passaic County Schools who at the time was Dr. J. Harold Straub whose residence was in North Haledon. The last member was George Sokalski who lived in Paterson and owned a business at 126 Market Street in the city.²²² Ethnicities or races of the trustee board were not supplied.

²²¹ PCCC Board of Trustee Minutes, January 14, 1970.

²²² Letter from Gaetano Dittamo to Mr. Terrence Tollefson, Director of Community College Programs, Department of Higher Education, State of New Jersey. February 20, 1970.

Shortly after the approval for the county college was granted by the state, several taxpayer groups from Clifton forced a county wide referendum as provided for in the 1962 law. Its purpose was to decide whether or not the college should go forward. No other county in New Jersey had acted (before or since) on this provision of the County College Law of 1962. This was different from the one that Mercer County called which was a voluntary action by the Freeholders to muster taxpayer support for the large expenditure.²²³

The referendum in Passaic County, in accordance with the County College Law of 1962, took place on November 4, 1969 and passed by a narrow margin. The question placed on the ballot read, “Shall a county college be established in Passaic County pursuant to Chapter 64A of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes?” Of the votes that were cast, 50,355 votes were in the affirmative while 47,117 votes were in the negative. There were sixteen municipalities in Passaic County and only three were urban, Clifton, Paterson, and Passaic. The remaining 13 were suburbs while five of them were mostly rural. As expected, Clifton had the largest percentage of “no” votes with 15,560 or 67.1 percent of the town’s total votes cast.²²⁴

The college site committee purchased a temporary site in Paterson, the former Bell Telephone building, at 170 Paterson Street in March 1971. It was a five story building that was easily converted for college use. As part of its concept letter (master plan), the college decided to go with the Learning for Mastery technique or systems approach which was different than the conventional pedagogical approach over a 15 week semester. The building was renovated to have plenty of laboratory space and areas where students could

²²³Letter to George Otlowski from Guy Ferrell, Director of Community and Two-Year College Education. April 24, 1963.

²²⁴Mike Batelli. “The College that Won’t Drop Out” *The Bergen Record*. March 14, 1971.

use tape recorders to listen to their lessons repeatedly if necessary. The president of the college, Robert Zimmer, was hired in August 1970 because he advocated this approach. It was created by Dr. Benjamin S. Bloom of the University of Chicago. Zimmer said that students might be able to learn more than they thought possible under this system without having to worry about an “F” on their transcript. Student could take an “I” which noted they were still in process of completing the work for the course and repeated it by paying for it again on their own. By eliminating “F’s,” it increased the student’s chances of being accepted by a four year college later on. Additionally, the systems approach graded each student for his or her own work. It did not grade based on a curve which assumed a certain percentage of students would not succeed in the class.²²⁵

The County College Citizen’s Advisory Committee in 1967 recommended a county college in Passaic County that should be built initially for 4000 students. It arrived at these figures by using the state’s formula which was to take the county’s total high school enrollment figure of 10,000 students and approximated 40 percent of these would attend the county college. With a 50 percent drop-out rate, the college could expect about 3,000 students a year and have 1,000 spots in reserve for expansion. The committee also followed the state’s suggested guidelines for 100 acres of land where 50 of it was typically used for parking for staff and students. The only possibility for 100 acres of state owned land in Passaic County for a possible county college was the lot adjacent to the North Jersey Training School for Women Property in Totowa. It had a total of 222.41 acres. There were 147.25 acres on the north side of Minnisink Road while 63.09 acres

²²⁵ *The Paterson Herald News*, “Passaic County College Abandons Tradition: Something New in Grading,” September 1, 1971.

were on the south side. This location had access to Route 46 and would have been proximal to a future Route 80 corridor.

While 100 acres was the optimal amount for acreage, 45 acres was considered the minimum. There were 34.46 acres of county owned land on the west side of Oldham Road adjacent to the Preakness Hospital in Wayne and Haledon Boroughs (near the current site of Passaic County Community College's Public Safety Academy). This land which abutted the proposed county vocational high school had a steep grade and was thought to incur additional building costs to accommodate suitable academic buildings. It was proximal to local bus routes and current and future highways. Another 34.37 acre lot was identified in Wayne as the former Nike missile tract and was located minutes from Route 23. The issue with that parcel was that there was no access road to the site and that land for it would need to be negotiated, acquired, and paved.²²⁶

The state gave the study commission and the freeholders some advice on a county college site. In its official report response to the request from the Passaic County Freeholders, the state acknowledged the benefits of using tax free land as a site for the community college. However, it felt that the county should recognize that the lower portion of Passaic County with its three largest municipalities, Paterson, Passaic, and Clifton, as an area with one of the largest population densities per square mile in the entire country. With that in mind, the college was told to consider a site with less acreage that was accessible to a greater number of potential students. It also alluded to the trend where many community colleges built vertically to satisfy space requirements in urban settings that were close to mass transportation.

²²⁶ Study Commission to Determine the Need for a County College in Passaic County. *A Report to the Board of Chosen Freeholders of Passaic County*. Paterson, New Jersey, 1967, 20.

The state also mentioned in its response that it was alerted to an offer of several hundred acres that once occupied the Shelton College Campus in Ringwood. It stated that this land would be difficult to acquire due to the need for several state and federal agencies to collaborate to get it. Moreover, its price tag of 2.2 million was way above fair market value and the site was in a geographic area that contained only about 10 percent of the county's population. For these reasons, the state did not recommend the former Shelton College location in Ringwood as a permanent site for Passaic County Community College.²²⁷

As stated earlier, the college site committee selected the former Bell Telephone building at 170 Paterson Street as the interim location for the college. The rally charge for Paterson as the interim site for the county college was led by Mayor Lawrence F. "Pat" Kramer. For many years, Pat tried to lure a developer for the urban renewal land in downtown that would generate life and tax ratables in his city whose demographics were changing rapidly. In his lifetime, he witnessed many businesses exit his city and saw large non-profit entities such as a Paterson State College and a local hospital expand or move to sites in the suburbs. The mayor was vocal in his arguments to locate the college in the city. These were his three main reasons for locating the interim (and main) site in Paterson:

- a. Paterson had more college age students than any other town in Passaic County (18,000) as of the 1960 census.
- b. Because Paterson led the county in families living below the poverty level, it had the greatest requirement for low cost training and education.

²²⁷ New Jersey Department of Education. *Committee for the study of the proposal to establish and operate a county college in Passaic County: A Study of the Proposal*, 1968, 2-6.

- c. The city had the best network of mass transportation to allow students to get to and from the college at minimal or no cost.²²⁸

In an informal interview I had with Mayor Kramer in 2009, he admitted that it was a necessary argument to have the college located in Paterson and one that was easy to win. He said if he had to do it all over again, he wouldn't change a thing. He told the Passaic County Freeholders and the trustees that the satellite campuses up county in Ringwood and Pompton Lakes could come later. His office put pressure on the freeholders to site the college in Paterson. He said the demographics and low education levels made the argument a no contest. He said the facts he and his team presented to the trustees, the freeholders, and the state convinced them that the only logical choice was Paterson.²²⁹

While the city had the largest black population in the county, some predicted that whites from the suburbs would not send their children to an area in Paterson that many felt was unsafe after dark. Kramer responded to these attacks by pledging to increase the police presence in the area that was known for its many bars and prostitution arrests. He felt that by putting more people on the streets, it would lower the crime statistics. He cited that this strategy had been successful in several New York City neighborhoods.

While Kramer was steadfast in his pleas for Paterson, the College Trustee Chairman, Philip Martini, and Clifton City Manager, William Holster, seemed to suggest that locating a college in Paterson would cost taxpayers too much money. Martini floated a figure of "84 million" and questioned whether taxpayers should have the opportunity to re-evaluate their vote in the referendum in light of these new fiscal projections. Holster filed another

²²⁸ Mike Batelli. "The College that Won't Drop Out" *The Bergen Record*. March 14, 1971.

²²⁹ Author's interview with Paterson Mayor Lawrence F. "Pat" Kramer via telephone. August 13, 2009.

law suit in February, 1971, on behalf of the City of Clifton in an effort to have a second referendum be placed on the ballot regarding the future of the college. At the time, Clifton's population of 82,000 only had about 300 blacks (see Appendix I-Table A-3). His lawsuit was dismissed by Superior Court Judge Gordon H. Brown who stated that the financial decisions regarding an educational institution must be made by the administration and not the judiciary.²³⁰

Another part of the legal complaint charged that Passaic County was going to use an unusual bonding format to pay for the college. It was discarded by the New Jersey Supreme Court on July 9, 1971. Later that year in September, the Freeholders issued a resolution for a county referendum in the November 1971 election capping the taxpayers' portion of Passaic County at \$17 million. A few weeks later, they added the question, "Should the plans for the Passaic County Community College be implemented?" In the few weeks before the election, that question was dropped from the ballot by a student-parent civil action law suit filed by PCCC student, Kathy Ulrich.²³¹

Approval of the Temporary Campus

Despite the political battles that were raging in Passaic County, the Chancellor of Higher Education, Ralph Dungan, recommended the approval of the temporary site in Paterson for 600 FTE (full-time equivalent) students in March 1971. The maximum headcount for day school students was 450 full-time equivalent (FTE) students and

²³⁰Mike Batelli. "The College that Won't Drop Out," *The Bergen Record*, March 14, 1971.

²³¹"The Early History of the College." Found in PCCC archives. Undated. 3-4.

headcount for the daytime program would not surpass 800 persons. Additionally, the college could enroll a maximum of 450 students in their part-time evening program. The college was also approved to offer two transfer liberal arts programs. One was for the humanities and social sciences while the other was to be in the math and sciences. He approved the purchase of the building from Bell Telephone in the amount of \$75,000 (well below the appraised value) and its anticipated renovation costs of over \$1 million. With his recommendation came the assurance that the state would fund its share of costs as provided for in the Senate Bill Number 1000.²³² The state board passed a resolution approving the interim site in Paterson later that same week.

In the concept letter (master plan) that the Passaic County Community College Board of Trustees sent to Chancellor Dungan recommending the Paterson Street locale as the temporary location, there were six other properties that were investigated by the site committee as possible temporary or permanent homes for Passaic County Community College. They were: the Hines site of 246 acres on Valley Road in West Milford; the Verkade site of 95.4 acres on Route 202 in Wayne; the Uni-Royal site of 99 acres on Alps Road in Wayne; the Boonstra site of 95 acres on Totowa Road in Totowa; the Crazy Horse site of 16 acres located on Alfano Island in Paterson, and the mill site of 17.5 acres located off of Spruce Street in Paterson (see Figure 4-6).

