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Interdisciplinary Studies: American City
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Remembering the Controversy of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike: Politics, Rhetoric and Visions of Progress

Intro: Highways and History

"Well it's a long way to Richmond rollin' north on 95
With a redhead ridin' shotgun and a pistol by my side
Tearin' down that highway like a modern-day Bonnie and Clyde."[1]

It is mildly ironic that this project began on a bus. It was my second bus tour of Richmond with Dr. John Moeser and it would eventually prove to be the most influential of my college career. During this tour, Dr. Moeser encouraged my undergraduate research team to explore the history of the Jackson Ward neighborhood for a documentary project on gentrification. We soon realized that the process of gentrification usually begins with a process of disinvestment by social, political, and economic forces. This process soon began to seem like the most important aspect of the story of Jackson Ward and the issue of gentrification became more of a denouement.

The lines at the top of the page are from a song called "Modern Day Bonnie and Clyde." It is a tribute the highway as pop culture icon and open pathway for escape. Of course, this is not the most famous highway reference in pop culture, but it seems significant that this one mentions the city of Richmond. While the highway is most often portrayed as an abstract metaphor for movement ("life is a highway," "endless highway") this song speaks of the highway in terms of the destination of the trip rather than merely the experience of the drive. Travis Tritt gives an appreciated shout out to a city that has long since fallen from the forefront of the nation's attention.

[1] <http://www.sing365.com/music/lyric.nsf/modern-day-bonnie-and-clyde-lyrics-travis-tritt/dc0553c6b2c9ad4b48256b73002f0b65>. Accessed via Google search for "Modern day bonnie and clyde." 4.20.2011.

Because of its unique connection to both Richmond and Interstate 95, this song played during the introduction to the final documentary on Jackson Ward produced with two other students during my sophomore year of college. We quickly realized that the true story of Jackson Ward, a historically black neighborhood in Richmond, was not the current gentrification of the neighborhood, but of the history of policies that had shaped that neighborhood to what it is today: Poor and open for new investment. With a video camera outside the window of my Honda Accord, Russ Gong attempted to capture video footage of the speed and vastness of the highway that had somehow become the focus of our story.

Richmond, like many American cities, built urban highways in the 1950s and 60s. Many residents of Richmond drive on these highways as a part of their daily commute or every once in a while in order to shop, eat or visit places throughout the Richmond region. Countless others from outside the region drive through the city on I-95 or I-64 in order to get to a destination on the other side. While of course these people understand the highway as a path for driving their car, most do not consider the highway as a historical artifact of the 1950s. to the contrary, the history of the highway seems to have become relatively lost over the years.

History often seems to be a record of the loudest voices in society. This history is often seen to cover political authorities, economic power, grand success and grand loss. When reading these histories, one begins to notice that there are silences between the lines: Lives lived, cultures created and memories formed. The untold stories are commonly referred to as “people’s history.” The record of this sort of history is usually more difficult to obtain, but the knowledge that it likely exists introduces a new critical lens with which one may read popular historical texts. In order to fully understand the purpose of the text, one must first take notice of these silences and learn to listen to their voice. Because they often exist as “absence” rather than “content,” these

silences are initially difficult to perceive. If one is willing to look closely, they are revealed in small moments of inspiration such as a family story or a simple photograph. As voices are awakened, ears become opened to the subtleties of the symphony that is history and the quietest instruments begin to take shape. Even the slightest sound from this unknown space is at once intriguing and maddening. Once located, the silences become profound. One such silence in the historical records of Richmond is the story of the debate and construction of a highway in the late 1950s.

In her *Chronology of Richmond 1607-1980*, Lynn Sims begins with a concession and a caveat. "A chronology," she writes, "is not usually an interpretative device, that is, there is little one can do to evaluate the entries. However, by inclusion and exclusion much can be told about the person selecting the events."[2] This insight is an excellent introduction to the study of the history of highways in Richmond and begs the question, "What can one learn about the people of Richmond from the inclusion or exclusion of the story of highways?" In the chronology, Sims essentially crafts a timeline in order to provide the reader with a survey of what she has determined the most important historical events in Richmond for easy reading. The period of history between February 29, 1956 and September 6, 1960 reads as follows:

1956 February 29	The Virginia War Memorial is dedicated.
April 26	Evangelist Billy Graham arrives to prepare for a three-week revival service at city stadium.
1957 June 24	Dogwood Dell Amphitheater in Byrd Park is dedicated.
November 11	The United Daughters of the Confederacy building at 328 North Boulevard is dedicated.
1960 June	The last classes are held in the old John Marshal High School at Eighth and Marshall Streets.
September 6	Two black students enroll at Chandler Junior High School, the first of their race to be admitted to a previously all-white school[3]

[2] Sims, Lynn. *Chronology of Richmond 1607-1980.* Carter Composition Co., Richmond, 1980. P. 1.
[3] Sims, Lynn. *Chronology of Richmond 1607-1980.* Carter Composition Co., Richmond, 1980. P. 28.

There are two ways to read this section of timeline: To analyze the content of the timeline or to explore the text in order to understand the absence of the story of the highway which was constructed within this time period. The events in the timeline seem to be related to either events or buildings in Richmond, but each project seems small in size relative to the size of a highway which stretched throughout the entire city. So why was the highway left out? It seems that most of the references in these two texts, from the Daughters of the Confederacy to the issue of integration, had direct connections to the mainstream identity of the city. From the Daughters of the Confederacy to the issue of integration, these events were likely recorded for their specific significance to Richmond. The highway, in contrast, is a road which exists in much the same form throughout the entire nation and does not seem as characteristically "Richmond."

Another historical account of Richmond is Virginius Dabney's extensive work titled *Richmond: The Story of a City*. In this book, Dabney details the history of the city from its discovery in 1607 to the year 1974. While he does not have the humility to make the same concessions as Sims, the truth of omission seen in her timeline applies just as equally to his historical account. In his chapter of the Post-War years, Dabney describes changes to the physical landscape of Richmond after WWII as well as the presence of natural disasters which occurred at the time. Dabney writes, "Various landmarks disappeared from the Richmond scene during the years that followed World War II. The city's street car system, which had pioneered for the whole country more than threescore years before, finally went out of existence and was replaced by buses in 1949."[4] This account of the loss of the street car system is an instance where the presence of highways and cars in America had begun to eradicate other forms of transportation, specifically that of rail-based transit. A second common topic of inquiry in his

[4] Dabney, Virginius. Richmond, The Story of a City. Doubleday & Company, Garden City, New York,1976. P. 334.

account of Richmond's history is the presence of natural disasters. Dabney continues, "Richmond was visited by two natural calamities in the decades following World War II. The first was a tornado which ripped through part of the city in June 1951. Numerous houses were unroofed, and Monroe and Byrd parks lost many hundreds of trees, 1,500 of them in Dogwood Dell alone. Only one life was lost, that of a swan in Byrd Park."[5] This natural disaster in Richmond seems significant, but there is nothing intriguing about an unforeseeable and unplanned natural event. It potentially might have seemed more historically relavant if Dabney described opportunistic businessmen taking advantage of the destruction or another similar story or reaction, but Dabney does not offer such a record.

One common theme between both Dabney and Sims is the theme of disaster by unforeseen, external forces, recovery and the resilience of Richmond residents. To this end, Sims writes, "Several times, during hostile invasions or as a result of floods or storm the city has been set back, but each time a new start has been made. Richmonders from other eras have struggled, and built, and lived in what we now call home."[6] In the same way, Dabney describes the aftermath of a flood by writing, "The city did not recover for months, but the mud and other debris were finally cleared away and the damage done in the river front areas was rectified. Richmond took this calamity in its stride as it had done with others over the years."[7] The historical style in these two analyses of the Post-War era in Richmond reiterate this theme of external invasion and recovery throughout the two works of history and many others.

In both of these accounts, the authors cite events that "happened" to Richmond and events which happened in Richmond, but the research does not sufficiently explain what

[5] Ibid. P. 334.
[6] Sims, Lynn. *Chronology of Richmond 1607-1980.* Carter Composition Co., Richmond, 1980. P. 1.
[7] Dabney, Virginius. Richmond, The Story of a City. Doubleday & Company, Garden City, New York,1976. P. 355.

Richmond did to itself. There is one significant event left from both Sims's and Dabney's accounts. Not a natural disaster or invasion, but a planned destruction from within that would affect more people than a Christian revival, fill the void of the street car system, and destroy more homes than either natural disaster described by Dabney. This event was the construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike known today as I-95. In Christopher Silver's seminal work, *Twentieth-Century Richmond*: *Planning, Politics, and Race*, he devotes about 15 pages to the highway which he calls, "the most divisive political issue of the decade."[8] According to John Moeser, Richmond scholar and a colleague of Silver, this is the last time the expressway was thoroughly examined in a book of history or political science.[9] J. Douglass Smith's more recent book *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia* (2002) centers on the effect of policy on segregated society rather than the city itself as a political place being transformed. As this account follows the shifting Virginian society during the early twentieth century, it also ends just as the story of urban renewal in Richmond begins. In 2004, Randolph and Tate published *Rights for a Season: Politics of Race, Class and Gender in Richmond, Va*, but the authors only anecdotally mention the construction of the 'pike or other public works projects that shaped the city in the 1940s and 50s. Instead, the two focus on the Civil Rights movement, the struggle for the black vote in Richmond and the role of the City Council in local governance. It seems that the story of the highway has been relegated to the realm of planning history rather than considered more broadly significant for its relation to the history of the people and politics in Richmond.

The research process for this paper has involved recovering many aspects of the story of the construction of the highway that have been lost over the past sixty years. Most importantly,

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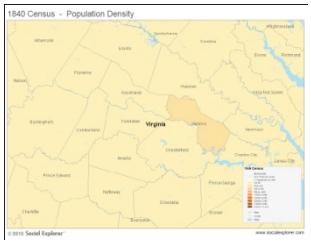
[8] [8] Silver, Christopher. *Twentieth-Century Richmond,* University of Tennessee Press, 1984. P. 196.
[9] Moeser, John. E-mail to the author. 5 July 2010.

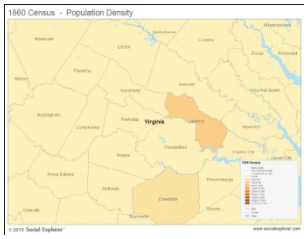
the story of the debates surrounding the expressway has been expanded and analyzed in order to understand the controversy of the highway and a phenomenon that has been termed the "rhetoric of highway battles." Other aspects of this story include details of the public rejection of the highway and the political maneuvering which eventually allowed for the construction of the unwanted road. Finally, the process of destruction and highway construction in Richmond entered the narrative in vivid detail with the discovery of photos commissioned by the construction company. These photos allow for a more moving reflection on the process which had previously been presented as a singular event (e.g. "the highway was built") rather than a dramatic process. The photos also beg the question of why the story of destruction in Richmond was ever forgotten. Why would the aforementioned historical accounts of this city not mention what Silver's account considered "the most politically divisive issue of the decade." This question of memory directly related to historiography and specifically the different values placed on events in American history. Ultimately, if the highway was a story of Americans destroying each other's homes and livelihoods, it would not be a story chosen by someone who preferred to further a more positive historical account. If the highway in Richmond was a story of success and American modernization, it would not be chosen by someone desiring to distinguish Richmond from every other American city with a highway. Thus, the nuances of the story of the planning, debate and construction of the highway have been gradually lost amid the sound of other stories and perspectives.

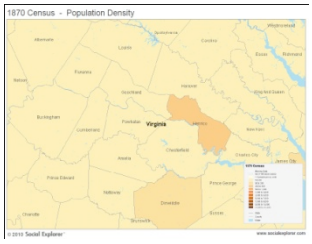
Today, highways have become such an integral aspect of American life that we sing about them, lament them, curse their traffic and praise their construction. Despite the ubiquity of highways, most passengers do not take the time to understand them. It seems that their very essence defies understanding because people move too fast to learn their story. Rarely can you

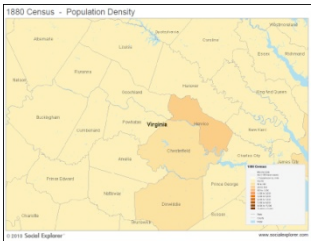
begin to formulate a thought about a particular section of highway before you have already moved on down the asphalt path. In the historical context of debate and politics, the highway has become less of a permanent fixture of the Richmond landscape and more of a political statement and a historical artifact of a certain era in American history.