The concept letter further stipulated that the college trustees recognized that the Paterson Street site had room for growth as part of the city's plan for Urban Renewal. Federal grants could help offset the cost. They were still evaluating the total costs associated with this

²³² Department of Higher Education Memo from Ralph Dungan, Chancellor, to the Members of the New Jersey Board of Higher Education regarding a resolution approving a Concept Letter for an Interim Facility at Passaic County Community College. March 19, 1971.

project but wrote, "...the Trustees do not, at this time, judge it prudent to make a firm commitment for a large urban campus at this location." They said that this site might someday make a specialized learning center (one of several throughout the county) that might house such majors as criminal justice, fire science, and urban planning. They said that they felt one large main campus would not adequately serve the educational needs of Passaic County. They made this statement based on the recommendations of planning consultants after their careful study of the county's geography, population allocation, and transportation infrastructure.²³³

The college opened its doors on October 4, 1971 at the temporary Paterson Street location to 369 students (286 full-time and 83 part-time) taught by 10 full-time faculty members in the following disciplines. Two each were employed for Mathematics and English. One professor was hired for each of the following departments: Art, Psychology. History, Sociology, Biology, and Physical Education.²³⁴

Once the college's temporary location was settled, the battle lingered on for the permanent site. Several members of the community lobbied all along for the college to be located permanently in Paterson. One person who attended the Board of Trustee meetings from the beginning was a schoolteacher from Paterson, Mr. William "Bill" Pascrell.²³⁵ At the third meeting of the Board of Trustees, Bill urged the Board to place the college in

²³³Concept Letter to Chancellor Ralph Dungan, Department of Higher Education from the Passaic County College Board of Trustees. March 17, 1971.

²³⁴Ruth Fetterman, "Zimmer Installed as College Head," *Paterson Herald News*, October 25, 1971.

²³⁵ Today, the Honorable William "Bill" Pascrell is the Democratic United States Representative for New Jersey's 9th Congressional District. He has been a congressman since 1997 and also served as the mayor of Paterson from 1990-1997.

Paterson where he felt it will benefit the greatest number of people.²³⁶ Later that year, Bill Pascrell became Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to locate the college in Paterson. He wrote to the state and assured Mr. Tollefson, the Director of the State's Community College Programs, that their committee was strongly advocating the college to be located in an urban setting. He further added that he hoped it would come up for a vote in the not too distant future.²³⁷

Consultant Reports

The College Board of Trustees hired an architectural consultant, George McDowell, from the firm of McDowell and Goldstein, to study the six sites that were considered for the temporary location as the permanent site. He narrowed it down to the Verkade site in Wayne and the mill site in Paterson that was located near Spruce and Grand Streets as the two top contenders. The college already indicated that it was open to a multi-campus structure with an administrative core around several branch locations rather than just one main campus. The mill site in Paterson had several advantages including the preservation of 100 year old mills that were central to Paterson's past. In the architect's opinion, the structures could be easily adaptable to classrooms and common areas. The main disadvantage was that the proposed 80 foot wall that would need to be constructed for the new Route 80 would obliterate the site. It would separate the college from the community it was meant to serve. The mills were also owned by several owners as opposed to the Verkade site in Wayne that only had one proprietor.

²³⁶ PCCC Board of Trustee minutes, March 17, 1970.

²³⁷ Letter to Mr. Terrence Tollefson from Mr. Bill Pascrell. January 25, 1971.

The 96 acre Verkade site was projected to be located near the center of the county's population by 1985. Parking spots would take up to at least 30 acres of the site and could be achieved at a price of \$300 each which was markedly cheaper than the estimated \$3000 price tag in an urban parking garage. While Verkade would lose about ten acres to the proposed Route 287, there were 30 acres adjacent to the current site that they recommended to be purchased immediately to enlarge the location. The College Trustee Board had rights to the Verakade property until the end of October. It was located near the county's main highways and accessible by public transportation.

While the board had rights to the property until the end of October, it was downplayed. Not everyone was excited about a Wayne location, including the mayor and several members of the Wayne Town Council. Paterson citizens Edward Lindsay and Robert Cornish said that if they went with the Verkade site as the administrative core and kept Paterson as a branch location, they would have segregated campuses, a black one in Paterson and a white one in Wayne. The Board President, John Pasquale, said he would resign if that happened and assured them the college would stagger classes and offerings to at both sites to ensure a racial balance. Does this sound familiar? It should. The promise of creative and alternative scheduling was the same response President McCabe and Trustee Chair Ferguson made when a two campus system was considered for Essex County College.

Trustee Helen Foster said that she was not too concerned about "1987 projections" and that the college should build in Paterson where most of the population density was located at that time. The other sites that were considered were rejected for the following reasons: the Hines site of 246 acres in West Milford was determined to be too remote and had no available utilities. The Wayne Uniroyal site of 100 acres on Alps Road had estimated costs

that were too high. The Boonstra site off Totowa Road in Wayne had 95 acres but was land locked and would incur additional costs due to the stony topography and the creation of a major access road which did not currently exist. The Crazy Horse site on Alfano Island in Paterson was discarded since it was only 16 acres and the ability to acquire additional land for parking was not available.²³⁸

²³⁸ Ruth Fetterman, "Architect reports on proposed college site," *Paterson Herald News*. May 19, 1971.

Table 4-4²³⁹

PRELIMINARY POPULATION ESTIMATES
PASSAIC COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
 Population Growth in Passaic County by minor Civil Divison,
 Actual 1950 to 1960 and Projected to 1985

	1950 (Actual)	1960	1965	1970	1975 (in Thousands)	1980	1985
PASSAIC COUNTY	337,093	406,618	439.3	472.0	508.2	537.3	570.0
Bloomington	3,251	5,293	6.2	7.1	8.1	9.1	10.3
Clifton	64,511	82,084	89.6	97.7	107.2	115.0	123.7
Haledon	6,204	6,161	6.2	6.1	6.1	5.9	5.7
Hawthorne	14,816	17,735	19.3	20.8	21.9	23.1	24.5
Little Falls	6,405	9,730	11.4	13.2	14.7	16.1	17.7
North Haledon	3,550	6,026	7.5	8.5	9.7	10.7	12.0
Passaic	57,702	53,963	53.2	51.9	50.3	47.3	43.9
Paterson	139,336	143,663	146.6	149.1	152.5	152.1	151.0
Pompton Lakes	4,654	9,445	11.4	13.7	15.8	18.3	21.1
Prospect Park	5,242	5,201	5.3	5.2	5.6	5.4	5.1
Ringwood	1,752	4,182	5.3	6.6	7.6	9.1	10.8
Totowa	6,045	10,897	13.2	15.1	17.8	19.9	22.8
Wanaque	4,222	7,126	8.3	9.9	11.1	12.9	14.3
Wayne	11,822	29,353	36.5	44.4	52.9	61.8	71.8
West Milford	3,650	8,157	10.1	11.8	14.2	16.1	18.8
West Paterson	3,931	7,602	9.2	10.9	12.7	14.5	16.5

²³⁹ New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development. *Population Trends in New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: The Department, July 1961), 38 as cited in *A Report to the Board of Chosen Freeholders of Passaic County*. Paterson, New Jersey, 1967, 4. 1965-1985 forecast of county-wide population from the Bergen- Passaic Regional Plan Association.



Figure 4-5²⁴⁰

Map of Passaic County with municipalities

²⁴⁰ Chris Ruvolo. "Map of Passaic County New Jersey." Uploaded to Wikipedia Commons File on November 28, 2005. Accessed on March 3, 2013 from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Passaic_County,_NJ_municipalities_labeled.png

Figure 4-6²⁴¹

1970 Census Map showing Paterson Street Location in Paterson

²⁴¹ United States Census Bureau. "Map of Paterson and Urbanized Areas-map 46," 1970 Census.

Table 4-7²⁴²

1970 Census Demographics of Area Surrounding Paterson Street, Paterson Location

Tract	Total Persons	White	Black	Children < 18
1802	8225	7978	247	2303
1803	5625	4950	675	169
1815	4967	695	4272	2086
1816.01	1395	739	656	516
1816.02	1756	527	1229	738
1817.01	866	823	43	113
1817.02	3455	2004	1451	1449
1818	2983	2715	268	925
1820	3006	2375	631	1323
1822	3640	2803	837	1492

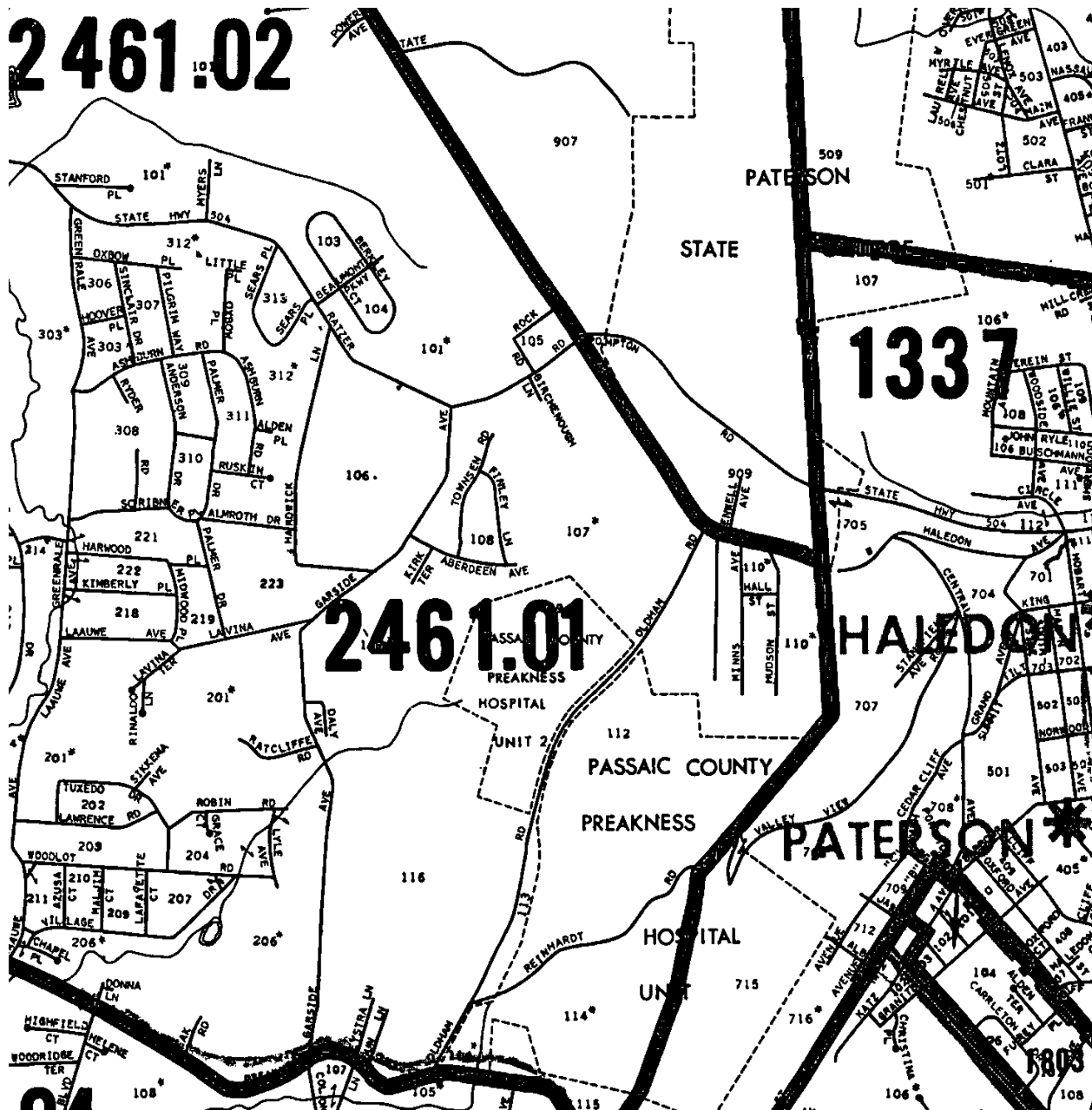
Table 4-8²⁴³

1970 Census Demographics of Area Surrounding Oldham Road, Wayne Location

Tract	Total Persons	White	Black	Children < 18
1337	6767	6699	68	1489
2461.01	5925	5866	59	2429
2461.02	3389	3389	0	915

²⁴² United States Census Bureau. 1970 Census Tracts. Information for Selected Tracts from 1802 to 1822 from “Map of Paterson and Urbanized Areas-map 46.”

²⁴³ United States Census Bureau. 1970 Census Tracts. Information for Tracts 210 to 212 from “Map of Paterson and Urbanized Areas-map 30.”

Figure 4-9²⁴⁴

1970 United States Census Map of Oldham Road, Wayne Location

²⁴⁴ United States Census Bureau. "Map of Paterson and Urbanized Areas-map 30," 1970 Census.

Table 4-4 shows the population in Passaic County, both real and projected from 1950 to 1985. The county was forecasted to have 40 percent growth by 1985. It shows that Paterson was the largest city, almost double in population density as Clifton and three times the size of Passaic. Paterson's population growth was projected to be modest, about five percent, through 1985. The city of Passaic was estimated to decline in population. All of the other towns were projected to grow astronomically. Clifton, Passaic County's third city, had a lot in common with the suburbs in terms of the race and socioeconomic class. Paterson and Passaic were increasing in their minority residents while many whites fled to the suburbs. Additionally, many citizens of Paterson and Passaic did not own cars and relied on public transportation. If the college chose a site in the suburbs, many wondered how many folks would not be able to attend due to the costs and time associated with travelling by mass transportation.

Figure 4-5 shows the unique hourglass shape of Passaic County. It shows the three congested cities of Clifton, Passaic, and Paterson at the bottom of the county while the land rich towns of West Milford and Ringwood are located at the top. The image also reveals that the upper part of Wayne Township or Pompton Lakes appear to be the geographic center of the county which was what the state recommended for a main campus location. All of the towns near the bottom of the county were small in size compared to the large wilderness regions of Ringwood and West Milford. Given that the state only wanted one college location per county, it seems plausible that Wayne would have been the preferred locale. It was not too far from any point in the county and was large enough (or so it seemed) for another tax exempt government entity.

Figures 4-6 and 4-9 show the Census maps for the areas surrounding the Paterson Street in Paterson and Oldham Road in Wayne locales. The Paterson Street location eventually

became the main campus for the college. On Figure 4-6, it is located in Block 105 in Tract 1816.01. The demographics shown in Table 4-7 for this area depict only two tracts that are mostly black, Tracts 1815 and 1816.02. Tracts 1816.01 and 1817.02 are approximately half black in 1970. The rest of the tracts show mostly white neighborhoods. Paterson never became a majority black city the way Newark and Trenton did due to the large influx of Latino immigrants. (see Table A-3 in Appendix I)

Figure 4-9 shows the Oldham Road area in Wayne. This was the land adjacent to Preakness Hospital Unit #2 in Block 107 on Tract 2461.01. This was the land that the freeholders offered to the College Board of Trustees in March 1972. This will be discussed in depth further later in this chapter. The corresponding demographics for that area as shown in Table 4-8 depict a black population of less than one per cent.

Votes on the Main Campus Site

The ad hoc committee to situate the county college in Paterson, headed by Bill Pascrell, did not favor the multi-campus site and said it would create “de facto” segregation. He and Mayor Kramer’s supporters were strong advocates for the mill site in Paterson. The college’s former chairman, Philip Martini, resigned as chairman of the trustee board on March 15, 1971 after he emphatically rebuffed the notion that Paterson should be the main administrative site for the college. He said, “This college is being used to bolster the diminished image of the city of Paterson, rather than to benefit all qualified Passaic County residents.” Mr. John Pasquale, the Vice-Chair, succeeded Martini as chairman.

Trustee Robert Wuester sided with Martini and argued that up county residents would find trekking to Paterson a major hassle.²⁴⁵ The assumption that all white suburban folks wanted the college to be located there was not true. Wuester and Martini and a few freeholders felt strongly about a suburban location but several public officials in Wayne did not. Site location was a very complicated issue that folks felt passionate about. Martini was not alone in zeal. That will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

The Board of Trustee meeting on March 28, 1972 was most interesting. It started at 8:00 PM and ended at 1:00 AM (according to the minutes). The trustees voted on a resolution based on an offer of land described in a letter to them from the Board of Chosen Freeholders dated March 17, 1972. The Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders passed a resolution at their meeting on March 15, 1972 offering a 14.5 acre in Wayne Township to the college for use as their permanent site. The property was adjacent to the county owned Preakness Hospital on Oldham Road and near the new Passaic County Technical and Vocational High School. At the college trustee meeting, the motion to accept the land offer from the freeholders was moved by Mr. Wuester and seconded by Mr. Deleasa. The chairman, Mr. Pasquale, then opened up the motion to the public for their comments. The mayor of Paterson, Arthur Dwyer, spoke first and offered the trustees over two acres of land in Paterson at a cost of \$1.00 per square foot. He was then followed by a Passaic County College student, Winston McCoy, who presented the board with a petition of over two hundred student signatures beseeching the board to locate the college in Paterson.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Ruth Fetterman. 1971. "Reared in disagreement, school opens amid controversy." *Herald News*. September 30.

²⁴⁶ *Wayne Today*, "County College Wayne Location at Stalemate," April 2, 1972.

Subsequent to McCoy came John Mazzacca, a Wayne Democratic leader, who presented the Board with a letter from the Wayne Chamber of Commerce dated December 24, 1970 and another from the Wayne Republican Organization dated March 28, 1972 declaring their sponsorship of a Paterson site. Wayne was happy to endorse a site that was not Wayne. This was already well established for almost 15 months. Mazzacca, issued a statement of support for a Paterson site on behalf of four of his Democratic Councilmen, Walter Hoffmann, Walter Jasinski, James Mingo, and Harold Somerdyk.²⁴⁷ The Republican mayor of Wayne, Newton Miller, went on record to say that he did not want the county college in Wayne due to a deficient road system that sorely needed upgrading. He also said he did not want to lose any more tax ratable land. He endorsed Paterson as the site for the county college by saying:

If the majority of the students would be coming from Paterson, then logically, it should be located there. If the students favor a more campus type atmosphere, then I would support the location of the college in an up county community. Problems of transportation could be solved by busing them from Paterson, Passaic, and Clifton. It is difficult to satisfy both the up county and the down county communities in something like this. I can't help but feel that students from down county areas would benefit from the country atmosphere of an up county location. If the choice boils down to Paterson and Wayne, however, I will support Paterson's claim. If it is between Paterson and another up county community, I would have to reconsider. In any event, I am opposed

²⁴⁷ *Wayne Today*, "Wayne Chamber Wants C-College in Paterson." December 27, 1970.

to locating the school in Wayne. We have far too many county facilities here without compensation already. We cannot afford another tax free institution.²⁴⁸

Newton and his bi-partisan town council did not mince words. Both political parties, as well as the local chamber of commerce, did not want the community college in Wayne no matter what. Many others, including Freeholder Director Edward O’Byrne, spoke in favor of a Paterson site. Dr. Stanley Worton and Mr. Bill Pascrell proposed to amend the resolution to read: “We respectfully received the offer of county land from the Freeholders, but reserve at present, on the decision of permanent site.” The motion to add this wording was defeated. Then the original motion to accept the Wayne property as the main campus was voted on with these results: four “yes” votes; two “no” votes; two “abstain” votes; and one “pass.” The chair, John Pasquale, was not sure if it carried so he said he would research the issue and would inform everyone at a future date. Upon investigation, it turns out that the motion did carry but by the time Pasquale learned that it had passed, the offer of the Wayne land was retracted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders at their April 5, 1972 meeting. No reason was given as to why the land offer was retracted but it may have something to do with the fact that the last College Board of Trustees meeting on March 28th (which Freeholder Director O’Byrne attended) did not adjourn until 1:00AM.²⁴⁹ We can only assume that some deal was struck behind closed doors that ultimately caused the offer of land to be retracted by the freeholders.

Then on July 25, 1972, a vote arose at the Board of Trustees meeting for 27 acres of county owned land in Wayne adjacent to Preakness Hospital to be conveyed to PCCC contingent upon drilling samples to be taken immediately for construction feasibility. It

²⁴⁸ Fran Friend, “No Community College Here,” *Wayne Today*, December 13, 1970.

²⁴⁹ PCCC Board of Trustees meeting minutes, March 28, 1972.

passed by Deleasa, Dittamo, Straub, Wuester, and Pasquale. The negative votes were cast by Pascrell and Worton. Day and Foster were absent. Pascrell then put up a motion, seconded by Worton, to send the Freeholders a tape of this meeting so they can hear the [embarrassing] remarks made by several members of the Board of Trustees. This motion was defeated.²⁵⁰ No final disposition of that motion could be found. On August 22, 1972, a vote was to be taken again on the permanent site for the college but was adjourned for lack of quorum. The trustees present were: Pascrell, Worton, Foster, and Pasquale. Those who were absent were: Day, Dittamo, Deleasa, Straub, and Wuester.

The decision on the permanent location finally came at the September 5, 1972 Board of Trustees meeting. Pascrell read a motion to accept Mayor Dwyer's offer of almost two acres of land (approximately 64,000 square feet) which was adjacent to the college's temporary location at 170 Paterson Street. The cost was \$84,000 and the motion passed by a vote of seven to one with Alfred Deleasa dissenting.²⁵¹ Again, there must have been some compromise that was made that resulted in an almost unanimous decision by the trustees. At the October 24, 1972 Board of Trustee meeting, John Pasquale, Public Relations Sub-Committee Chair and Chairman of the Board of Trustees, said that he was pleased that the decision on the permanent site of college was finally behind them. It was, he elaborated, the only internal contention the board had with itself and stated, "...from here on in, the board is going to be functioning as we have in the past, in the best interest of the county and the students."²⁵²

²⁵⁰ PCCC Board of Trustees meeting minutes, July 25, 1972.

²⁵¹ *Paterson News*, "County College Trustees Will Buy Here, Stay Here," September 6, 1972.

²⁵² PCCC Board of Trustees meeting minutes, October 24, 1972.

Summary

While the discussion here on Passaic County was not as in depth as the ones on Mercer and Essex, it shared many common themes. One was the stakeholders involved. They were: community and civic groups, the media, the local politicians and their supporters, teachers, local businessmen and chambers of commerce, and the students themselves. The many local community groups that came out in support of an urban community college were vocal and had the backing of the local media. The members of some of the press were once again the conscience of the county and advocated for its poor and under-educated citizens in the cities, many of whom were black. (Not the local newspaper in Wayne, though). Paterson Mayor Pat Kramer and his successor, Mayor Arthur Dwyer, also played a significant role in advocating for a Paterson site. The mayors recognized that there were many crime issues associated with the proposed site but Urban Renewal funds and a pledge to rid the neighborhood's seedier elements assured the trustees and the freeholders that the college could be successful in downtown Paterson. These mayors were part of the college meetings from the very beginning. They also encouraged their supporters to attend them as well. It's pretty safe to assume that their strategy in Passaic was similar to what we saw in Essex County with Newark Mayor Addonizio. His staff and supporters religiously attended the trustees open public meetings and spoke up. It proved to be a successful strategy for both cities.