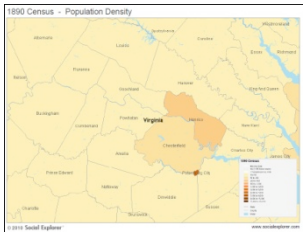
The Genealogy of a New America

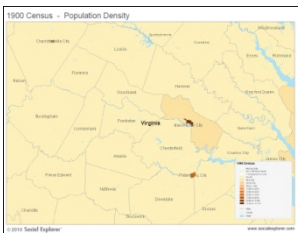


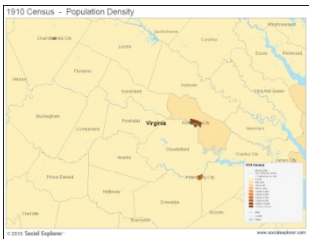


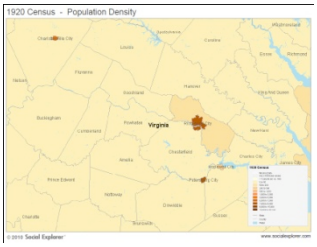


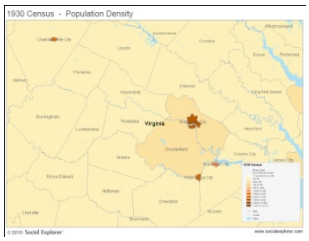


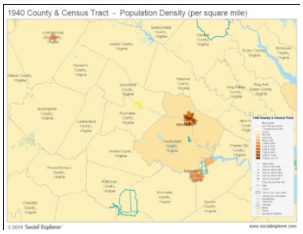


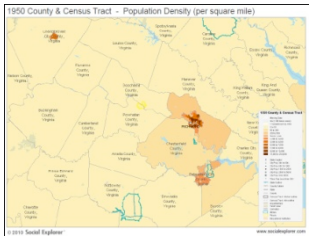


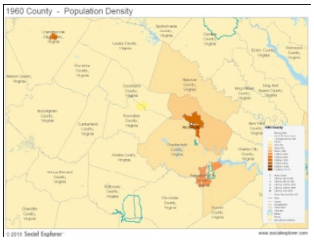


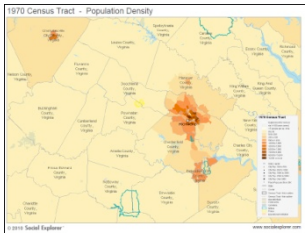


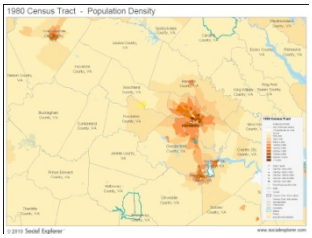


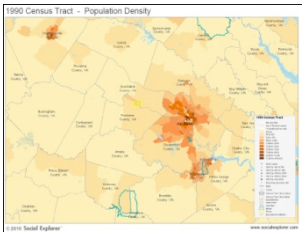


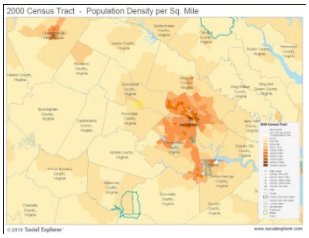


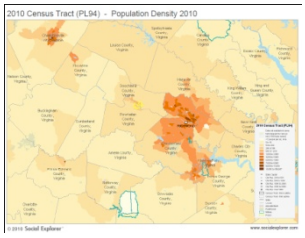












The images on the previous page display the growth of Richmond, Virginia in terms of population density from 1810 to 2010.[10] This data also reveals the physical growth of the city as people gradually moved away from the existing city and built or purchased new places to inhabit. It is interesting to view, mutatis mutandis, data from one moment in time each decade for 200 years of this city's life. From its early beginnings, Richmond has spread like oil on water to become the relatively sprawling metropolis that it is today. This story of Richmond's growth is, for all practical purposes, an American story. While population growth is not unique to America, the socio-political forces in this nation led to developments that are certainly unique to this nation and society. These developments were planned, reactionary and at times accidental.

The tenth photo above is a snapshot of Richmond in 1900. At this time, the city was a small, dense place and likely a place a intimate civil society. In his book *City: Urbanism and its End*, Douglass Rae describes the social interconnectedness during this era that he calls "civic density." This density essentially related to commitments that residents made to each other in the form of societies, teams, fraternities, sororities and many other civic organizations. In relation to his research in New Haven, CT, Rae writes, "All or virtually all of the people who were assembled by these organizations—whether for religious worship or a fraternal lodge meeting or a sporting contest—were members of locally grounded communities. And the acts of assembly and association almost certainly deepened and enriched participants' sense of loyalty to and identity with place."[11] These connections that people formed with each other were significant to developing the identity of the city and providing distractions from work and family.

At the same time, city life began to be transformed during the industrial revolution. In his account, *The City in Time and Space*, Aidan Southall describes the conditions of the industrial

[10] Images derived on Social Explorer. <http://www.socialexplorer.com/pub/home/home.aspx>.
[11] Rae, Douglass, *City: Urbanism and its End.* Yale University Press, New Haven, 2003. P. 144.

city when he writes, “The intolerable overcrowding, noise, filth and stench, belching smoke and rowdy disorder impelled the better off to move out, the middle class as far as they could afford, the wealthier further still.”[12] The advent of industry essentially took over the city and made life more hazardous and difficult. This reality of the city began to provide an impetus for people to find new ways to develop the American city. As activist and historian Howard Kunstler put it, “The industrial city in America was such a trauma that we developed this aversion to the whole idea of the city, city life and everything connected with it … so what you see fairly early in the mid-nineteenth century is that now we have to have an antidote to the industrial city which is going to be life in the country for everybody.”[13] In this way, the city became associated with the industrial aspects of city life and residents began to imagine life outside of this place of smoke and smell. Rather than move the industry away from the people, the people began to move away from the city.

This impetus of industry incited a debate of competing visions for the future of American cities. At its heart, this debate was a struggle over the identity of the city and a question of the potential and value of the space therein. Essential to understanding this struggle is to understand that a value was placed on parts of the city “as is” relative to what they could eventually become. Implicit in each new vision for the city was a strong dissatisfaction with the conditions of the city and an arrogant pride in the success of prescribed solutions to perceived problems.

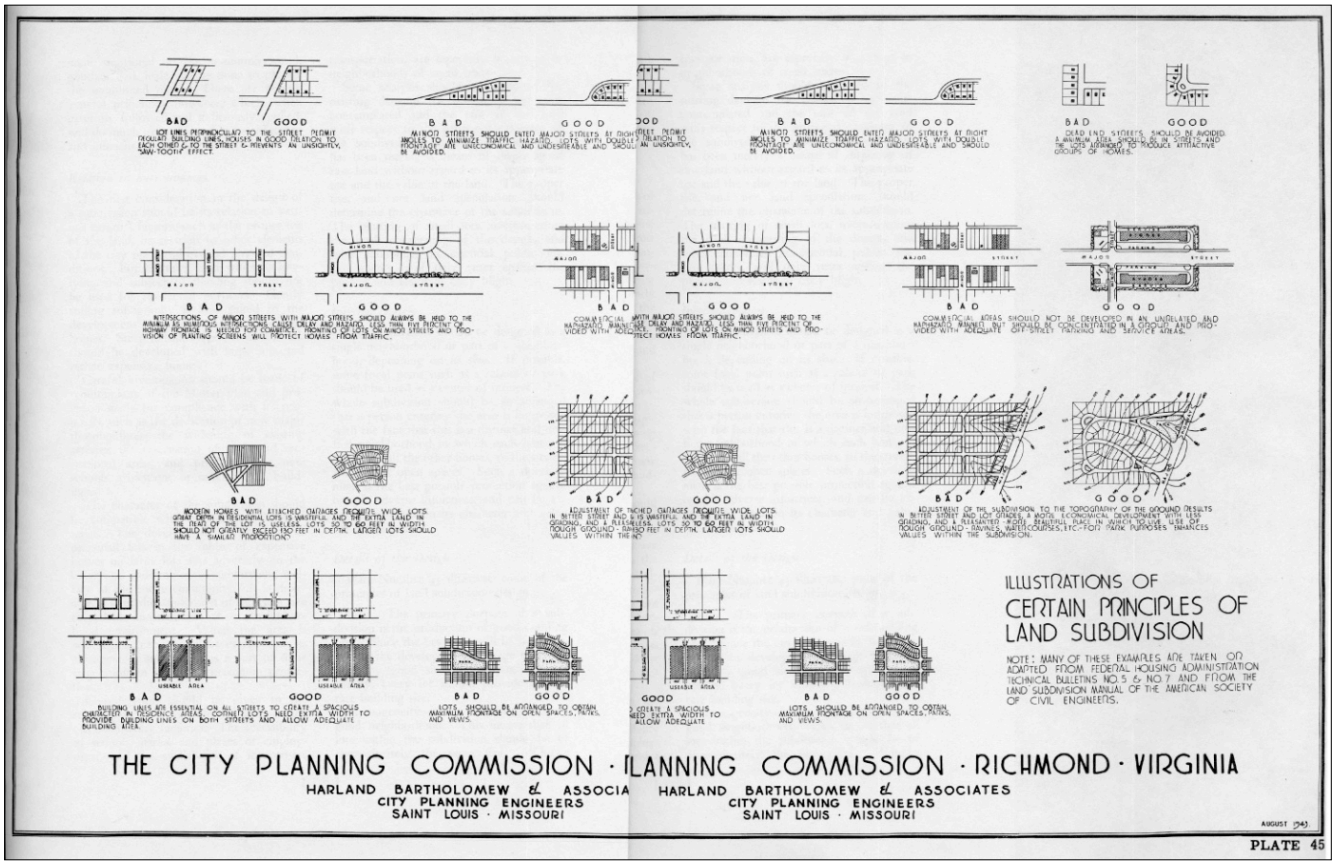
According to Donald Krueckeberg, city planning in America developed alongside this growing dissatisfaction in an attempt to remedy the problems of the American city. He writes, “Before the turn of the century there was no visible organized planning movement in this country.”[14] In the

[12] Southall, Aidan. *The City in Time and Space.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998. P. 361.
[13] Kunstler, James. “James H. Kunstler Dissects Suburbia.” Filmed for TED Feb 2004, Posted May 2007. <http://www.ted.com/talks/james_howard_kunstler_dissects_suburbia.html>.
[14] Krueckeberg, Donald A. Ed., *The American Planner*. Methuen, New York. P. 3.

decades that followed, a few notable individuals promoted the cause of planning in the states and also began to transition the profession from small operations to large national firms. Kruckeberg writes, "By the advent of the Second World War there were only a few hundred more. But after 1945 … their growth was exponential, to nearly 10,000 by 1970, and perhaps 25,000 by 1980."[15] This transformation of the profession signifies an interest in planning and a dramatic influx of money allocated to funding the practice. The dramatic transformation after World War II signified the future place of planning on the development of the city: The city would be new and the city would be unlike any before.

This desire to completely redevelop the American city is inherently linked to what Rae describes as, "an abhorrence of historical urbanism." He writes this hatred was "embedded in a folk theory of residential succession that placed traditional city neighborhoods at the end of a long cycle which begins with the good and the new and ends with the bad and the old." [16] This hatred of the historical American city was seen in a significant document in the history of urban planning in Richmond: *A Master Plan for the Physical Development of the City* (1946). The Master Plan of 1946 contained a section on existing and projected urban forms. This section included Plate 45, the image on the next page, which clearly stated that the old was "bad" and the projected was "good." The master plan was a vision for the new America, but it also demanded a dramatic reconstruction of the city as it existed during the time. With such a vision in tow, the city of Richmond was in danger of being completely restructured. Indeed, new developments in Richmond and elsewhere in the United States began to follow the forms described in this graphic. It is almost uncanny how similar the "bad" side of the graphics mirror what is now

[15] Ibid. P. 3.
[16] Ibid. p. 265.



considered "smart growth" while what is determined to be "good" is now harpooned as indicative forms of inefficient, antiquated suburban sprawl.

At the same time as these advancements within the planning profession in America, technological advances began to allow for the movement of Americans beyond the previously constraining urban periphery. Rae writes, "Two economic events—the advent of the AC electric grid and of automotive transport—ended the urbanism-friendly age of centered development."[17] The critical combination of these two technologies during the first half of the twentieth century changed urban living in one significant way: The challenges of geographic distance were significantly diminished by the car and independent circulation.

The issue of circulation in America cannot possibly be discussed without a thorough foray into the history of the highway in America. In the book, *Asphalt and* Politics, Thomas

[17] Rae, Douglass, *City: Urbanism and its End.* Yale University Press, New Haven, 2003. P. 21.