While there were many suburban sites that were considered for the main campus site in Passaic County, they seemed to drop out one at a time. The only one that remained with serious contention was the 14.7 acre site on Oldham Road site in Wayne. That locale seemed to initially have the support of the freeholders when they offered it to the trustees

but something happened when it came up for a vote by the trustees. The pass vote and the abstentions presented a situation where the chair was not sure if the motion carried. By the time he found out that it actually did pass, the offer was off the table. While the trustees were the appointed decision makers for the college, this scenario more than validated the enormous influence that was exerted by the freeholders. Had the vote been clear cut, the college's main campus may very well be in Wayne today. Or would it?

Trustee Chairman Martini and Trustee Wuester advocated for a suburban site. Some politicians or freeholders must have also initially supported Martini and Wuester and a suburban location for the Wayne site to be offered to the trustees. However, it seemed that both political parties in Wayne, including the mayor, did not want to lose any more tax ratables. They felt that between the land that were losing for the new highways (Routes 80 and 287) and the other non-profits their town was getting, the Passaic County Technical Institute and Wayne Hospital, they did not need another major property to be tax-exempt. This was a very interesting perspective. Not all suburban folks were on the same page in terms of site location. On one hand, you had some trustees arguing for the suburbs while the city politicians, current PCCC students, civil rights groups, the media, and yes, other suburban politicians rallying for a city site. Strange bed fellows, indeed! Miller said he thought a country or up county location would be better for the down county kids. He seemed to imply that only the city kids would attend the county college. He felt an up county location would be good, just not a Wayne up county location. The rest of Wayne's town council echoed Miller's sentiments in advocating for a city site but not for the reasons you might expect such as access to education for city dwellers and reversing the historical trends of poverty. This is an appropriate place to remind the reader that this is a political history study.

To say that the debate to site the county college was complicated is an understatement. Paterson experienced race riots in 1964 and was viewed as an event it never wanted to repeat. Newspapers said that the three main conditions for the August 11, 1964 riots were: poor housing conditions, unemployment, and police brutality. The violence erupted in the city's fourth ward ghettos.²⁵³ As a result of these riots, Paterson applied for several federally funded anti-poverty programs since the black population in Passaic and Paterson almost doubled from 1960 to 1970. County politicians were keenly aware of the racial tensions and some were supportive of placing the college's temporary home in Paterson. The community college was seen by many as an answer to the city's high unemployment problem. The trustees were also aware of the effect race had on the site location of the college as evidenced by the often contentious open public trustee meetings.

While the county college referendum cast a shadow on the founding of the college, it did not personify it. Through several memos that were found in their archives, the state seemed to implicitly support a center city site. Several high ranking state department of education officials eventually became senior members of Passaic County College's administration in the 1970s and choreographed a major expansion of the college's facilities later that decade. The Passaic County College trustees who were involved with the first referendum and the subsequent legal proceedings were certainly aware of the effect race played relevant to the selection of a main campus. Even though the college's first trustee chairman resigned over issues related to placing a main campus in Paterson, the college persisted. Systematically, it overcame each obstacle one at a time and built a first rate

²⁵³ Michael Batelli, "An Anatomy of Riot: Its Start and Finish." *The Paterson Morning Call*. August 17, 1964.

facility that is now the anchor of a once squalid neighborhood. Over the years, the college has added campuses in Wanaque, Passaic, and Wayne (on land near Preakness Hospital.)

Chapter V

Conclusions

When I started researching topics for my dissertation, I was interested in learning more about why community colleges were located where there were and wondered how those decisions were made. After all, community colleges were called “peoples colleges,” and were supposed to meet all the postsecondary educational needs of the entire county. Following the guidelines of the recommendation of the County College Law of 1962, each county embarked on a journey to select one location to accommodate all of post secondary educational needs of an entire county. Hence, I reviewed the literature and found some research that I feel will give some insight into the conclusions that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Research on Community College Student Achievement

While a historical study like this one has not been done before, there were several studies that have previously looked at location as a determining factor. Two studies, Rouse (1995) and Gonzales and Hilmer (2007), investigated the effect community colleges had on the educational attainment of students using national data. In both studies, one of the control factors was proximity to the nearest community college and four year college. Other factors in the studies included: race/ethnicity, test scores, family background, and

average state community college and four year college tuition.²⁵⁴ The studies concluded that community colleges kept some students from transferring to a four year college but that outcome is negated by the greater amount of education by those who otherwise would not have enrolled in college at all.²⁵⁵

American Council of Education scholar, Jerome Karabel, thought that community colleges maintained the already established social classes while contributing to what he termed “educational inflation.”²⁵⁶ Educational inflation meant that an educational diploma or degree that was once important for socioeconomic advancement became less dear as lower socioeconomic groups attained that level of education. Many studies showed the opposite effect and that the rate of socioeconomic advancement had remained relatively stable. If this assumption was valid, we would expect that there would be a tremendous increase in the rate of social mobility in lower classes. This is not the case.

The Peoples Council at Essex County College definitely subscribed to Karabel’s theory on class reproduction. The students and faculty were furious over some of the bureaucracy and red tape they faced that they thought was holding them back. They felt an education should open up doors and were frustrated by society and the current place education held within it. They felt they were controlled by powerful white men in society who were only interested in advancing their wealth and their agendas.

²⁵⁴Duane E. Leigh and Andrew M. Gill, *Do Community Colleges Respond to Local Needs?* (Kalamazoo, MI: The W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2007), 32-3

²⁵⁵*Ibid.*

²⁵⁶Walter Garns, *Financing Community Colleges*. (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1977), 33.

Vincent Tinto (1973) conducted a study titled “Public Junior Colleges and the Substitution Effect in Higher Education.” This was a cross-tabular analysis of over 8,000 Illinois male and female high school graduates of varying ability and social class origins. Some of the students lived in areas with local community colleges while others did not. Tinto found that students from areas without a local community college were more likely to complete a four year college degree upon starting college than those comparable students from locales that had a public community college.²⁵⁷

This was contradictory of the philosophy that was espoused in New Jersey in the 1960s. Proponents of the county colleges argued that students could complete the first two years at a junior college and then transfer to a senior institution. It was believed that the low tuition costs associated with a community college along with the savings from living at home would allow more students to earn a bachelor’s degree. Now that many community colleges have branch and virtual campuses, Tinto’s study should now be revisited to see if it yields similar findings in the twenty-first century.

Other higher education researchers showed that the college’s proximity to students’ homes was correlated to college success. Location was the prevalent reason more students attended community college. Some scholars thought open admissions was more important than location since the institutions admitted students who had not performed well in high school. This was not the case. During the 1950s and 1960s, the ratio of high school graduates who attended college increased to rates of 50 per cent or higher in regions where there had been no public college in the past.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 35.

²⁵⁸ Arthur M. Cohen and Florence B. Brawer, *The American Community College*. 4th ed., (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 16-7.

Hence, the literature on community colleges relevant to campus location was not consistent. No research questioned why the judgments to locate community college campuses were made the way they were and sought to identify who made those choices. No one had ever taken these hypotheses and examined them in a historical case study analysis before this study.

This research sought to answer those questions. It showed how the decisions to site community colleges in four New Jersey counties were made. It illustrated that the community college trustees who were charged with choosing a permanent site for each county's community college were keenly aware of the magnitude of their decision and how it would affect people's lives. It demonstrated that the community college trustees were aware that their decision of where to site the community college would affect access and enrollment for many of the county's black, poor communities.

In three of the four counties, accommodations were made either initially or later on to place a campus location in the inner city. In three cases highlighted in this study, many public forums ended up in shouting matches over where the college should be sited. The media often championed for the college to be located in the inner city where opportunities would be the greatest for those who needed them the most. Hence, this paper explained that the decisions to locate the community college in some New Jersey counties caused a controversy that was often divided along the lines of race and class.

Population Numbers

One of the key factors that trustees and politicians looked at when contemplating sites for the county college was the population predictions. (See Appendix I)

It turns out that all county census projections for Essex, Mercer, and Passaic Counties were too high. 1970 projections were more accurate than the 1980 figures. In the mid-1960s when these forecasts were done, it was probably easier to forecast for the short term for 1970 (less than 10 years) as opposed to the long term (15 plus years into the future for the 1980 estimates). In Essex County, the total population density was the highest of the three counties at 6,784 but it was projected to be 7,763. (See Figure A-4 in Appendix I) These discrepancies greatly affected the forecast for the county college. Of the three counties studied, Essex is the smallest in square miles at 126.21.

In Mercer County, the 1970 forecast for population density was too high by nine persons per square mile while the 1980 forecast exceeded the actual population density by close to 200 people per square mile. (See Figure A-5 in Appendix I). Mercer County is the largest of the three counties at 224.56 square miles. In Passaic County, the estimated population density figure for 1970 surpassed the actual amount by about 61 persons per square mile while the 1980 figure exceeded the actual one by close to 500 people per square mile. (See Figure A-6 in Appendix I). Passaic's land mass is right in between Essex and Mercer Counties at 184.59 square miles. These [now] inaccurate figures were a major deliberation for the trustees when they contemplated site locations. The trustees seriously pondered whether each site had the potential or expansion capability to handle the projected growth of the college which was directly tied to the forecasted census numbers. If these estimated numbers were more accurate, perhaps the main community college campuses would be located in different places today.

Since the research in this study discussed race, it is then appropriate to know the actual black and white population numbers for each town in the time periods discussed in each of the three counties that were investigated in detail [Essex, Mercer, and Passaic]. Tables A-1, A-2, and A-3 in Appendix I show the white, black, and total population figures for Essex, Mercer, and Passaic Counties for 1960 through 1990.

In Table A-1 in Appendix I for Essex County, Newark's black population went from 21% of the total city population in 1960 to 34% in 1970 and soared to 54% by 2010 (racial tipping). Between 1960 and 1970, the black population in the Newark (also known as the Brick City) increased by 50% or a net gain of over 69,000 persons. The gains in Newark's black population were inversely matched by the decline in Newark's white population. In 1960, whites comprised 65% of the city's population; 44% by 1970; and were only 29% by 1990. This is overwhelming evidence that "white flight" did take place. The white population in the Brick City shrank by 37% or approximately 97,000 people between 1960 and 1970. Overall, the city shrunk in population by 32% or about 130,000 people between 1960 and 1990. Hence, the census forecasters were right that the city's population would decrease.

East Orange, another city in Essex County, saw similar results. The black population in East Orange grew by 100% from 1960 to 1970 while the white population diminished by 40% for that same time period. It also "tipped" racially to a black majority by 1970. Orange "tipped" to a black majority in 1980 while Irvington followed in 1990. Essex County, as a whole, was 41 per cent black by 1990. This compares to the 19 per cent black population in Mercer County and the 15 per cent in Passaic County for the same census year. All three cities in Essex County, East Orange, Orange, and Newark, shrank in size in overall population from 1960 to 1990 while the white population in the suburbs remained

flat or exploded [as forecasted]. While these numbers are great, they do not address the poverty or educational levels of those who were left behind.

In Table A-2 in Appendix I for Mercer County, the story was pretty much the same for Trenton as it was in Newark. Its black population was 22% in 1960; 38% in 1970; and was 45% by 1980. The overall black population in Trenton increased by 54% or about 14,000 people between 1960 and 1970. Like Newark, Trenton's loss in white population was inversely proportionate to the gains in the black population. Trenton was 77% white in 1960; 61% in 1970; and 45% by 1980. During the late 60s and early 70s, when the trustees were deciding on a college site, Trenton was still mostly white. It finally "tipped" to a black majority in 1990 with 49% of the city's population. The white population in Trenton was 42% in 1990. The white population in Trenton decreased 27% or by about 24,000 people between 1960 and 1970. Like Essex County, every suburban town in Mercer County either stayed flat or exploded in white growth during the same 30 year period [1960-1990].

Paterson in Passaic County showed a similar race pattern as seen in Table A-3 in Appendix I. The black population for Paterson was 14% in 1960; 27% in 1970; and 34% by 1980. It grew to 36% by 1990 but never "tipped" to a black majority during this 30 year period. The overall black population in Paterson (also known as the Silk City) increased by 81% or about 17,000 people between 1960 and 1970. Like Trenton, Paterson's loss in white population was inversely proportionate to the gains in the black population. Paterson was 85% white in 1960; 72% in 1970; and 50% by 1980. The demographers correctly predicted "white flight" in the Silk City, too. The white population in Paterson decreased by 13% or about 19,000 persons from 1960 to 1970. This was mostly due to a huge

increase in the Latino community who made up close to 23% of the city's population by 1990.

While the forecasted numbers were important elements for the trustees to review, we see now that they were all too high. Passaic and Irvington saw increases in their inhabitants from 1960-1990. Passaic's growth was mainly due to the large influx of Latino families. Paterson also witnessed a huge surge of Latinos during this same time period. While demographers did not predict this phenomenon, the Hispanic community has embraced the community college and all of its programs, from English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) classes to degree programs to continuing education to citizenship courses. In Passaic County, the relationship the Latino community has with the county college is strong and mutually beneficial.

Themes and Alliances

There were several common themes that came up in this research, particularly the stakeholders and their arguments. Several stakeholders formed alliances to strengthen their argument and those will be examined here. People who wanted the college in the city did not always play fair nor did the people who wanted a suburban location always play dirty. The ends didn't always justify the means as this issue over county college site selection was complicated. While there were some racial overtones on both sides, the debate over site selection was more than that. It seems each set of stakeholders had their fervent reasons and were steadfast in their tenacity.

Those who argued for a city location in Passaic, Mercer, and Essex Counties comprised of: local newspapers, civil rights groups such as the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE)

and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), union representatives, Paterson, Trenton and Newark mayors, several state and local politicians, white philanthropists, city businessmen and the chamber of commerce, and some student and faculty groups. While they all supported an urban location for the main campus of the community college, their motivation and reasons varied greatly.

Local newspapers and their editorial boards championed social justice for metropolitans. They teamed up with the local politicians and saw the big picture of what was happening in the cities in the 1960s (white flight and factory closings) and advocated for the “underdogs” who were left behind. CORE, the NAACP, and other civil rights groups joined local black businessmen and advocated for educational opportunities for blacks after generations of racism and discrimination and being treated as second class citizens. It is important to note that CORE and the NAACP were advocating for urban community colleges as early as 1964, long before the assassination of Dr. King. Like civil rights organizations, unions had many members who still lived in the cities and worked in the local plants that permeated the vicinity. Also in this alliance were the mayors of Newark, Trenton, and Paterson. The mayors’ offices wanted to anchor the urban areas with a college to stem the tide of crime and drugs that plagued some of their seedier neighborhoods. They knew they could qualify for Urban Renewal funds to create an institution that would benefit the city in many ways. The mayors also wanted to give hope and opportunity to city folks who had high poverty levels and unemployment rates.

In addition to advocating for their constituents, some state and county politicians favored an urban community college since it was proximal to the largest amount of impoverished people (according to the most recent census) who needed it the most. They also said that it was close to mass transportation and bus routes. Access to the city’s

cultural establishments such as museums, art galleries, libraries, and other colleges was another reason why some politicians supported a city location. A few county freeholders and a handful of congressmen were also brave enough to go on record in support of urban county college locations (to the dismay of some suburban voters).

White philanthropists also campaigned for a city location. They often made alliances with the media in their concern for the poor and downtrodden who desperately needed an education. The philanthropists' reasons were mostly altruistic since they felt it was important to "give back" to the community where they grew up. They cited that it would give hope to people who lived there and reverse the cycle of poverty through education. In Mercer County, a philanthropist provided major financial support to buy the land for the urban college campus. Ferguson, the trustee chair in Essex County and chairman of a Newark based bank, felt strongly that one of the campuses should be in Newark. Similarly, trustee Chair Bowers in Mercer County had many ties to Trenton and excused himself from the meeting before a vote on the permanent site could take place.

Other alliances were formed between civil rights groups and some disobedient student and faculty groups to affirm the selection of the urban campus. In some cases, students boycotted classes or faculty went on strike to stop the acquisition of land for a suburban campus. These groups believed they had to send a message to the college's administration. These rebellious student and faculty groups formed alliances with the local chapter of the NAACP and CORE to strengthen their argument that the only logical place to put a community college was in the city. Local urban chambers of commerce supported a center city site since they felt many businesses could provide students with job and internship opportunities within walking distance of the new institution.

The fear of “de facto” segregation by having segregated institutions was a huge concern for urban campus advocates. This was brought up time and again by the Civil Rights and community groups as well as several city politicians in all three counties. Civil Rights groups wanted integrated institutions. They fought for an end to “separate but equal.” Two campuses meant the black city campus would be inferior to the white suburban one. Their rationale was that K-12 suburban systems were markedly superior to urban ones. The black community feared it would happen at the community college level as well.

The black community and their advocates argued that the county college should be in the city to do the most good. I would argue that people who wanted a city location felt “oppressed” and discriminated against in all aspects of life, particularly education. Feeling like second class citizens, they wanted an education so they could be “first” class citizens like their white suburban brethren. Like I stated in the Introduction, city folks were keenly aware of what the suburbs had and they wanted those same resources in their backyard. Freire wrote in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,

The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion.²⁵⁹

In the 1960s, the black community was no longer fearful. They were speaking up. They wanted a community college to empower themselves and their community. They wanted

²⁵⁹ Paolo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th ed. (New York: Continuum International, 2002), 47.

to be complete, as Freire so aptly noted. Encouraged by Civil Rights activism and legislation, they went to public meetings and spoke up that the college should be located in the city. They advocated for bringing suburban excellence standards to the city neighborhoods so they could finally benefit after decades of neglect and being “oppressed.”

Why did people care where they put the community colleges? People wanted what is best for their children. Period. American parents view education for their children as the ticket to a better life than they had. All people, all races, all religions want their children to get ahead and be successful in life. It’s about access. It’s about leveling the playing field. It’s about getting what I deserve since I pay taxes, my children have every right to attend college as does yours.

Conversely, there were many reasons suburban politicians and parents cited against having an urban community college. They were: crime-ridden, unsafe neighborhoods that were prone to violence and riots, congested areas with smog and the lack of space to study, play, and recreate (athletic fields). Other reasons were the high cost of land acquisition plus the construction of high rise parking decks. Moreover, cities already had an abundance of tax-exempt lots and could not afford to lose any more tax ratable income.

I showed that the alliances and stakeholders who advocated for a suburban site were: suburban teachers and principal groups, some student groups, some freeholders, some county college trustee chairmen, and several citizens groups who formed as a response to several pro-city site groups. The teachers and principals in some counties went on record of endorsing a suburban site stating that it would allow for a “state of the art facility that would be first-rate for our students.” Some student groups were also interviewed who attended the temporary city campus in Trenton and said they would prefer a suburban site. This differed noticeably from the Essex County student and faculty groups who opposed

the possible suburban expansion into Verona. Several county freeholders pledged their allegiance to a suburban site because they referenced the state's suggested guidelines of 100 acres for county colleges but that they would accept a site as few as 45 acres. Some local politicians also pointed out that the recommendation that it should also be near the geographic center of the county and not necessarily near the most populous areas according to the most recent census. They also cited the census projections that called for the cities to shrink dramatically and the suburbs to explode.

We saw how county college trustee chairmen were viewed as pro-suburban in their lack of support for a city site. They were often judged by what they did not say. Some of them constantly questioned the money that would be spent for an urban campus. Other trustee chairmen were targeted by civil rights groups as "pro-suburb" when they backed a two campus system. Lastly, citizens groups advocating the suburbs sprung up in response to several pro-city site factions. They claimed that a pristine location amidst the trees would make an ideal place to study for their children which was far away from the smog and pollution of the city. Another factor that was not explicitly pro-suburb but was implicit was the consultant reports. By and large, these documents mostly showed that suburban land costs were cheaper per acre and construction prices would be lower in the suburbs since it would not entail high-rise facilities. These reports also noted that the suburban sites often contained plenty of acreage for parking and athletic fields. These reports just looked at numbers and never considered the social justice issues that could be addressed by placing the college in the city.

On the other hand, there were many reasons against a suburban county college location. The consultant reports often mentioned that a suburban location often had no public utilities and they would have to be brought in at substantial additional costs. City

supporters questioned why anyone would build a campus in a town that only contained less than 10 percent of the county's population. Other motivations against a suburban setting were: a lack of mass transportation or established bus routes to get the urban students back and forth to class, concern over the academic majors offered (will they appeal to urban students?) and lastly, the issue of adjustment surfaced. Would the urban students fit in at the suburban campus? Would they feel comfortable?

All this controversy was taking place while the elected freeholders tried very hard to keep all the voters in the entire county happy...a tough balancing act. After all, it was often the politicians and the freeholders who wanted to use a referendum to garner support for a county college. Unlike the state politicians who crafted the County College Law, they viewed the referendum as a positive tool. A referendum, as described in the 1962 County College Law, could only be authorized if enough people objected to it. Using the law's definition of referendum, it was seen as a negative issue.

We discussed that the availability and cost of land were two major factors when the trustees were contemplating site locations. In Paterson and Newark, Urban Renewal funds were used to finance the site acquisition. Similarly in Mercer County, the Green Acres initiative was the catalyst to buy land that would eventually house the West Windsor campus. Lastly, in Middlesex County, cost was the sole factor in deciding the site. The federal government deeded the land to the freeholders of Middlesex County at no cost for the express use as a community college.

The whole approach to selecting a county college as outlined in the County College Law of 1962 where one location would accommodate the access and educational needs of an entire county was flawed from the start. It did not work and by its very structure, was meant to create winners and losers. Also, the state guideline stipulating 100 acres was

preferable for a community college (45 acres minimum) was another main reason why county colleges were chosen where they were. This suggestion automatically favored the suburbs and put the cities at a disadvantage. The state eventually relaxed its 45 acre minimum rule but administration at Mercer said it would not change its mind about West Windsor.

I found it interesting that some cities and towns brazenly promoted the community college while others did not. Obviously, Newark, Paterson, and Trenton advocated loudly that they wanted the community college in their cities. But not all towns did. I came across no documentation that indicated ordinary citizens or town politicians wanted a community college in West Windsor or Verona. The Citizens Group of 1000 in Mercer County that advocated for a community college in West Windsor was made up of folks from all the suburban towns in Mercer County, not just West Windsor. I found the same pattern in Verona. Even with all the controversy in the press, no group of citizens or town politicians spoke up and said, “Yes, we want the community college here.” It was always the freeholders and independent consultants who said, “this town would be an ideal location.” This may have to do with the fact that the land in Verona and West Windsor was already off the tax rolls.