Karnes writes that the first national highway was appropriated by a bill approved by Thomas Jefferson in 1806.[18] In the next 150 years, the highway would become a powerful force in shaping the physical landscape of cities and rural places in the United States. While highways seem to have always existed in this nation, the development of the highway system in America required significant efforts to convince the American public of their value over the course of several decades. One significant way in which the American public was introduced to the automobile was through the American military. The automobile represented the power and efficiency of the military and began liberating Americans with dreams of freedom. In WWI, the US military purchased 118,000 automobiles from 216 different automakers. These purchase accounted for 90% of General Motor's production during the war. Karnes writes that the soldiers' experience with cars and with deteriorating roads during the war led them to desire an enjoyable automobile experience at home and, "Not by coincidence did GM begin installment plan sales in 1919.[19] Directly following the return of the military from WWI, Henry C. Osterman began to promote the [Lincoln Highway Association]'s idea of a "military convoy, crossing the country on the Lincoln Highway."[20] The military saw Japan as a serious threat and Pershing believed that railroads would not be enough to mobilize the military to the west. Trucks, it seemed, were the most efficient form of transportation in time of war. While it's impossible to determine the success of the goal of recruitment, it's clear that the trip gained significant notoriety as it progressed. To this end, Karnes writes that "The army claimed that 33 million people heard of the convoy, and 3.25 million actually witnessed it."[21] Each person that viewed the convoy had

[18] Karnes, Thomas L. *Asphalt and Politics: a History of the American Highway System*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009. P. 8-9.
[19] Ibid. P. 28.
[20] Ibid. P. 43.
[21] Ibid. P. 71.

the opportunity to consider two powerful ideas: the potential value of the highway and the sad inadequacy of roads in America.

The Federal Highway Administration was created in 1893, but in 1919 Karnes writes, "a tough new leader was appointed, and he remained until 1953, serving six presidents and almost seven."[22] This man was Thomas H. MacDonald. The military also provided some of the initial funding for MacDonald as he began to use money designated for use during WWI, but not spent. There was a suspension on highway construction from 1941 until Truman ended the building hiatus on September 6, 1945. The Federal Aid Act of 1944 increased construction of rural "farm-to-market" roads and urban highways, but, most importantly, initiated the "National System of Interstate Highways, a 40,000 mile network to connect as directly as possible all metropolitan areas of 300,000 population or more."[23] This network would eventually become what is now the American interstate highway system.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this bill was the fact that all of this money was appropriated for highways without considering where they would be built. Karnes writes, "Precisely where the new roads would go was not addressed by the new law, and much bitterness would be generated as time went by."[24] The location of the highways would eventually become a powerful point of contention as the highways were being built. Also, during this time, the decision was made for highways to be built into cites in order to ensure that urban politicians would support the highway program. Although the decision would transform America, the effects were hardly considered in congressional debate.[25] This decision to construct highways in cities began to set a precedent for urban highways that would be followed in cities across the

[22] Ibid. P. 85.
[23] Ibid. P. 96-88.
[24] Ibid. P. 92.
[25] Ibid. P. 93.

nation. In addition to the desire to construct highways for transportation, cities began to cite a second reason: the restoration of the city.

Roger Biles' recently published book further describes the dreams that people had of restoring their cities with highways. In this work, *The Fate of Cities: Urban America and the Federal Government, 1945-2000*, Biles writes that local governments believed that they had to destroy large sections of their cities in order to enjoy the economic benefits of the highway. He writes, "In city after city, policy makers concluded that downtown revitalization depended upon improved highways to funnel workers and shoppers in and out of the city core."[26] This model of development assumed that the center of cities would always be the center of economic and consumer life. The urban highway was also predicated on this conviction that the city would become more significant with the insertion of highways. Biles adds, "Urban planners also joined the consensus proclaiming the necessity of expressways for the future well-being of the cities. Like their counterparts in the business community, planners saw the resurrection of the central business district as the linchpin of urban revitalization…"[27] Developing this central business district (CBD) in cities became the ultimate goal of urban public works projects in the 1950s and 60s. The urban highways necessitated the destruction of large amounts or urban land and gradually began to slice American cities in every way. These highways were often championed as public works projects that would benefit the city and provide for its future needs.

In regards to his research on New Haven, Rae writes that highways had quite the opposite effect. He writes, "Some supposed that having the new interstate highways I-95 (which was originally called the Connecticut Turnpike) and I-91 meet in the center of New Haven would encourage manufacturers to locate in the city much as the convergence of rail lines had done a

[26] Biles, Roger. *The Fate of Cities: Urban American and the Federal Government, 1945-2000.* University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, 2011. P. 49.
[27] Ibid. P. 41.

century before. They were mistaken: the highways decentralized everything they touched."[28] This sprawling effect in New Haven has been mirrored in nearly every American city that constructed highways in this way. Rather than centralize cities as the trains did, highways have been cause for even more concern amidst the waning American city.

It certainly seems that in the early half of the twentieth century, there was a great convergence of forces, private, public, planned, accidental, economic, technological, social and professional forces which all struggled to determine the future of the American city. While the social organizations kept people together, the advent of industry seemed to drive people apart. Technology also began to allow for a wider expansion of people who were able to settle farther away from each and still maintain modern comforts. The planning profession began to imagine a new American city while the federal government guided the planner's pen and determined that public highways would be built through the American city to the initial praise of metropolitan politicians. The final result of this dramatic story is that the city was the place where all of these changes were constructed and remains as the true site of struggle and transformation.

[28] Rae. P. 361.

The Anatomy of a Highway Battle

On April 19, the Russian government arrested 26 people protesting the construction of a highway through the Khimki Forest north of Moscow.[29] The plans for this highway were approved in December of 2010 after being delayed for several months amidst public outcry. At the time the plans were confirmed, the times reported that the Russian government had done little to account for the desires of the individuals and organizations for which the project had been delayed. Michael Schwirtz writes, "In the end, however, authorities settled on the original plan, arguing that building the road through the 2,500-acre oak forest would take less time and money than a proposed alternate route through an industrial area."[30] It seems surprising that after months of protest and discussions with politicians the highway can be built without changing at all to fit the considerations of the public. Of course, highways cover such a wide swath of land that their planning must exclude some voices from consideration. These are usually the quietest and least powerful voices or of course land (forests) with no voice at all.

From the American perspective, one could conclude that this sort of exclusion "would only happen in Russia" or a nation of similar dictatorial past, but that is not the case. A remarkably similar highway battle occurred in Richmond, Virginia and in many other cities across the nation in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. These battles happened at what many consider to be the "peak of American democracy" just after the end of World War II and at the beginning of the USA's reign at the top of global politics. It was at this time that America began discussing

[29] "Police make arrests in Khimki forest protest." Ria Novosti. <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20110419/163601111.html>.
[30] SCHWIRTZ, MICHAEL. "Russia Approves Road That Will Run Through Forest." New York Times, Dec. 14, 2010.

modernization as an achievable goal and progress as an American ideal. In this context, the highway battle was "progress" struggling against the status quo.

For the purposes of this paper, a highway battle is essentially the conflict which arises when one entity (often a governmental unit) proposes plans to construct a large, limited-access road that would necessitate the taking of land which an oppositional set of individuals and entities (often a communities and NGOs) finds significantly valuable in its current form.

The battle of competing visions for the American city was never equal. It seems that there was always an invasion and a defense. As with most wars, one side was usually more prepared and the other forced to organize and defend or retaliate. Because such a defense and retaliation was reactionary, the arguments used were often initially more material than theoretical. In other words, while Le Corbusier dreamed of streets in the sky, residents of Richmond defended a claim on the inherent value on their homes, churches and communities. These opinions become gradually more developed as the residents of Richmond came to understand more of a context for their situation and the battle itself. Additionally, because the proponents of the highway plans were so detached from the places to be most affected, they employed the same sanitized, scripted rhetoric from the beginning of the fight until the end.

This study is essentially a study of both the vocalization and conclusion of visions of progress. In the 1940s and 50s these ideas were written into plans: The bigger the firm, the more developed and sweeping the plan. These ideas were edited into newspapers: The more organized the group, the more precise the message. These ideas were placed into advertisements: The more money, the more space on a page. These ideas were most likely discussed in private conversations throughout the city: The more powerful the person, the more likely the opinions. In each instance along the course of this story there is a need to both analyze the rhetoric as these

visions were articulated as well as the people and politics that eventually made the visions a reality in Richmond.

The first section, "Blitzkrieg: Planning to Surprise the Public," is a study of the initial presentation of a thoroughly developed idea into the city of Richmond. This came in the form of a master plan in 1946. This master plan of almost 300 oversized pages was produced under the aegis of a national planning firm in St. Louis called Harland Bartholomew and Associates and developed by the City Planning Commission.[31] The first section of this chapter is a study of the rhetoric of this plan and related issues raised soon after its release.

The second section, "The Politics of Highway Plans," is a study of the political nature of proposing "tentative" highway plans in 1950s Richmond and the reaction such a proposal elicited in the citizens of the city. This is essentially a history of the proposal process as well as a look into the debate of the highway. This section attempts to examine particular people and coalitions that unite on the issue of the expressway, develop authority in the debate and propel their opinions and convictions.

The third section, "The Rhetoric of Highway Battles," is a more thorough analysis of a body of references to the expressway found in the Richmond Times-Dispatch. These references have been analyzed for their rhetorical value in order to gain a deeper understanding of the types of arguments employed during a highway battle. These have all been compiled into a taxonomic scheme of four sets of binary arguments made either for or against the highway. This section attempts to give deeper insight into the mechanics of highway battles. Finally, this section seeks to interrogate the dubious arguments of the highway proponent and explain their shortcomings.

The fourth section, "Elimination of Public Recourse," describes how the debate about the highway was eventually buried under the decision to build the highway without the consent of

[31] *A Master Plan for the City of Richmond*, 1946.

the people. This section attempts to reveal that, through the use of special governing bodies, the city of Richmond and State of Virginia worked together to direct the highway through its current route in the city. This section is a look into how the visions for an urban highway in Richmond became manifest in the physical realm of the city: from idea to rhetoric to power to asphalt and concrete.

The fifth and final section, "Eighteen Months of Destruction," refers to the final physical manifestation of a decade of pro-highway rhetoric. This section forces the reader to confront the vast destruction of the city from the perspective of one neighborhood: Jackson Ward. Once a tight grid of roads and buildings, this neighborhood was split into two pieces for the passage of automobiles and now exists as simply a bit of content in the windshield of drivers speeding by. Construction of the highway exposed what is left of this neighborhood in more ways than just the physical removal of acres of land. With the highway as it exists today, untold hoards of strangers are given the right to a condescending glance into the once-proud heart of Black Richmond.

Blitzkrieg: Planning to surprise the Public

As stated previously, planning in America was a profession that was drastically transformed by its practitioners and patrons in the years following World War II. At the same time, the concept of a city plan was becoming more widely accepted and practiced. These plans essentially became tools used to redraw the physical landscape of American cities with little meaningful input from the residents of the cities themselves. Plans such as the 1946 master plan were so long (almost three hundred 8 ½" x 11" pages of text and images) that they seem to have been designed to catch the residents of a city such as Richmond off guard. While the plans were

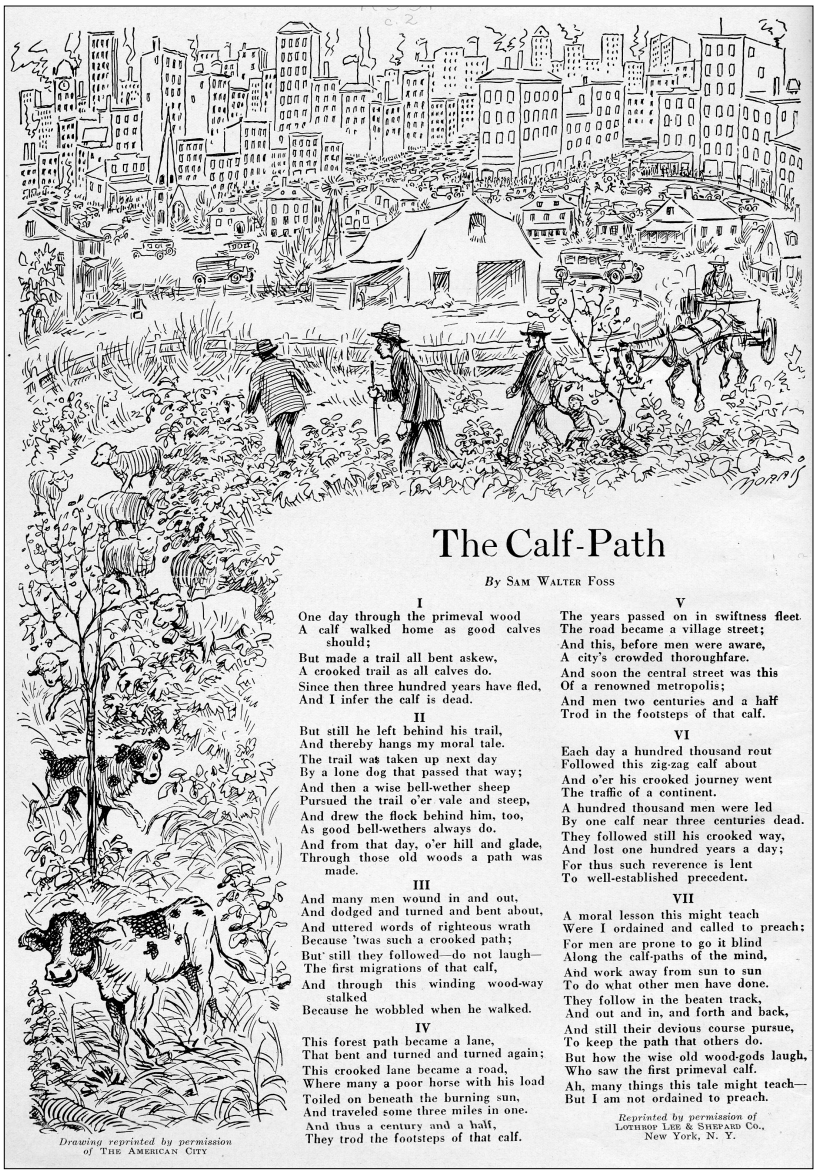
"public documents," the sheer length of the document prevented many from interpreting and accessing the information within.