This was markedly different than what took place in West Orange and Wayne. In those towns, citizens, businessmen, and local politicians all banded together to say “no” to a community college in their town. Both towns cited that they did not want any more land to come off the tax rolls. Wayne also said it was because their road system could not handle any extra traffic. My point is this: When a town wanted or did not want a community college, their voices were made loud and clear to the public. Further proof of a town’s

resolve about a county college is Clifton's majority of negative votes in the 1969 county-wide referendum that they initiated in Passaic County.

The outcome on community college site in three of the four counties in this study produced neither winners nor losers. Compromise was king. The town that got the main campus never celebrated and boasted of their victory for they knew some folks in other towns were still licking their wounds. This was clearly the sentiment in Trenton from the time West Windsor was announced until the James Kerney Center was founded. The town not selected for the main campus eventually got a satellite or smaller site of their own to serve that part of the county. While many stakeholders had the community's best interests in mind, some could only think of their own.

Limitations and Further Study

While this study was a document analysis, I included an excerpt of an interview I had with former mayor of Paterson, Pat Kramer. I feel that interviews would have helped to broaden the story and reveal details that were not written in a newspaper article or in the minutes of a Board of Trustee meeting. Additional studies of this topic would focus on other counties in New Jersey and around nation that may have encountered the urban-suburban conundrum when deciding a main campus for their community college.

Another recommendation I have for further study is the creation of an oral history archive on the founding of community colleges in New Jersey. The youngest faculty and staff who were employed at the colleges in the late 1960s and early 1970s are now approaching their mid sixties. Many are well into their seventh decade of life. Another group that would be important to interview would be the students, trustees, and community

group members who were actively involved in the debate over where to locate the county colleges. Many of them should be still alive to contribute to this invaluable body of work.

Summary

Before starting this dissertation I thought race may have been somewhat involved as a factor when the decisions were made about the locations of the community colleges. After all, this is New Jersey! We are one of the most divided states in the union when it comes to K-12 public education. I had no idea to the extent of the story that I would uncover. In three of the four counties I researched, I have proven that the community college trustees who were charged with choosing a permanent site for their county's community college were keenly aware of the magnitude of their decision and how it would affect people's lives. They knew that where they located the college would affect access for many of the city's black population. Each county college trustee board wrestled with this complex issue and came to a consensus regarding site selection. In the end, no one trustee board got everything they wanted and compromise always prevailed.

This research looked at events that happened over 40 years ago in the Civil Rights era. A lot has changed in terms of educational attainment and access for minorities groups since then. But way more needs to be done. Today, if you drive around this great and wonderfully diverse Garden State, you will see inner-city main community college campuses in Newark and Paterson. You will also see the James Kerney Center in downtown Trenton. Each campus founding was controversial and steeped in a racial divide that engulfed the entire county. From the outside, these buildings look no different from the ones that surround them, blending nicely into metropolitan oblivion. The profound difference is the work that is done on the inside which is resurrecting hope and transforming lives in the communities they serve.

Appendix I

Table A-1-Census Figures for Essex County for 1960-1990²⁶⁰

	1960 white	1960 black	1960 total	1970 white	1970 black	1970 total	1980 white	1980 black	1980 total	1990 white	1990 black	1990 total
<u>Municipalities</u>												
<u>City</u>												
Newark	265,889	138,035	405,220	168,382	207,458	382,417	101,417	191,745	329,248	78,771	160,885	275,221
East Orange	57,839	19,220	77,259	34,657	40,099	75,471	11,065	64,626	77,690	5,301	66,157	73,552
Orange	27,452	8,269	35,789	20,631	11,630	32,566	12,084	17,840	31,136	7,169	21,045	29,925
<u>Town</u>												
Irvington	59,237	79	59,379	57,165	2,345	59,743	34,268	23,397	61,493	13,687	42,760	61,018
Bloomfield	51,112	681	51,867	50,837	914	52,059	45,079	1,258	47,792	40,130	1,937	45,061
Montclair	32,774	10,312	43,129	31,792	11,932	44,043	26,358	11,057	38,321	24,713	11,697	37,729
West Orange	39,586	271	39,895	42,945	471	43,715	37,400	967	39,510	34,269	2,240	39,103
Belleville	34,240	745	35,005	33,610	856	34,643	33,263	815	35,367	29,447	1,254	34,213
Nutley	29,032	433	29,513	31,380	498	32,099	27,758	483	28,998	25,130	478	27,090
<u>Township</u>												
Maplewood	23,765	196	23,977	24,429	428	24,932	21,636	1,003	22,950	18,177	2,578	21,652

²⁶⁰1960-1990 data from: <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.
Accessed on May 5, 2013.

Livingston	23,005	92	23,124	29,907	96	30,127	26,847	153	28,040	23,749	288	26,609
Millburn	18,591	184	18,799	21,066	180	21,307	18,996	119	19,543	17,436	224	18,630
Cedar Grove	14,011	557	14,603	14,764	725	15,582	11,867	413	12,600	11,100	270	12,053
Caldwell^	3,298	6	3,310	6,697	8	6,731	7,832	17	7,987	7,345	16	7,615

Borough

Verona	13,421	336	13,782	14,781	235	15,067	13,667	226	14,166	12,920	239	13,597
Glen Ridge	8,227	87	8,322	8,385	102	8,518	7,516	135	7,855	6,576	226	7,076
West Caldwell	8,272	30	8,314	11,783	33	11,887	11,102	34	11,407	9,974	53	10,422
Caldwell	6,837	88	6,942	8,557	100	8,719	7,432	90	7,624	7,166	122	7,549
North Caldwell	3,733	425	4,163	5,974	414	6,425	5,212	427	5,832	5,690	682	6,706
Roseland	2,801	1	2,804	4,432	7	4,453	5,193	21	5,330	4,634	22	4,487
Essex Fells	2152	21	2,174	2,513	22	2,541	2,323	21	2,363	2,080	25	2,139

Village

South Orange	15,487	669	16,175	16,300	583	16,971	13,878	1,593	15,864	12,560	3,064	16,390
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Totals	692,903	180,737	923,545	640,987	267,204	932,526	482,193	316,440	851,116	398,024	316,262	778,206
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^Caldwell Township changed its name to Fairfield Township in November 1963.

Table A-2
Census Figures for Mercer County for 1960-1990²⁶¹

	1960 white	1960 black	1960 total	1970 white	1970 black	1970 total	1980 white	1980 black	1980 total	1990 white	1990 black	1990 total
<u>City</u>												
Trenton	88,315	25,638	114,167	64,305	39,671	104,638	45,087	41,860	92,124	37,392	43,689	88,675
<u>Township</u>												
East Windsor	1,931	361	2,298	11,199	410	11,736	19,057	1,178	21,041	19,307	1,439	22,353
Ewing	24,868	1,748	26,628	29,675	3,054	32,831	29,387	4,774	34,842	26,908	6,243	34,185
Hamilton	63,206	1,780	65,035	76,975	2,468	79,609	78,619	3,030	82,801	79,594	4,413	86,553
Hopewell	7,566	244	7,818	9,756	241	10,030	10,614	111	10,893	10,871	485	11,590
Lawrence	12,662	1,036	13,665	18,292	1,179	19,567	17,615	1,758	19,724	22,326	2,073	25,787
Princeton	9,446	820	10,411	12,652	633	13,651	11,952	1,044	13,683	11,095	908	13,198
Washington West	2,016	136	2,156	3,135	168	3,311	3,362	62	3,487	5,543	134	5,815
Windsor	3,783	185	4,016	6,215	110	6,431	7,972	119	8,542	13,121	414	16,021
<u>Borough</u>												
Hightstown	3,681	630	4,317	4,911	484	5,431	3,994	458	4,581	4,281	546	5,126
Hopewell	1863	64	1,928	2,190	75	2,271	1,938	40	2,001	1,889	54	1,968
Pennington	1,938	124	2,063	2,072	75	2,151	2,034	67	2,109	2,414	61	2,537
Princeton	10,790	948	11,890	10,825	1,234	12,311	10,466	1,044	12,035	9,915	1,022	12,016
Totals	232,065	33,714	266,392	239,550	49,802	304,116	242,097	55,545	307,863	244,656	61,481	325,824

²⁶¹ 1960-1990 data from: <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>. Accessed on May 5, 2013.

Table A-3
Census Figures for Passaic County for 1960-1990²⁶²

PASSAIC COUNTY	1960 white	1960 black	1960 total	1970 white	1970 black	1970 total	1980 white	1980 Black	1980 total	1990 white	1990 black	1990 total
Bloomingtondale	5,288	4	5,293	7,762	12	7,797	7,759	13	7,867	7,401	30	7,530
Clifton	81,881	126	82,084	81,953	267	82,437	72,670	360	74,388	66,546	1,005	71,742
Haledon	6,106	52	6,161	6,691	49	6,767	6,422	95	6,607	6,411	252	6,951
Hawthorne	17,719	4	17,735	19,131	13	19,173	18,071	10	18,200	16,731	72	17,084
Little Falls	9,713	15	9,730	11,670	22	11,727	11,288	50	18,200	16,731	72	17,084
North Haledon	6,015	4	6,026	7,600	1	7,614	7,931	183	8,177	7,729	97	7,987
Passaic	49,203	4,661	53,963	44,529	9,861	55,124	32,210	10,369	52,463	26,304	11,955	58,041
Paterson	122,310	21,138	143,663	103,777	38,919	144,824	70,203	47,091	137,970	57,977	50,729	140,891
Pompton Lakes	9,428	7	9,445	11,349	17	11,397	10,558	16	10,660	10,247	57	10,539
Prospect Park	5,200	0	5,201	5,123	19	5,176	4,916	46	5,142	4,467	283	5,053
Ringwood	3,780	392	4,182	10,016	310	10,393	12,088	252	12,625	12,043	227	12,623
Totowa	10,754	135	10,897	11,381	176	11,580	11,230	131	11,488	9,854	120	10,177
Wanaque	7,062	61	7,126	8,542	65	8,636	9,764	66	10,025	9,246	139	9,711
Wayne	29,254	63	29,353	48,764	193	49,141	45,353	243	46,474	44,675	499	47,025
West Milford	8,032	125	8,157	17,011	259	17,304	22,261	205	22,750	24,717	262	25,430
W. Paterson *	7,589	12	7,602	11,634	16	11,692	11,072	41	11,293	10,423	156	10,982
Totals	379,334	26,799	406,618	324,980	50,199	460,782	353,796	59,171	447,585	325,530	66,077	453,060

*changed its name to Woodland Park on January 1, 2009

²⁶² 1960-1990 data from: <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>. Accessed on May 5, 2013.