This growth of the city planning movement in the 1940s and 50s was even more noticeable in Richmond because the city had experienced a decidedly "hands-off" mayor for a majority of the 1920s and 30s. J. Fulmer Bright was mayor from 1924 to 1940 and Silver writes that he led Richmond with the same doctrine that he used in his very first political campaign: "public retrenchment and privatism."[32] With this political motive, Bright prevented the city planning function from destroying the city with urban renewal in the way that many other city officials had done elsewhere. At the same time, he prevented Richmond leadership from fully engaging the growing number of planners in America and accessing the new ideas being circulated regarding urban development. When he was ousted in 1940, the Richmond City Council began to dream of a new Richmond.

In Krukenberg's analysis of the American planner, he writes that the profession made three significant developments in the twentieth century with the third stage being the stage of the "new professionals." This is the stage that most concerns the study of the planning and construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike. In the 1940s and 50s, two of the "new professionals" would bring their ideas and plans to Richmond: Harland Bartholomew and Ladislas Segoe. Krukenberg writes, "Unlike their forebears, [the new professionals] were the first generation to make the new profession a primary career. Harland Bartholomew and Ladislas Segoe, trained in engineering, established major planning firms in St. Louis and Cincinnati, respectively …" and developed into national authorities on questions of urban planning.[33] With

[32] Silver, Christopher. 92-93.
[33] Krueckeberg, Donald A. Ed., *The American Planner*. Methuen, New York. P. 3.

their national presence, these men began to disseminate their ideas and plans throughout the nation and to plan projects in all areas as well.



The Calf-Path

By Sam Walter Foss

I

One day through the primeval wood
A calf walked home as good calves should;
But made a trail all bent askew,
A crooked trail as all calves do.
Since then three hundred years have fled,
And I infer the calf is dead.

II

But still he left behind his trail,
And thereby hangs my moral tale.
The trail was taken up next day
By a lone dog that passed that way;
And then a wise bell-wether sheep
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep,
And drew the flock behind him, too,
As good bell-wethers always do.
And from that day, o'er hill and glade,
Through those old woods a path was made.

III

And many men wound in and out,
And dodged and turned and bent about,
And uttered words of righteous wrath
Because 'twas such a crooked path;
But still they followed—do not laugh—
The first migrations of that calf,
And through this winding wood-way stalked
Because he wobbled when he walked.

IV

This forest path became a lane,
That bent and turned and turned again;
This crooked lane became a road,
Where many a poor horse with his load
Toiled on beneath the burning sun,
And traveled some three miles in one.
And thus a century and a half,
They trod the footsteps of that calf.

V

The years passed on in swiftness fleet.
The road became a village street;
And this, before men were aware,
A city's crowded thoroughfare.
And soon the central street was this
Of a renowned metropolis;
And men two centuries and a half
Trod in the footsteps of that calf.

VI

Each day a hundred thousand rout
Followed this zig-zag calf about
And o'er his crooked journey went
The traffic of a continent.
A hundred thousand men were led
By one calf near three centuries dead.
They followed still his crooked way,
And lost one hundred years a day;
For thus such reverence is lent
To well-established precedent.

VII

A moral lesson this might teach
Were I ordained and called to preach;
For men are prone to go it blind
Along the calf-paths of the mind,
And work away from sun to sun
To do what other men have done.
They follow in the beaten track,
And out and in, and forth and back,
And still their devious course pursue,
To keep the path that others do.
But how the wise old wood-gods laugh,
Who saw the first primeval calf.
Ah, many things this tale might teach—
But I am not ordained to preach.

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It was Bartholomew's firm which was first made known in the city of Richmond as the primary consulting firm for a document titled "A Master Plan for the Physical Development of the City." In the first pages of the 1946 Richmond master plan, there is a page with a poem titled "The Calf Path."[34] In this poem, a calf wanders through a field and is followed by a long series of animals and eventually humans that turn the path in to a road. The story of the calf path is the story of cities growing in an organic way: Crooked, unplanned and irregular. By the time the cow path turns into a road, the people don't even remember why it was built there in the first place. This organic calf path is essentially what Jane Jacobs famously believes should be the essence of organic urban form rather than planned urban design. In regard to these sorts of cities she writes, "Cities, again like

[34] Reference to the Master Plan

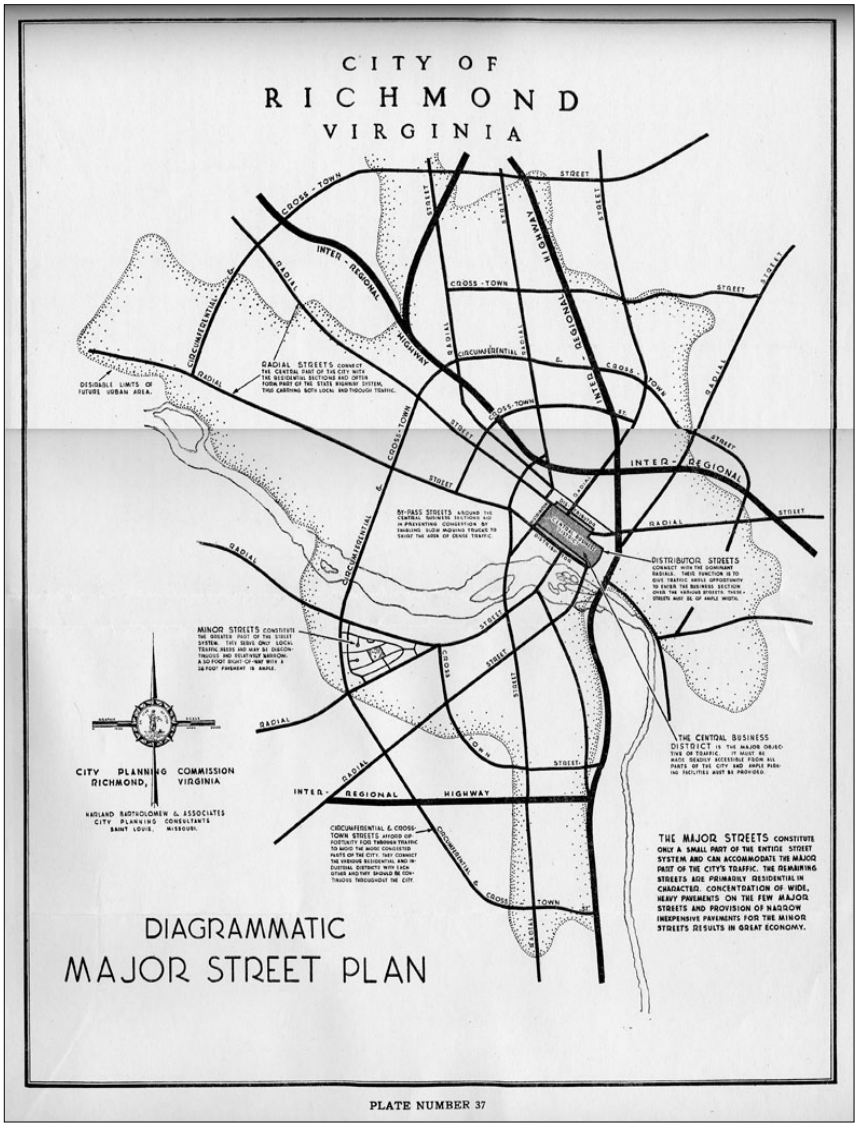
the life sciences, do not exhibit *one* problem in organized complexity … they are 'interrelated into an organic whole.'"[35] "The Calf Path" would be a fine poem if the organic formation of cities was the point of the story, but this is not the point. The moral of the story is that people tend to stick to the organic forms, the status quo, and follow meaningless tradition instead of taking the time to develop the best city. To this end, the conclusion of the poem states, "For men are prone to go it blind Along the calf paths of the mind … But how the wise old wood-gods laugh, Who saw the first primeval calf." And thus, the master plan begins with a poem about lamenting the foolish ways of the past. Now, the poem seems to continue, we are obliged to correct this "calf path" of a city with a new master plan that will set it right. There are countless legitimate reasons for desiring to reconstruct this metaphorical calf path: Efficiency and aesthetics are the most obvious, but two other reasons could be the simple desire to start over new and the desire to make the city welcoming. Regardless of the reason, the master plan was a general move to undo the city of Richmond in 1946.

Harland Bartholomew was a formidable figure in the planning profession and the city of Richmond likely chose his firm, in part, to remain above critique. By the time Bartholomew & Associates was enlisted for the Richmond plan, the man and his firm had already been working on master plans for almost three decades. Krueckeberg writes, "… while Bartholomew's comprehensive planning may not appear to be unique in its ideas and methods, it brought to the profession a refining of standards and a special sense of system and cohesiveness in which each step in the planning process assumed its logical place."[36] This level of professionalism is likely the quality which promoted Bartholomew's firm beyond others to become one of the most

[35] Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities.* Random House, New York, 1961. P. 433.
[36] Krueckeberg, Donald A. Ed., *The American Planner*. Methuen, New York. P. 294.

renowned firms in the field. Additionally, enlisting such a firm was a move by the city leadership in Richmond to achieve a "flawless" plan for the city and her residents.

One page among hundreds in this master plan was related to the "Major Street Plan" in the city of Richmond. Plate Number 37 shows the city of Richmond with various dark lines drawn over it to denote the presence of an entire lattice of existing roads, future roads, and major arteries. Among these, one would eventually become vehemently opposed by the citizens of Richmond: The road labeled "Inter-regional Highway" which is pictured travelling from the north to the south along the river as well as the east-west corridor located north of the CBD. Over a decade after this master plan was published, this highway would be built as the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike that would eventually be known, quite anonymously, as a stretch of I-95. Before the construction, however, the city of Richmond had to begin the process of presenting this detailed and "complete" plan to the residents of Richmond.



The Politics of Highway Plans

On December 8, 1946, the average resident of Richmond was not aware of a plan to build an expressway through the heart of the city. Even if Richmonders did know about the plan, there was plenty of other news on this day that would have seemed more immediately relevant than a long-term plan. Two particular stories might have captured their attention on this day: The end of a 17-day coalminers strike and a tragic hotel fire in Atlanta.

As the pages turned, these two stories resurfaced several times with more context, background information and "the stories behind the story." John L. Lewis, the infamous AFL-CIO Chairman, had conducted the strike that involved a total of 400,000 miners. Combined with another 40-day strike earlier in the year, the Times-Dispatch reported that the coalminers lost a total of $222,000,000 in pay with no improvements to their situation as a result. "Lights go on," the news reported, "Trains Run as Lewis Acts." Along with this story was the story of an unexpected tragedy in Atlanta in which 116 people died and at least 100 more were injured.

Every few pages there was a photo of dead bodies, smoke coming out of windows and a fire truck attempting to end the crisis. Alongside these and other news articles were countless advertisements announcing the arrival of the Christmas season. A full-page ad informed readers about a "6-TUBE AUTOMATIC RADIO AND PHONOGRAPH COMBINATION." Soon after this ad was another for a store with billfolds, perfume, shaving brushes, pullman slippers and a "Spiffy invisible collar 'stay-down'" for twenty-five cents.

When you begin to read archives of newspapers, it becomes clear that the information is related to events that seemed most significant at the time. In retrospect, it becomes clear that some events deemed insignificant would set in motion a conflict that becomes so great that it would later surpass the importance of all others. Thus, what seemed insignificant becomes

historically pivotal. In this way, each of these articles and advertisements were given priority over other news, but if the reader persevered through twenty-seven such pages of information they might have found an article that seemed to matter very little. This brief, 140-word article was titled, “Meeting Set to Discuss New Highway.” This article was not newsworthy on a day that included such incredible stories, but this article can be considered the prelude to a decade of debate regarding an idea that had entered the minds of the leaders of the city.