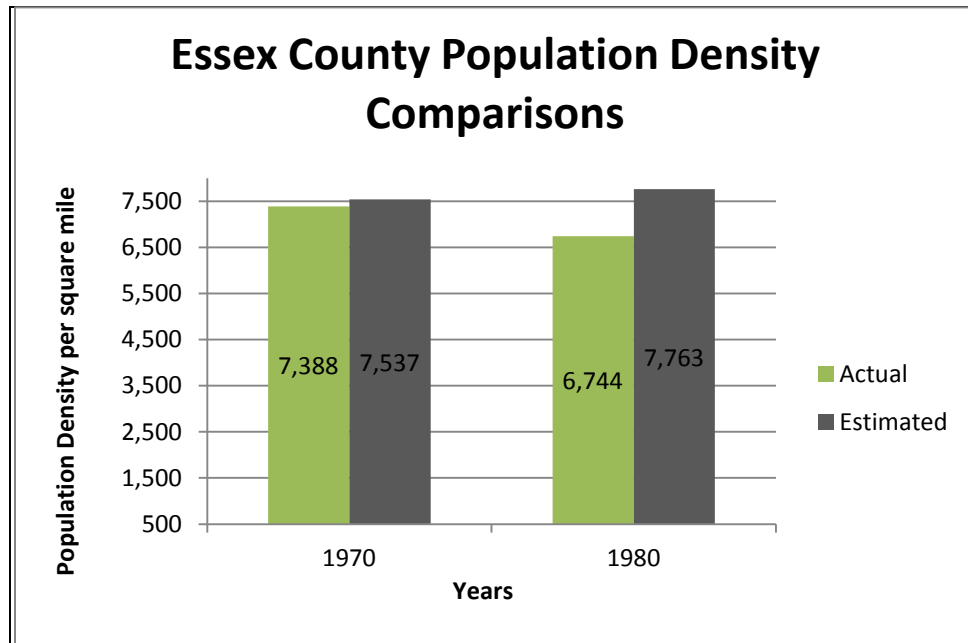


Figure A-4

Chart of Essex County Population Density Comparisons 1970-80

This chart compares the estimated population density figures for Essex County in 1970 and 1980 in Table 2-2 versus the actual numbers reported by the United States Census in Table A-1 in Appendix I.²⁶³

The land area of Essex County is 126.21 square miles.

²⁶³ Actual census data for 1970 and 1980 taken from:
<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html> Accessed March 29, 2013.

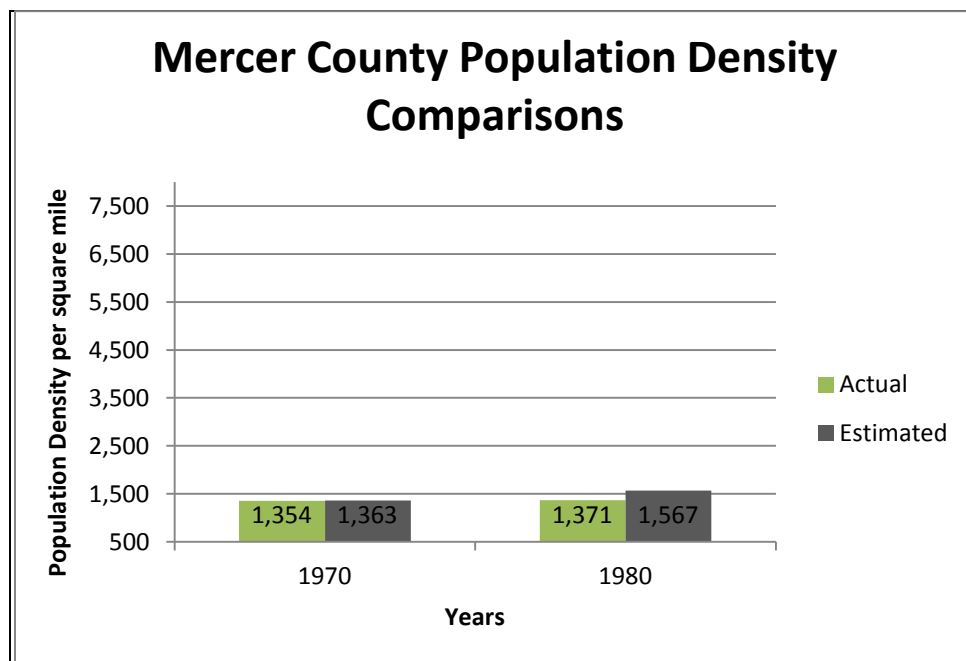


Figure A-5
Chart of Mercer County Population Density Comparisons 1970-80

This chart compares the estimated population density figures for Mercer County in 1970 and 1980 in Table 3-9 versus the actual numbers reported by the United States Census in Table A-2 in Appendix I.²⁶⁴

The land area of Mercer County is 224.56 square miles.

²⁶⁴ Actual census data for 1970 and 1980 taken from:
<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html> Accessed March 29, 2013.

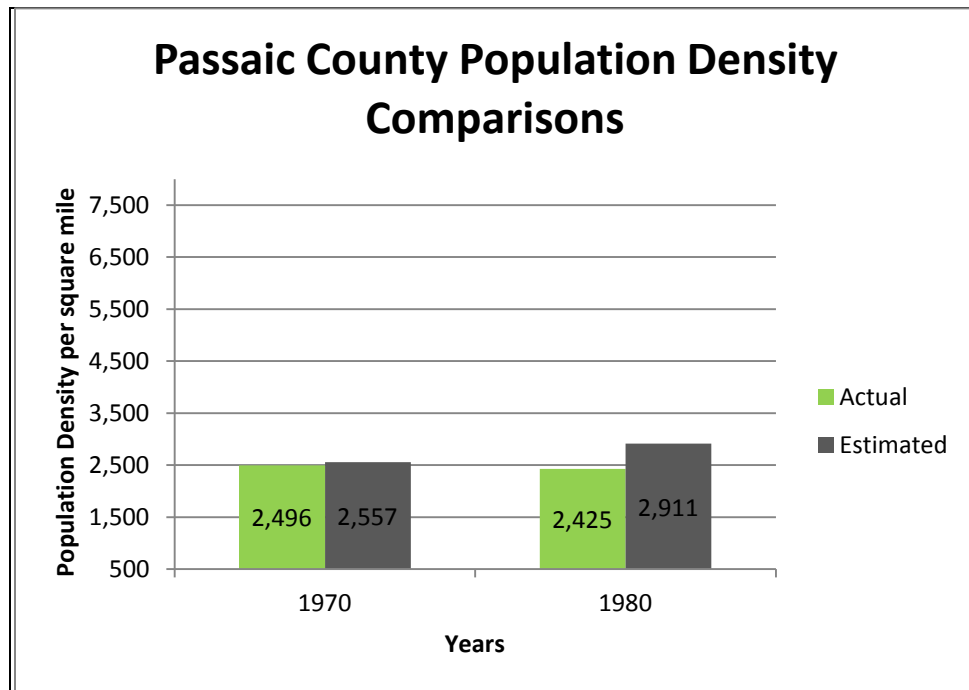


Figure A-6

Chart of Passaic County Population Density Comparisons 1970-80

This chart compares the estimated population density figures for Passaic County in 1970 and 1980 in Table 4-4 versus the actual numbers reported by the United States Census in Table A-3 in Appendix I.²⁶⁵

The land area of Passaic County is 184.59 square miles.

²⁶⁵ Actual census data for 1970 and 1980 taken from:
<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html> Accessed March 29, 2013.

Appendix II

The New Jersey County College Law of 1962

An act concerning the establishment and operation of county colleges and providing for the method of financing and raising the necessary funds therefore.

Be it enacted by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. As used in this act:

- (a) "County college" means an education institution established or to be established by one or more counties, offering programs of instruction, extending not more than 2 years beyond the high school, which may include but need not be limited to specialized or comprehensive curriculums, including college credit transfer courses, terminal courses in the liberal arts and sciences, and technical institute type programs.
- (b) "State board" means the State Board of Education.
- (c) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Education.
- (d) "Capital outlay expense" means those funds devoted to or required for the acquisition, landscaping or improvement of land; the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, improvement, remodeling, alteration, addition or enlargement of buildings or other structures; and the purchase of furniture, apparatus and other equipment.
- (e) "Operation expense" means those funds devoted to or required for the regular or ordinary expenses of the college, including administrative, maintenance and salary expenses but excluding capital outlay expenses.
- (f) "Local Bond Law" means the Local Bond Law of Title 40A of the New Jersey Statutes.

2. When the board of chosen freeholders of one or more counties, after study and investigation, shall deem it advisable for such county or counties to establish a county college, such board or boards of county freeholders may petition the State board for permission to establish and operate a county college. A report shall be attached to such petition and shall include information on the higher educational needs of the county or counties, a description of the proposed county college, the proposed curriculum, an estimate of the cost of establishing and maintaining such county college, and any other information or data deemed pertinent.

Upon receipt of such petition by the State board, it shall be referred to the commissioner who shall make an independent study as to the higher educational needs of the county or counties, the necessity or advisability of establishing such county college, and whether the county or counties could, with the State aid provided for in this act, financially support such college. The commissioner shall submit a report containing his conclusions to the State board and to the petitioning board or boards of chosen freeholders.

The State board, after studying both the petition of the board or boards of chosen freeholders and the report of the commissioner, shall determine whether there is a need for such college and whether the county or counties have the financial capacity to support such college. If the State board finds such a need to exist and further finds that establishing and maintaining such college is financially feasible, it shall approve the petition and shall so notify the board or boards of chosen freeholders.

3. Whenever the board or boards of chosen freeholders receive notification that the State board approves the establishment of a county college, each participating board may provide by resolution for the establishment of a county college in accordance with the provisions of this act and the regulations of the State board. Prior to the final passage of

said resolution, the board shall have published, in full, in a newspaper circulating in the county, the resolution together with the time and place of a public hearing to be had upon said resolution. Said publication shall be at least 10 days prior to the time fixed for the public hearing.

Within 5 days after passage, the resolution shall be published in full in a newspaper circulating in the county and a copy of said resolution shall be filed for public inspection with the clerk of the board of chosen freeholders and with the clerk of each municipality in said county.

The resolution shall become effective in said count 45 days after passage unless there is filed with the county clerk within said 45 days, a petition requesting a referendum in said county signed by either 5% or 10,000 of the registered voters of said county, whichever is lesser, or such a petition authorized by the governing body of a municipality or municipalities representing in total at least 15% of the population of said county. If such a petition is so filed, the proposal for the establishment of a county college shall be submitted to the registered voters of said county at the next general election.

Where a county college is to established by more than one county, similar resolutions authorizing the establishment of such county college shall be passed by the board of chosen freeholders in each participating county. If a petition such as is described above is filed in one or more said participating counties, then the proposal for the establishment of a county college shall be submitted to the registered voters of the county or counties in which such a petition or petitions are filed.

The county clerk of each participating county shall notify the commissioner and the board of chosen freeholders of each other participating county upon the elapse of 45 days after the passage of the resolution in said county whether the question of the establishment of a

county college is to be submitted to the registered voters of said county at the next general election.

4. If a proposal for the establishment of a county college is to be submitted to the registered voters of the county, the county clerk shall have published at least 10 days before said general election notice thereof in a newspaper circulating in the county and the county clerk shall have printed or cause to be printed on the official ballot to be used at such general election the following: If you favor the proposition printed below, make a cross (X), plus (+), or check (/) in the square opposite the word “yes.” If you are opposed thereto, make a cross (X), plus (+), or check (/) in the square opposite the word “no.”

Shall a county college be established pursuant to “An act concerning the establishment and operation of county colleges and providing for the method of financing and raising the necessary funds therefore.” be approved?