One small news brief announced a meeting to discuss what was to be the most debated and opposed public works project of the decade: The Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike. No one could have possibly known its significance when it was printed, but each part of this article reveals deep insight into the debate that would last over a decade in Richmond.

First, the purpose of the meeting was to introduce plans for the city rather than to brainstorm with citizens. “Plans for the projected superhighway,” the article begins, “to route north-south traffic through Richmond will receive a thorough airing … in the first meeting of the newly-organized Ginter Park Civic Association.” As early as 1946, the idea of a highway through the city of Richmond was already being called a “plan.” This plan had already rooted itself firmly in the minds of many of the city’s leaders who would begin to place the plan above the will and desires of local residents

Second, the meeting organizers made it perfectly clear that this plan was backed by power. In addition to “the entire City Council,” Frank P. Cowardin told a reporter that speakers would include, “William S. Price, , representing the Federal Public Roads Commission; Burton Marye, representing the State Highway Department, and Director of Public Works Gamble Bowers, representing the city.” These titles and departments all connote power and political

force for the proponents of the highway. In other words, the meeting organizers wanted to be prepared to defend the highway's legitimacy against any sort of critique.

Finally, the idea of the highway had already been allowed to develop to its conclusion with little input from the general public. One meeting hardly justifies the phrase "a thorough airing." The article states that the speakers would each develop the suggestions of their respective agencies in order to "give an overall picture of the highway as it would be when completed." These two phrases "as it would be" and "when completed" are impressive in their confidence in the future of the plan. Rather than write, "as the highway might look if constructed," the author penned a phrase that likely suited the highway proponents' desire for political momentum.

The politics of highway plans in mid-century American can thus be summed up by one phrase: Bring the brass. The local governments did everything possible to prepare the idea of the plan before it was finally received by the people who would be most affected by the changes proposed. Proponents of the highway entered the city of Richmond armed with a plan vetted by studies, officials, politicians and city planners. These proponents seemed blinded by their obsession and unaware that it would be rejected by the people of Richmond in every possible iteration.

In some ways, the politics of submitting a highway plan in 1946 was more of a sport than a formal gesture. One can almost hear the common phrase, "Let the games begin." As soon as the highway was announced, the city of Richmond began to mobilize in favor or in opposition of the plan. This story seems like a social history of the people of Richmond as they begin to struggle with the plans being asserted on them; however, it is also a story of the political mobilization in Richmond as spurred by the highway proposal. In his analysis of social history,

Geoff Eley, writes that it is not proper for a historian to stay in an academic "ghetto, only rarely venturing more ambitious judgments concerning the political importance of his or her findings. But unless the importance of the latter is theoretically instated at the center of social-historical discussion, social history will remain the Trevelyan, in a much derided epigram—'history with the politics left out.'"[37] In such a way, this history is an attempt to understand the people of Richmond as well as a general understanding of reactionary social mobilization in mid-century America.

This social mobilization usually began the moment a highway plan was finished and made public as well as at various instances of heightened awareness along the way. This was certainly true of the status of the highway plan in Richmond for many years after it was initially proposed. Christopher Silver writes, "Planners in Richmond devoted more attention to the highway issue between 1946 and 1956 than to any other element of the master plan.[38] This is because no other element was as equally volatile as the plan to build the expressway through the city.

The City Council in Richmond was the body of officials that usually instigated the political battles in Richmond between the proposition of the highway plan and its final completion.[39] This is primarily because the City Council was the elected body charged with garnering support of the general public. In reference to political history, G. R. Elton writes, "Dynamic activity depends on the presence of a force—on the employment of energy—and the force applicable to political action is power: the power to do things for, or to, other people."[40] In this way, the City Council was being tested as to whether the body would be able to employ the

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[37] Eley, Geoff. "Some Recent Tendencies in Social History." Georg G. Iggers and Harold T. Parker, Eds. *International Handbook of Historical Studies: Contemporary Research and Theory*. Greenwood Press, Westport, 1980. P. 64.
[38] Silver, Christopher. *Twentieth-Century RICHMOND*. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1984. 185.
[39] Unless otherwise noted, all further references to the City Council were found in the corresponding date of entry in the City of Richmond Council Journal courtesy of the Library of Richmond.
[40] Elton G.R. "Political History" p. 4.

force necessary to achieve a level of dynamic activity worthy of note. Thus far, the plans had been written, but the highway had not been built.

In April of 1947, a document titled *Proposed Charter for the City of Richmond* was released to the public and included a plan to replace the 32-member bicameral city council with a council made up of nine leaders to be elected at large.[41] The charter also proposed a mayoral position that would serve as a political face of the council and a city manager that would serve as the active leader in city affairs. As Silver states, the creation of a city manager "consolidated the diffused power of the bicameral City Council and made it easier to isolate and influence the administrative power in the city."[42] This new system appealed to a majority of Richmond residents and in 1948 nearly three fourths of voters approved the plan which "abolished the bicameral City Council, the ward system, and the City Democratic Committee" in favor of a 9-member city council elected at large, an appointed city manager and a symbolic mayor.[43] This consolidation of power satisfied the public objective of the reform, but it was yet unclear how the new government structure would manage to answer the underlying question of the 'pike. Silver writes, that in 1949 the new City Council reenergized the topic of the turnpike by appropriating $1,372,000 for the construction costs of the road and the salary of newly hired planner, Ladislas Segoe (pictured to the left).[44,45] This more streamlined City Council was voted in by the people of Richmond and immediately began attempting to make statements of power. The appropriation of funds and the hiring of Segoe are two


Ladislas Segoe

[41] Silver, Christopher. *Twentieth-Century RICHMOND*. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1984,177
[42] Silver, Christopher. *Twentieth-Century RICHMOND*. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1984, 178.
[43] Silver, Christopher. *Twentieth-Century RICHMOND*. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1984, 56 and 179.
[44] Silver, Christopher. *Twentieth-Century RICHMOND*. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1984, 186.
[45] Miller, L.W. "Says Any Way You Slice It, It Will 'Still Be Baloney.' Photo. Richmond Times-Dispatch. 21 May 1950.

examples of power found in money and experts in the field of planning. According to Donald Krueckeberg, "Ladislas Segoe was the chief planner for the 1925 plan for Cincinnati, the first plan to be officially adopted by a major American city. Segoe also taught planning … authored one of the most important textbooks in the field, and was a major figure in the leadership of the profession. He spent fifty-two years in the practice of planning in America."[46] In response to highway opponents in Richmond, Segoe was cited saying, "There are two ways of slicing baloney. You can cut it across or you can cut it lengthwise." To this, L.W. Miller adds, "Mr. Segoe's reply would have been complete if he had added, "And no matter how you slice it or cut it, it will still be baloney."[47] This response from Segoe places him in the political arena as planner, expert and booster for the highway plan he himself produced.

Members representing trains and busses were vocal opponents of the expressway plan. These representatives of non-automobile transportation gradually began to realize the threat of the highway in the early 1950s and actively advocated against its construction. On April 13, 1950, the City Council archives records that Mr. P. A. Rice spoke against Resolution NO. 50-R38 "To approve and tentatively adopt a general plan of interregional highway routes in the

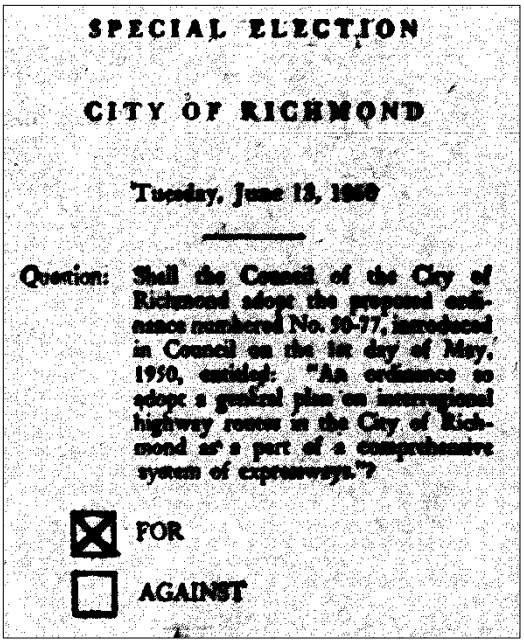
[46] Krueckeberg, 24.
[47] Miller, L.W. "Says Any Way You Slice It, It Will "

City of Richmond as a part of a comprehensive system of expressways and as the first part of an ultimate urban system of expressways." In this meeting with the City Council, Mr. Rice represented the "Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad Company, the Richmond Terminal Railroad and the Richmond Land Corporation" in order to prevent the passage of the bill. While the records do not mention his exact arguments against the construction of the expressway, there was a political cartoon published within a few weeks of this meeting that gives some insight on the situation of regional trains in the 1950s. The title of the political ad is "What's wrong with the picture?" The ad continues to assert that railroads are self-sufficient industries in contrast to transportation in the air, road and water. As the ad states, trains "pay the costs of their 'highways' … including bridges, tunnels and signals … out of their own pockets—not with your tax dollars."[48] This is a legitimate argument because it is now clear highways all ended up costing more than they were expected to cost. In addition, repairs cost more than expected and as new ones were being constructed older highways were already becoming insufficient.[49] Also present in opposition at this City Council meeting were two voices that had become common in the political arena: former Mayor Dr. J. Fulmer Bright and Israel Steingold.

The debate seen in the City Council meeting was eventually put to the citizens of Richmond in the form of a local referendum. As always, the City Council held a tight grip on the political capabilities of the citizens of Richmond and even a democratic referendum limited the voice of the citizens of Richmond. In the case of the referenda, the City Council formulated the language around the vote in such a way that voters could not even determine what exactly it was they were being asked to permit. The sample referendum ballot was originally printed in a RTD editorial (note the "for" box is checked) in order to "help" voters going to the polls and reads,

[48] Richmond Times-Dispatch, May 9, 1950.
[49] Karnes, Thomas L. *Asphalt and Politics: a History of the American Highway System*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009. P. 93.

"Shall the Council of the City of Richmond adopt the proposed ordinance … entitled: "An ordinance to adopt a general plan on interregional highway routes in the City of Richmond as a part of a comprehensive system of expressways."[50] This vague description of the highway system being proposed in the ordinance angered many citizens who desired to have the option of another route for the highway in Richmond.


SPECIAL ELECTION

CITY OF RICHMOND

Tuesday, June 13, 1950

Question: Shall the Council of the City of Richmond adopt the proposed ordinance numbered No. 50-77, introduced in Council on the 1st day of May, 1950, entitled: "An ordinance to adopt a general plan on interregional highway routes in the City of Richmond as a part of a comprehensive system of expressways."?

☒ FOR

☐ AGAINST

In his opinion article regarding the meaning of the pending referendum, Israel Steingold of Richmond emphasizes that the Richmond City Council made a mistake when setting up the parameters of the referendum. He writes, "It had been my hope in urging a referendum of the various expressway proposals that an ordinance would be adopted which would permit the voters of Richmond to express their choice of one or the other of the Segoe, Royer or Shockoe Valley routes, or of a by-pass for heavy traffic." Instead, he writes that the City Council wrote the resolution by asking for a vote "on one general route." He continues that the Richmond Times-Dispatch misled readers by writing that the a vote "for" the referendum would be followed by a more specific referendum regarding the exact location. "That is not true!" writes Israel, "The referendum on June 13 is to ask approval of only one general route, a depressed highway adjoining the central business district."[51] To Israel, there was no option, but to vote against this obscure referendum, but he still believed that a route through the more industrial areas of Shockoe Valley should be an option for later debate.

[50] Richmond Times Dispatch, June 11, 1950.
[51] Richmond Times-Dispatch. June 11, 1950.

In addition to the vague and open-ended wording of the referendum ballot, the Richmond Times-Dispatch casually reported, "There is one legal loophole in the ordinance … The first paragraph says that the general plan of interregional highways outlined in the ordinance is 'subject to such modifications and adjustments as may appear to be necessary or expedient after detailed investigations and studies are completed and as may be finally adopted by the Council.'"[52] Thus, even if citizens were able to vote for a specific route in the city of Richmond, the City Council still reserved the right to move the route as they saw fit.

Silvers' analysis of the referendum states, "The referendum produced a resounding defeat of the expressway plan—only eight of fifty-five precincts voted in its favor."[53] This referendum was a clear message that the residents of Richmond had not embraced the idea of the highway. On June 16, 1950, the day after the defeat of the referendum, the City Council archives recorded the resignation of Lewis G. Chewing from the City Planning Commission. Rather than accept the apparent will of the people of Richmond, Silver states, "… the battle amounted to a test of the new progressive leadership's ability to dictate the city's development policy."[54] In other words, the highway was more than simply a public works project in Richmond; it became directly linked to the success of the city council. Stephen Elkin supports this claim with his research as he writes, "One of the easiest ways for public officials to gain the necessary reputation for innovation and to achieve visibility is by association with major land-use projects."[55] This "major land-use project" thus did not merely constitute an attempt to provide circulation in the city of Richmond, but had become much more of a political statement in Richmond regarding the strength of the city's leadership.