_____ YES _____ NO

If a county college is to be established in one county, the name of the county, and if it is to be established in more than one county, the names of the counties, should be inserted in the appropriate blank of said question.

In any county in which voting g machines are used, the question shall be placed upon the official ballots to be used upon the voting machines without the foregoing instructions to the voters and shall be voted upon by the use of such machines without marking as aforesaid. If the question of the establishment of a county college is submitted to the

people of the county, that county clerk shall send notice of the results of said election to the commissioner and the board of chosen freeholders of each of the participating counties.

5. That said election the proposal for the establishment of the county college is approved by a majority of all the votes cast both for and against said question in the county, then the board of chosen freeholders shall proceed to establish a county college.

Where the county college is to be established by more than one county, then the boards of chosen freeholders of the participating counties shall not establish a county college until the commissioner notifies said boards that a similar resolution of the board of chosen freeholders in each participating county has become effective upon the elapse of the 45-day period or the proposal for the establishment of a county college has been approved by a majority of the registered voters of said county at a general election.

6. If a majority of the votes in a county are cast against a proposal for the establishment of a county college, the board of chosen freeholders of such county may not establish a county college unless thereafter the board:

(a) Submits a petition to the State board in accordance with the provisions of section 2 of this act, and

(b) Submits a proposal for the establishment of a county college at a general election and has it approved by a majority of the votes of the county voting thereon.

The board of chosen freeholders shall not resubmit a proposal which has been defeated to the voters of the county before the third general election thereafter, however, an alternate proposal may be submitted at any general election.

7. The State board shall establish rules and regulations governing:

- (a) The establishment of county colleges; and
- (b) The operation of county colleges which shall include but need not be limited to:
 - (1) accounting systems, auditing and other financial controls,
 - (2) determining tuition rates,
 - (3) attendance of nonresident pupils,
 - (4) standards for granting diplomas, certificates or degrees, and
 - (5) minimum qualifications for professional staff members.

8. For each county college there shall be a board of trustees, consisting of the county superintendent of schools and 8 persons to be appointed by the director of the board of chosen freeholders with the advice and consent of that board.

When a county college is established by more than one county the board of trustees shall be increased by 2 members for each additional participating county. The membership of the board of trustees shall be apportioned by the commissioner among the several counties as nearly as may be according to the number of inhabitants in each county as shown by the last Federal census, officially promulgated in this State. Each apportionment shall continue in effect until a reapportionment shall become necessary by reason of the official promulgation of the next Federal census or the enlargement of the board by the admission of one or more additional counties as provided for in section 24 of this act. Each county shall be entitled to have at least one member and the county superintendent of the schools of said county on the board of trustees.

9. Appointed members of the board of trustees shall be citizens of the United States who have been residents of the county appointing them for a period of 4 years prior to said appointment. The term of office of appointed members, except for

the first appointments, shall be for 4 years. Each member shall serve until his successor shall have been appointed and qualified.

Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment for the remainder of the unexpired term. Members shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses.

In the case of a county college established by one county, the term of office of members initially appointed to the board of trustees shall be as follows: 2 persons each shall receive: terms of 1 year, 2 terms of 2 years, 2 terms of 3 years and 2 terms of 4 years.

In the case of a county college established by more than one county, the commissioner shall fix the terms of the members initially appointed to the board of trustees so that as nearly as possible, 1/4 of the appointed members will receive terms of 4 years, 1/4 terms of 3 years, 1/4 terms of Z. years and the remainder terms of 1 year. Such terms shall be allocated by the commissioner among the participating counties, in accordance with the number of members on the board of trustees appointed to each county, starting with the terms of 4 years, by allocating one of such terms to each of the participating counties in alphabetical order of the names of such counties, and continuing, still in such order, with the terms of 3 years, the terms of Z. years and the terms of 1 year.

Members initially appointed to the board may serve from the time of their respective appointments, but the term of such office shall be deemed to commence as of November 1 of the year in which the appointment was made.

10. The board of trustees of a county college shall organize annually on the first Monday in November by the election of a chairman, vice -chairman and such other officers as the board shall determine.

11. The board of trustees shall be a body corporate and shall be known as the "Board of Trustees of (here insert the name of the county college).

The board of trustees, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the State board, shall have custody of and be responsible for the property of the college and shall be responsible for the management and control of said college. The board shall make an annual report in the manner prescribed by the State board to the commissioner and to the board of chosen freeholders of each participating county.

12. For the effectuation of the purposes of this act, the board of trustees of a county college, in addition to such other powers expressly granted to it by this act and subject to the rules and regulations of the State board, is hereby granted the following powers:

- (a) To adopt or change the name of the county college;
- (b) To adopt and use a corporate seal;
- (c) To sue and be sued;
- (d) To determine the educational curriculum and program of the college;
- (e) To appoint and fix the compensation and term of office of a president of the college who shall be the executive officer of the college and an ex officio member of the board of trustees;
- (f) To appoint, upon nomination of the president, members of the administrative and teaching staffs and fix their compensation and terms of employment subject to the provisions of section 13 of this act;

- (g) To appoint or employ such other officers, agents and employees as maybe required to carry out the provisions of this act and to fix and determine their qualifications, duties, compensation, terms of office and all other conditions and terms of employment and retention;
- (h) To fix and determine tuition rates and other fees to be paid be students;
- (i) To grant diplomas, certificates or degrees;
- (j) To enter into contracts and agreements with the State or any of its political subdivisions or with the United States, or with any public body, department or other agency of the State or the United States or with any individual firm or corporation which are deemed necessary or advisable by the board for carrying out the provisions of this act;
- (k) To accept from any government or governmental department, agency or other public or private body or from any other source grants or contributions of money or property which the board may use for or in aid of any of its purposes;
- (l) To acquire (by gift, purchase, condemnation or otherwise), own, lease, use and operate property, whether real, personal or mixed, or any interest there in, which is necessary or desirable for college purposes;
- (m) To determine that any property owned by the county college is no longer necessary for college purposes and to sell the same at such price and in such manner and upon such terms and conditions as shall be established by the State board;
- (n) To exercise the right of eminent domain pursuant to the provisions of Title 20 of the Revised Statutes to acquire any property or interest therein;
- (o) To make and promulgate such rules and regulations, not inconsistent with the provisions of this act or with the rules and regulations of the State board, that are

necessary and proper for the administration and operation of a county college and to implement the provisions of this act; and

(p) To exercise all other powers not inconsistent with the provisions of this act or with the rules and regulations of the State board which may be reasonably necessary or incidental to the establishment, maintenance and operation of a county college.

13. The teaching staff employees and administrative officers other than the president of the county college are hereby held to possess all the rights and privileges of teachers employed by local boards of education. The president and teaching staff members shall be eligible for membership in the Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund.

For the benefit of its other officers and employees, the county college, as a public agency, may elect to participate in the Public Employees' Retirement System.

14. Counties, municipalities, school districts or special schools may sell, give or lease any of their property to the board of trustees of a county college pursuant to the rules and regulations of the State board.

15. Each county college shall have a board of school estimate. In the case of a county college established by one county, such board shall consist of the chairman of the board of chosen freeholders, 2 members of the board of chosen freeholders appointed by that board and 2 members of the board of trustees appointed by that board. In the case of a county college established by more than one county, such board shall consist of the chairman of the board of chosen freeholders from each participating county, one member of the board of chosen freeholders from each participating county appointed by that board and one member of the board

of trustees from each participating county appointed by that board.

16. Appointments to the board of school estimate shall be made annually on or before December 1 and any vacancy in the board's membership shall be filled by the board which originally appointed the members. The secretary of the board of trustees shall be the secretary of the board of school estimate but shall receive no additional compensation therefore.

The board of school estimate shall fix and determine the amount of money necessary to be appropriated for use of the county college for the operation and capital outlay expenses for the school year, exclusive of the amount to be received from the State and other sources.

17. On or before February 1 in each year, the board of trustees of the county college shall prepare and deliver to each member of the board of school estimate an itemized statement of the amount of money estimated to be necessary for the operation and capital outlay expenses for the ensuing year.

Between February 1 and February 15 of each year, the board of school estimate shall fix and determine the amount of money necessary for the operation and capital outlay expenses of the college for the ensuing year, exclusive of the amount to be received from the State and from other sources

The board of school estimate shall, on or before February 15 of each year, make a certificate of such amount signed by at least a majority of its members. Copies thereof shall be delivered to the commissioner, to the board of trustees of the college and to each participating board of chosen freeholders.

In the case of a county college established by more than one county, the amount to be raised for the annual operation and capital outlay expenses shall be apportioned among the participating counties upon the basis of appropriation valuations, as defined in section 54:4-49 of the Revised Statutes. In such case, the certificate of the board of school estimate shall certify the proportioned part of the total to be raised by each participating county.

18. The board of chosen freeholders shall, upon receipt of the certificate, appropriate the amount of the operation expenses certified therein, in the same manner as other appropriations are made by said board and the amount shall be assessed, levied and collected in the same manner as moneys appropriated for other purposes in the counties are appropriated, levied and collected.

19. The board of chosen freeholders shall, upon receipt of the certificate, appropriate the amount of the capital outlay expenses certified therein by either:

- (a) The method provided for in section 18 of this act; or
- (b) An ordinance authorizing the borrowing of such amount and securing the repayment thereof, together with the interest thereon, by the issuance of bonds in the name of the county. The bonds so issued shall be designated "county college bonds. 11 They shall be issued and sold pursuant to the Local Bond Law. No county shall issue such bonds if the amount thereof together with the amount of prior outstanding county college bonds shall exceed an amount equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% of the equalized valuation of property in said county unless such bond issue shall first have been approved by the commissioner and the Division of Local Government.

20. If the board of trustees shall determine that it is necessary in any school year to raise money in addition to the amount in its annual budget for such year for:

(1) current expenses for the operation and maintenance of the college when the amount necessary therefore was underestimated in the budget;

(2.) repair or utilization of property destroyed or made unsuitable by accident or other unforeseen cause; or

(3) meeting emergencies arising since the preparation of such budget; the board shall prepare and deliver to each member of the board of school estimate a statement of the amount of money determined to be necessary therefore. The board of school estimate shall meet within a reasonable time after the delivery of the statement and fix and determine the amount necessary for such purpose or purposes. In the case of a county college established by more than one county, the board shall apportion upon the basis of the appropriation valuations as defined in section 54:4-49 of the Revised Statutes, such amount among the participating counties. The board shall then certify the amount so determined and apportioned to the commissioner, the board of trustees of the college and to each participating board of chosen freeholders.

The board of chosen freeholder~, upon receipt of such certificate, shall appropriate the amount certified therein and shall raise such amount in. the manner provided for by sections 18 and 19 of this act.

2.1. Notwithstanding the time limitations specified in section 17 of this act, during the calendar year in which the board or boards of chosen freeholders first establish a county college, the board of trustees of the county college may prepare and deliver to the board of school estimate of the college an estimate of the amount necessary to finance the county college until the first regular budget is adopted and available.

The board of school estimate shall meet within a reasonable time after the delivery of said estimate and shall fix and determine the amount necessary to so finance the county

college and, if more than one county participated in establishing the county college, shall apportion said amount upon the basis of apportionment valuations as defined in section 54:4-49 of the Revised Statutes.

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