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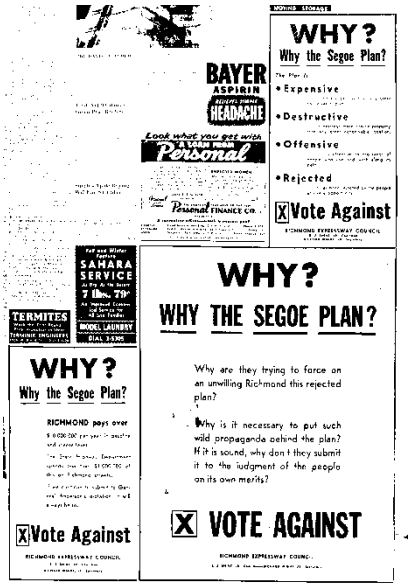
[52] Richmond Times-Dispatch. May 2, 1950 (news).
[53] Silver, Christopher. *Twentieth-Century Richmond,* University of Tennessee Press, 1984. P. 188.
[54] Silver, Christopher. *Twentieth-Century Richmond,* University of Tennessee Press, 1984. P. 188.
[55] Elkin, Stephen L. *City and Regime in the American Republic*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987. 37.

Silver writes that after the City Council appropriated more money toward the construction of the highway and Sego released a new plan that would essentially affect the same area, former mayor Bright "procured twice the necessary signatures to force a referendum."[56]

On November 5, 1951, members of the anti-highway group Richmond Expressway Council (REC) published three ads on the same newspaper page that all asked the same question, "Why the Segoe Plan?"[57] Chairman R. J. Shine, Jr. and Secretary Richard Wight, Jr. both signed off on the three advertisements in order to emphatically state one message most clearly. In contrast, Citizens for Traffic Relief (Walter W. Craigie, chairman) published a pro-highway ad around the same time.[58] This full-page advertisement (pasted at the end of this section) represented the full extent of political posturing in the news, but did not have a noticeable affect on the referendum that failed by over 6000 votes just three days later.[59] To the left, former Richmond Mayor J. Fulmer Bright and his supporters can be seen celebrating this sound victory against the highway.[60] "Expressway Proposal Is Defeated by 6,002 Votes" reported the RT-D on this day. This success was surely a cause for celebration.



J. Fulmer Bright, Hand Upraised, Leads Victory Celebration of Opposition (
With Him (left to right) Are Wight, O'Ferrall, Councilman Garber and S

[56] Silver, Christopher. *Twentieth-Century Richmond,* University of Tennessee Press, 1984. P. 189.
[57] Richmond Times-Dispatch, Nov. 5, 1951.
[58] Richmond Times-Dispatch, Nov. 4, 1951.
[59] Richmond Times-Dispatch, Nov. 4, 1951.
[60] Richmond Times-Dispatch, Photo, Nov. 7, 1951.

34 Cities Build Freeways to Relieve Traffic Congestion

Yes, 34 of our sister cities have found from experience that Freeways into their central business districts are the principal solution to their problems of traffic congestion. It is true that, of the larger cities in the United States, several have by-passes, when justified, to carry tourist and through traffic around their city borders . . . but in every major instance, where such a by-pass exists, the city already has a Freeway into the center and is planning additional Freeways to relieve internal traffic problems.

U. S. Highway No. 1 passes through 11 cities with populations in excess of 200,000 people. These cities include Boston, Mass.; Providence, R. I.; New York, N. Y.; Jersey City, N. J.; Newark, N. J.; Philadelphia, Pa.; Baltimore, Md.; Washington, D. C.; Richmond, Va.; Jacksonville, Fla., and Miami, Fla. There is not a single approved traffic plan for U. S. Highway No. 1 to by-pass any of these cities. Competent traffic authorities on the basis of experience know that Freeways are the real solution to the traffic problems of cities. NOT one single responsible traffic authority has recommended against Richmond's Freeway.

These Cities Now Have Freeways

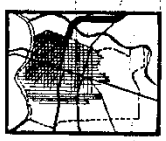
Chicago, Ill.	Boston, Mass.	Washington, D. C.	Dayton, Ohio	Sacramento, Calif.
Detroit, Mich.	Cleveland, Ohio	Akron, Ohio	Denver, Colo.	San Antonio, Texas
Los Angeles, Calif.	Pittsburgh, Pa.	Atlanta, Ga.	Houston, Texas	San Diego, Calif.
New York, N. Y.	San Francisco, Calif.	Cincinnati, Ohio	Kansas City, Kans.	Seattle, Wash.
Philadelphia, Pa.	St. Louis, Mo.	Dallas, Texas	Oakland, Calif.	Syracuse, N. Y.

These Cities Are Planning Freeways

Baltimore, Md.	Milwaukee, Wis.	Grand Rapids, Mich.	New Orleans, La.	Rochester, N. Y.
Buffalo, N. Y.	Charleston, W. Va.	Louisville, Ky.	Portland, Oreg.	

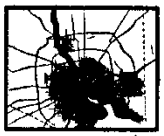
FREEWAYS GO INTO CITIES

Dallas, Texas



Sacramento, Calif.

Philadelphia, Pa.



Baltimore, Md.

FREEWAYS ARE ATTRACTIVE

Western Avenue Freeway
Chicago, Ill.

Arroyo Seco Freeway
Los Angeles, Calif.

Let's not lag. Let's continue to progress along with other American Cities. Let's save lives, time and money. Let's get going! Vote for Richmond's Freeway November 6th.

CITIZENS FOR TRAFFIC RELIEF

WALTER W. CRAIGIE, Chairman ELDRIDGE REAMS

LET'S GET GOING!

VOTE FOR RICHMOND'S FREEWAY Nov. 6

The Rhetoric of a Highway Battle

The Rhetoric of a Highway Battle	**Proponent Position:** The Plan is Inevitable	**Proponent Position:** Legitimacy of the Technical	**Proponent Position:** The Expressway is for the City	**Proponent Position:** Already Funded by the Residents
Opponent Position: Skeptic of the Plan's Success	**Validity of the Plan: Will it be passed?** *"A question of confidence"*	Skepticism about surveys to tell whether plan will be successful Confidence in surveys to prove the inevitable	Skepticism about the purpose of the expressway Confidence that the Expressway is inevitably for the city	Skepticism about the funding sources for the highway Confidence that the funding for a certain route has been approved or will inevitably be found
Opponent Position: Legitimacy of the Individual	The individual opinion stating that the plan will fail because "look at our community" The technical statement that it will succeed because "look at our survey"	**Forms of Opinion: Whose perspective should affect the plan?** *"A question of legitimacy"*	The individual opinion stating that expressway is not for the city because, "look at my house!" The technical response saying that it is for the city because they planned it that way	The individual opinion stating that the highway will cost too much A technical response that they've studied it and found that it will not
Opponent Position: The Expressway is for Outsiders	The plan will fail because it's not for the city The plan will succeed because it is for the city	Studies have shown that the highway if for the residents The people have rejected the highway because it's for outsiders	**Purpose of the Expressway: Who is this for?** *"A question of intent"*	The expressway is too much of a burden on residents The money is not an issue, YOU already paid for the expressway
Opponent Position: It is too much of a Burden for the City	The plan will fail because the cost to the city is too high The plan will succeed because it is going to benefit the city	The highway will be too much for individuals to be worth it The highway is worth the burden because of its value to the city and region	The destruction of the city cannot be for the city The construction of the highway is for the needs of the city	**The cost of the Expressway: Is it worth it?** *"A question of value"*

"The Rhetoric of Highway Battles," is an attempt to understand the rhetorical mechanisms which people used to either support or speak out against the construction of the highway in Richmond. In contrast to the political history of this same general time period, this analysis focuses on a body of 210 highway references found in the Richmond Times-Dispatch around the first and second referenda. These references have been analyzed for their rhetorical value in order to gain a deep understanding of arguments made during a highway battle. These have all been compiled into a taxonomic scheme of four sets of binary arguments made either for or against the highway. This section attempts to give deeper insight into the mechanics of highway battles. Finally, this section seeks to interrogate the dubious arguments of the highway proponent and explain their shortcomings.

One man who deserves to be mentioned for his power over the political messages in the Richmond Times-Dispatch during this period of time is Virginius Dabney, Editor in Chief of The RT-D. In regards to his work at the paper and influence on the city of Richmond, J. Douglass Smith writes, "…Virginius Dabney emerged in the 1930s as one of the most consistent and persistent advocates for the equitable treatment of African Americans. Dabney rejected a core tenet of white supremacy, the horizontal color line, which mandated that all whites were considered superior to all blacks. Instead, he envisioned a vertical color line that allowed blacks and whites to live parallel lives, equal yet divided, each with their own intraracial hierarchy."[61] While Smith did not include the years surrounding the highway battle in his research, this biographical note on Dabney is helpful in understanding his staunch support of the highway throughout the entire process. To Dabney, perhaps the highway and the automobile satisfied what Smith describes as his desire for "parallel worlds" because everyone who could afford to

[61] Smith, J. Douglass. *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia.* The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2002. P 13.

drive a car would be able to drive from one place to another without interacting with people on the other side of the color line. With this conviction, Dabney published countless political cartoons, editorialss and news articles blatantly in favor of the expressway being constructed in the city of Richmond.

Instead of looking for a counter-hegemonic discourse in the black community to balance the likes of Dabney, it is more apt to consider all anti-highway rhetoric as counter-hegemonic. The highway coalition was thus the hegemony in American society because this coalition was built upon mainstream conceptions of intelligence, power, authority, and value. The highway itself is the physical projection of this power on the powerless constituents of a city. The proponents of the highway consistently channeled the power of the state, corporations and large firms that had already thoroughly developed the ideas of highways and found ways to defend them. In stark contrast, all anti-highway rhetorical tactics should thus be considered anti-hegemonic in nature because those in opposition to the highway were struggling as citizens to protect their way of life, protect their city, to demystify unrealistic visions of grandeur and to make sense of the power struggle they found themselves in. Those fighting highways were often relatively unprepared and consistently outdone.

In contrast to the political history of the previous chapter, this chapter will develop a deep analysis of news and city council archives as rhetorical artifacts of the time period. The rhetoric of a highway battle will examine a large amount of text (over two hundred articles from the Richmond Times-Dispatch) to understand the relationship between the most common arguments related to the city and the highway. Finally, this analysis seeks to look at arguments for or against the highway as arguments essential to personal identity and the visions people hold for the future.

Raymie McKerrow writes, "The critique of domination has an emancipatory purpose—a telos toward which it aims in the process of demystifying the conditions of domination. The critique of freedom, premised on Michel Foucault's treatment of power relations, has as its telos the prospect of permanent criticism—a self-reflective critique that turns back on itself even as it promotes a realignment in the forces of power that construct social relations. In practice, a critical rhetoric seeks to unmask or demystify the discourse of power."[62] In this way, this analysis of the rhetoric of a highway battle in Richmond is an "emancipation" of the dominated demographics in 1950s Richmond. Additionally, this critique seeks to solidify the pro-highway argument as essentially oppressive and directly linked to anti-democratic political structures within mid-century United States. McKerrow continues to write that the critique of domination is a critique of the discourse of power. He writes, "… the emphasis has shifted from the question 'is this discourse true or false?' to 'how the discourse is *mobilized to legitimate the sectional interests of hegemonic groups.* "[63] This question is critical to understanding the ways in which the proponents of the highway sought to make illegitimate the arguments of opponents and in the process to construct the highway with their futurist rhetoric. It seems that proponents believed that the more times they said that the highway would be built, the more likely that it would be done.

Validity of the Plan: Will it be passed?

Skepticism vs. Inevitability, *"A question of confidence"*

An interesting aspect of the debate regarding the highway was the presence of semi-prophetic statements made regarding the passage or failure of the plan. Because the idea of the expressway was introduced within the hegemony, arguments related to the expressway were

[62] McKerrow, Raymie E. "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis." P. 91.
[63] McKerrow. 93.

permanently framed within the context of the positive or negative future of the highway (e.g. If the highway is built it will be good/bad) rather than within the context of the positive or negative reality of the physical space of the city. Instead, the city itself was implicitly ignored during the debates regarding the highway. For this reason, the opponents of the highway were never truly able to critique the hegemonic discourse in order to expose this implicit argument. Both sides of the debate made comments about the future results of the referendum, but the hegemonic discourse utilized the tactic more deliberately for its favor. It was as if proponents of the expressway were speaking the plan into existence. Proponents of the expressway often cited surveys of highways in other cities in order to support their claims of future success in Richmond and spoke about the inevitability of progress on the urban landscape of America as fact (e.g. "when the expressway is built"). The opponents of the highway often stated that the referendum would be rejected, but usually by citing the cost of the highway or general disdain for the plan rather than a more thorough critique of the hegemonic discourse and a defense of the city as is.

Forms of Opinion: **Who deserves to be heard?**

Officials and Studies vs. Popular Opinion, *"A question of legitimacy"*

The question of legitimacy of different types of information is an implicit question that factored significantly in the debate regarding the expressway in Richmond. From the very first meeting referenced in 1946, the proponents of the highway most often cited federal, state and local officials as well as urban planners, studies and national examples of highways in other cities (i.e. "highways are American") when attempting to craft arguments related to the legitimacy of the highway in Richmond. In contrast, the counter-hegemonic discourse in this highway battle most often referenced the will of the people in Richmond and the local prerogative of the citizens in order to argue that this national phenomenon had no place in

Richmond. This national v. local aspect of this argument is also significant vis-à-vis the perspectives of the hegemony on the city and the relative value that the powerful people in America placed on certain parts of the city 'as is.'

Purpose of the Expressway: Who is this for?

Richmond vs. Outsiders, *"A question of intent"*

Before this category can be understood, it must be stated that the hegemonic discourse was essentially the invading side of a rhetorical battle over the physical space of Richmond. In contrast, the counter-hegemonic discourse was the side of the argument struggling to hold onto the city. Both sides of this debate were fighting for different conceptions of the term "Richmond" as it described both a physical space and a lived experience. The hegemony considered "Richmond" as simply a space to be rebuilt, but the counter considered "Richmond" to be the memories and communities that were slated for destruction. When cited by the offense as a space that would benefit from the construction of the highway, any reference to the city should be read "suburbs" or "Central Business District" because these were the two areas that were usually mentioned in reference to the circulation of cars through the region. When the counter-hegemonic discourse mentioned the city they usually referenced destruction and claimed that the road would be used by through traffic and thus would not help the traffic situation in the city. Thus, the counter-hegemonic discourse also considered the city as a permanent fixture while the hegemony arrogantly considered the city a plastic form ready to take new shapes with each new theory. Of course, this debate regarding the future use of the highway was complete speculation and likely the most significant red herring of the debate. Once the road was completed it would be used however drivers desired.

The cost of the Expressway: Is it worth it?

Already paid vs. Too much money, *"A question of value"*

The cost of the expressway was a difficult topic for the hegemony to rhetorically frame as a positive for the constituents of Richmond, but the powerful in Richmond essentially pitted the cost of the highway against the opponents of the highway. This argument was most often stated in this way, "The highway has already been funded with taxes paid by the residents of Richmond, thus an opposition to the highway is a rejection of *your own money.*" This funding was often also often framed as national funding that would not be appropriated for the route through Shockoe Valley and thus the hegemony used the federal government as a higher standard. The defending side of the debate often cited both the cost of the destruction of the city and the cost of the construction of the highway as legitimate reasons against building the road. Both costs were far too high to justify the construction of a highway and the opposition was quick to add that monetary costs would likely be higher than projected. Of course, both sides admitted that the cost of the highway was purely speculation. Once construction began the money would be found to complete it.

In each of these four categories the hegemony utilized one claim more than any other: The claim on the future. The hegemony claimed to understand what would happen in the future, spoke as if the highway would certainly be constructed in the future, confidently dreamed about the future of Richmond and constantly asserted that its actions would benefit the future. In contrast, the counter-hegemonic discourse often engaged this futurist argumentation, but more often held onto the reality of the city and the benefits of the city in its current form. The irrationality of the hegemony was fortunately perceived by a citizen of Richmond in 1951 and submitted to the Richmond Times-Dispatch opinion editor. This analysis will serve as a

conclusion to this analysis of the hegemonic discourse within the rhetoric of a highway battle. It is fitting that a voice struggling from the past be remembered in the context of an obsessed and delusional hegemony in the city of Richmond and the nation of the USA.

Robert Leroy Shepherd writes,

> **"Freedom, Independence, Taxes and the Freeway**
>
> Inflexible plans result in a fixation of mind. Steering them becomes an obsession kindred to a driver's headlong dash above or over a freeway.
>
> Following a series of political and military plans, Alexander the Great ended Phoenicia's independence in 65 B.C. that had been developing for 2,000 years.
>
> Caesar, Hitler and Hirohito also had plans.
>
> Britain's plan of empire received a mortal blow with the attainment of American independence born of the English Magna Charta June 15, 1215, furthered by the English Bill of Rights, 1689, and subsequently included in the first 10 amendments of our Constitution.
>
> Freedom and independence are on the defensive. They are fixed to the plans of the Kremlin and faltered step by step into trap after trap. They need to take the initiative with plans of their own.
>
> National and State taxation prerogatives impel Richmonders to accept the halter of a council-maniac freeway, or do without.
>
> Freedom and independence are involved as well as the passage of a fiscally imposed freeway from which we cannot afford to return.
>
> Taxes and plans? Yes. But some lead to the freedom of men, others lead to a fixation of mind and bondage just a binding as chains.
>
> Robert LeRoy Shepherd, Richmond[64]"

[64] Richmond Times-Dispatch Nov. 3, 1951.

Elimination of Public Recourse

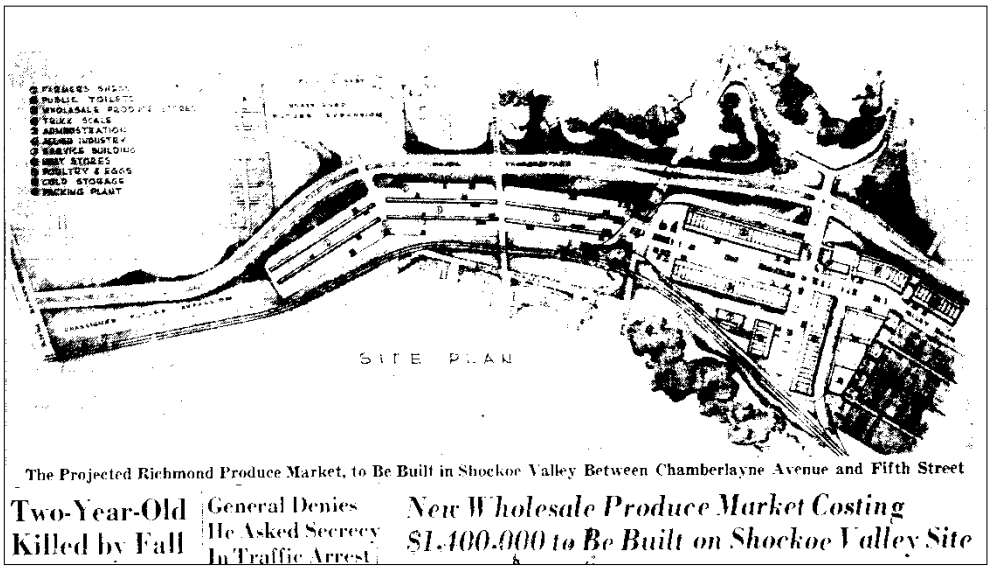
The day after the second expressway referendum was defeated, the RTD staff editorial was sarcastically titled, "The Expressway's Defeat." The first line of the article states, "The outcome of yesterday's referendum merely postpones the day when the work will begin on an express highway system in Richmond."[65] The article continues to assert the same old argument that the expressway system is the only viable plan for reducing traffic congestion in Richmond. The authors then make the ominous statement that the people of Richmond would eventually recognize the merits of the expressway plan and the tone of the article seems to imply the classic, "Or else." As the opponents of the expressway celebrated another resounding victory, the editorial board continued to critique their work and question their legitimacy. The article states,

> "If the opponents have any plan, the city would be interested in seeing it. But if the plan is simply for a by-pass or a Shockoe Valley route, it is difficult to see that this would merit extensive consideration, since such proposals already have been exhaustively studied and rejected by competent engineers."[66]

In other words, the article contrasts the opponents of the Segoe plan to "competent engineers" who have convinced the editorial board that the planned highway is best for the city. Of course, there is no concern for the will of the people. While the editorial board of the RTD did not have the authority to authorize the expressway, this editorial seems like more than just mere confidence. Indeed, the next few years would see democracy gradually stripped from the people of Richmond and the visions of Dabney would eventually be fulfilled.

[65] Richmond Times-Dispatch, Nov. 7, 1951.
[66] Richmond Times-Dispatch, Nov. 7, 1951.

The process of eliminating public recourse seems to have begun as early as November 1, 1951. On this day, an article was published regarding a produce market to be built in Shockoe Valley. Keep in mind, this graphic was published six days before the defeat of the second referendum as a dream for the future. This dream was never realized, but became a sort of political tool after the defeat of the second referendum. One can imagine politicians and power brokers sitting in a room scratching their heads wondering how they were going build the highway against the will of the people of Richmond. After the citizens of Richmond debated for and against the expressway, the rules of this highway battle were about to be changed. Because there was such a vehement opposition to the idea of this highway in the city of Richmond, the City Council had to find a way to circumvent the public in order to complete the plan. The primary method of doing this was the creation of special authorities through the Virginia General Assembly. While economic and political forces had informed the planning and debates of the highway for years, the establishing of an authority precluded all further public recourse because the authority was not constrained by local referendum.



The Projected Richmond Produce Market, to Be Built in Shockoe Valley Between Chamberlayne Avenue and Fifth Street

Two-Year-Old Killed by Fall

General Denies He Asked Secrecy In Traffic Arrest

New Wholesale Produce Market Costing $1,400,000 to Be Built on Shockoe Valley Site

The process of eliminating public input began with the creation of the Richmond Market Authority. While it initially seems irrelevant that the General Assembly of Virginia would desire

to plan and construct a market for produce, the timing and location of this project was clearly strategic in blocking off one of the most commonly cited and popular alternatives to the Segoe route: Shockoe Valley. On August 17, 1953, the City Council archives recorded that **"**Mr. Collins Denny, Jr., Attorney for the Richmond Market Authority, addressed the body." The purpose of this visit was to request $300,000 for the authority which the General Assembly had created without appropriating any funding toward its purpose as an organization. The record continues to say that the funding requested was for "approximately $300,000.00 for the purchase of land in the Shockoe Valley Site upon which to build a wholesale produce market."

After this presentation, a representative from the Chamber of Commerce stated that it was "one of the major projects needed in Richmond." It's not clear whether the large swath of land in Shockoe Valley was ever purchased for this produce market, but it is very likely that any further attempt to take the land in Shockoe Valley for the highway would be stopped by this newly created authority and a newly designated purpose for the future of the relatively vacant valley. It is possible that this entire project proposal was simply an attempt to politically "guide" the highway west out of the valley into Jackson Ward and the distant suburbs of the West End. One must wonder how much information the editorial board of the Richmond Times-Dispatch was given on the day after the referendum was defeated. After the RTD claimed it was "only a matter of time" that the highway would be constructed, the very next editorial was about plans for produce market in Shockoe Valley. Then two years later a new authority was established by the General Assembly before any money was appropriated for an operating budget.

Shockoe Valley seemed closed to the highway at this point, but the planners and leaders in Richmond still needed to find a way to construct the highway as it had been planned: directly through the city. On August 24, 1953, the City Council was for the second time presented with

Resolution No. 53-R50-46, "Concerning the report of Wilbur Smith and Associates on 'Toll Roads for the Richmond-Petersburg Area' and concurring in general with its findings and conclusions." With one amendment (the phrase "cities in the area" was replaced with "City of Richmond"), the resolution passed with six council members in favor and one opposed. Christopher Silver's research on this moment explains that this was the city council decision that established what would be known as the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike Authority. Silver writes, "This action shifted the decision to the general assembly where the plan quickly passed. This move prevented another referendum and ignored a petition of 400 signatures. Local officials citied expense of purchasing industrial property [in Shockoe Valley] compared to cheap residential property [in Jackson Ward]."[67] With this decision, the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike Authority was empowered with the strength of eminent domain and removed from the reach of local referendum.

Thus, the city of Richmond and the General Assembly together guided the highway through Richmond on its course with powerful authorities that Richmond residents could not deny. As Silver writes, once the R-PTA began receiving contracts for the construction of the highway, "The wheels of progress could not … be stopped."[68] Although this decision was made in 1953, it would take a year to approve the Segoe Plan, one year to begin to receive contracts and about two years to complete the construction of the road. By 1957, a large section of Jackson Ward would be destroyed and turned into a highway. No matter what citizens did to fight the looming destruction, it gradually became clear that they were fighting for a lost cause.

The reaction to this removal of political voice seems to have resulted in a victory for the highway hegemony and a suspension of democracy. In the section below, there are four

[67] Silver, Christopher. *Twentieth Century Richmond.* 192.
[68] Silver, Christopher. *Twentieth Century Richmond.* 194.

perspectives that represent reactions to the news of the highway. The first two of these perspectives show little change from earlier hegemonic perspectives in the highway battle. They are detached and technical. In contrast, the second two perspectives represent two new opinions on the highway from the citizens of the city. Because the authors of these articles had a stake in the city, they had changed their message as they realized the destruction was certain.

They are as follows:

Distanced and academic: "There is no cause for alarm"

On November 3, 1955, there was a curious opinion article titled "They Like Living Near a Highway." This article "From Public Administration Clearing House Bulletin" is an otherwise anonymous article published alongside other personal submissions. The article begins with the statement, "MOST PEOPLE who live near a heavily traveled highway think of it as a convenience instead of a nuisance." This statement is then confirmed as the conclusion of research conducted by the Westchester County planning department.

In five succinct points, this article writes that living near a highway is a convenience and does not have any negative effect on the neighborhood living situation. The article states, "Nearness of a major road to a man's home will not spoil and may not even affect his attitude toward his neighborhood," and continues, "The farther away from the road a house was located, the greater was the approval of the road, although even the near residents were mostly in favor." Additionally, "Concern for the safety of their children was a major reason that families with children gave for opposing the nearness of the road," and finally, "Property values were on the increase in all the areas near or removed from the road."

This distanced and academic voice mirrors the previously mentioned perspective labeled "Legitimacy of the Technical." This article represents a dismissive voice common to proponents of the expressway before and after its construction. This voice represents a perspective that was so invested in the idea of highways that an alternative was not an option. The submission is so matter-of-fact that it seems out of place. There is no introduction or conclusion; rather, just a statement and four supporting pieces of evidence supporting and one weakening the position. The four supporting sections are buttressed with statistical data and broad-scope analysis while the dissenting point is not supported at all. In this way, the only argument against the highway (that of the safety of children) is presented as anecdotal.

Pride and Vision: Grand plans presented at highways conferences

On November 2, 1955, the Richmond Times-Dispatch published a news brief titled, "Highway Conference Opens Today" and the following day another brief titled, "Tremendous Road Plans Seen in U.S." These briefs are both related to the ninth annual Virginia Highway Conference held at Virginia Military Institute. Continuing with the theme of self-fulfilling prophecy, the first brief projected that "more than 700 persons" would likely be in attendance for the three days of the conference with the theme of "Road Progress Through Teamwork -- Federal, State and Local."

The knowledge of such conferences is crucial to understanding the momentum of the highway movement and the energy of its ideas at this time. As with all movements, this one included a message stretching the attendant's vision to the next horizon.

As a brief, the second entry related to the conference is short enough to be assessed in its entirety. It reads,

"An official of the American Automobile Association predicted here Wednesday that a tremendous road program lies ahead for the United States. In an address at a technical session of engineers, which opened the ninth annual Virginia Highway Conference at Virginia Military Institute, Burton Marsh, of Washington, director of traffic engineering and safety for the AAA, said this anticipated road program will be far beyond anything we have ever seen."

The 1950s had already witnessed unprecedented change in the way Americans built roads, but this entry is significant because it's a perspective shared at a conference of insiders to the highway machine. One aspect of this news brief is most intriguing: the impression that Marsh was merely an onlooker to this highway transformation. Marsh seems to have positioned himself as an onlooker anticipating something great. While he understood the potential of these projects, neither Marsh nor his contemporaries knew when the highway projects should slow down or how the mania would conclude.

Reflective and self-aware: What is happening is not sustainable

On November 4, 1955, Ross Valentine wrote a particularly thoughtful piece titled, "Are They Jacking Up the Beanstalk?" In this submission, Valentine leads the reader through a series of ideas that posit the general idea that the automobile industry is growing at an unsustainable rate. This position, he writes is, "of course, a rank heresy—as it was rank heresy in 1927 and 1928, to doubt that "business is fundamentally sound." In equating the expansion of the automobile industry to the stock market of the 1920s, he reframed the success of 1950s America as nothing more than capitalist mania. He is thus aware that his message runs counter to the mainstream culture, but dismisses the arrogance of the majority as foolhardy and reckless.

He begins supporting his perspective with the statement, "In boom times the cautious are condemned as alarmists or timid souls, while overconfidence is regarded as a sterling virtue

synonymous with patriotism. Yet there is always a point in time beyond which the rate of expansion cannot go, without creating an imbalance baneful not only to the industry or business affected—but to the entire economy. The trick is to keep things in balance, to keep evolution *from getting* ahead of *itself*." He uses evolution and natural selection as a metaphor for what he sees as unsustainable growth. He cites examples of extinct animals to reiterate the terminal result of excessive, unsustainable growth. The sabre-toothed tiger's tusks grew too large to function, giant dragonflies grew too large and slow and an elephant's tusks held its head away from the ground. In each case, the theme of unchecked growth is reiterated and presented as a transcendent concept.

But, he adds that an economy "differs from a natural organism in one important aspect—its *growth* can be *controlled* by the industry itself." This, to Valentine, is a cause for hope that the cycles of nature might be prevented by the wisdom of mankind. He writes, "When it finds itself growing too big in relation to urban traffic arteries: in excess of anticipated demand—it can wisely curb 'the inner drive' that is urging it onward "regardless of consequences." This inner drive is assumed to be capitalist greed

Valentine seeks to appeal to reason within the reader and the citizen of Richmond. He concludes the opinion submission with the prediction that, "If it resorts to excessive relaxation of consumer credit—it will merely worsen the evil consequences." Indeed, this submission is something of a prophecy for every person in 2011 wondering America became such an unsustainable society.

Desperate and helpless: Please just move the highway a little farther away

On November 4, 1955, The Richmond Times-Dispatch published a news article titled, "Turn Aside Turnpike Just 150 Feet, Sherwood Park Residents Suggest." This article encapsulates the desperate position in which many Richmond residents found themselves once the construction of the highway was certain. To understand this perspective, imagine there is a new river flowing from the mountains toward your city and all your efforts are devoted to simply diverting its path. It is no longer an option to prevent the highway; at this point, residents seem desperate to at least lessen its negative impact on their neighborhood.

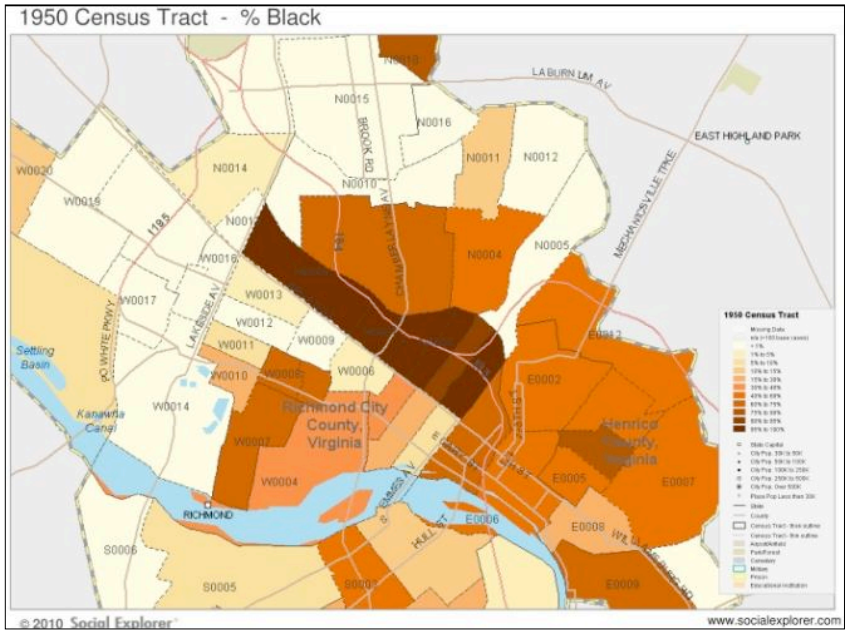
The article states that residents of the Sherwood Park Neighborhood voted 97 to four in favor of moving the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike 150 feet away from their neighborhood. Additionally, the Richmond City Council reportedly had the authority to move the highway, but this is unclear based on the content of the article.

The Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike Authority (RPTA), in contrast, is obviously in control of the situation and operating from a position of power while brokering the deal with the residents. The article states, "The Turnpike Authority offered to move the toll road slightly south and west in the Sherwood Park section if the cost of the move could be offset by the elimination of an overpass for Robin Hood Road." Though this example, one begins to understand the dynamic between The RPTA and residents in the path of destruction. The RPTA has no obligation to the desires of the residents and as such approaches this meeting with a general confidence. The residents, on the other hand, desperately desire to move the highway away from their neighborhood because they are invested in their homes and communities. The residents come from a position of weakness and emotional stress.

The two primary voices of dissent argue that there will be an increase in traffic if Robin Hood is closed and a loss of private land if the highway is moved. The second section titled

"And Another Problem" continues to describe a disagreement between two residents about whether noise will be an issue when the highway is built. The issue is not settled, but it is recorded that the minority in opposition to the highway was eventually defeated.

It must be noted that this neighborhood was primarily white at the time this article was published. While also being planned through almost all of the most densely populated Black neighborhoods, the highway becomes newsworthy when it enters the White neighborhood. It is significant that the burden of the highway was borne by both Black and White residents, but a map of the city (1950 Census Track - % Black) reveals that the affects were disproportionately felt by the Black population of Richmond. In contrast, the Sherwood Park neighborhood is the one of a few white neighborhoods to face the same fate (1950 Census Track - % White).



Eighteen Months

In all previous historical accounts of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike being planned, debated, rejected and constructed, the construction has been given little direct attention. Silver is thorough enough to discuss the people that the highway displaced and other related *effects* of the construction of the highway, but does not critically analyze the highway itself and the space that it currently inhabits. Perhaps this is because in the area of political history, the actual construction of the highway is irrelevant. By the time the construction process began it was perceived as beyond the reach of politics.

While the highway was already imminent, the process and effects of the road are still historically significant. This significance becomes obvious when the construction process is more thoroughly described. In a set of nine previously unpublished photos, the process of destruction of Richmond and subsequent construction of the highway is illuminated. Viewing a sequence of these photos seems like a silent film or a flipbook as the rhetoric and politics of the highway battle fade into the background. As the story of construction unfolds, it seems unbelievable that there is no way to stop the process from reaching its conclusion. It seems incredible that this was the best, indeed, the *only* possible path through Richmond.

This destruction and construction process has been divided into a few sections and analyzed for the individual effects on the community of Jackson Ward and the memory of Richmond. While conclusions to this section are not “empirical” in the way that some describe evidence, the narrative of the images is perhaps the truest history that can be told in a raw and unedited form.

February 7, 1957: Desertion

You can stare at this first photo for as long as you want, but it is the ghost of a city which no longer exists. You can marvel at the beauty of the row houses, but they have been likely rotting in a dump for the past sixty years. You can wonder whose car is parked in front of the buildings that were torn down. The car symbolizes the impetus for the destruction. Most importantly, as you look at this image, begin to wonder what the two children in the lower right-hand side are saying to each other. Did they have any idea why the neighborhood was being destroyed?

March 5, 1957: Destruction

Opponents to the highway often referred to it as irresistible and, at times, a supra-human force of destruction. In the photo to the left, the similarity to effects of natural disasters is unmistakable. The difference is that this destruction was planned.

In his book *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*, Robert Bevan writes "that the machine-like destruction of symbolic buildings and the physical fabric of cities and civilizations is not merely collateral damage, but a deliberate campaign by attackers to 'dominate, divide, terrorize, and eliminate' the memory, history, and identity of the opposing side."[69] This quote encapsulates the political statement that the City Council and General Assembly made in destroying this neighborhood and other neighborhoods in the wake of the highway.

March 27, 1957 and April 24, 1957: Clearance and exposure

At this point in the progression, there is no proof, aside from a street system, that there were ever buildings, communities and cultures on this small plot of land. The past has been erased. These photos exemplify an essential nature of the transformation of the American city as a result of these large public works projects: the city and its inhabitants were exposed. Later in this paper, there is a photo of Sixth Mount Zion published in the AFRO-American. The above

[69] Stephen Verderber, Delirious New Orleans: Manifesto for an Extraordinary American City, 218

photo was taken eight days before the AFRO published that photo of the church and an optimistic caption. It almost seems as though the photo was cropped closely enough to hide the destruction on the other side. While the church was saved, it is clear that the neighborhoods to the north were utterly destroyed and the church now stands as a testament to a once proud community,

June 27, 1957 and August 28, 1957: Moving Earth

In his famous collection of essays, *The Souls of Black* Folk, DuBois wrote a prophetic command to the twenty-first century, car-owning citizen. "To the car-window sociologist," he writes, "to the man who seeks to understand and know that South by devoting the few leisure hours of a holiday trip to unraveling the snarl of centuries, —to such men very often the whole trouble with the black field-hand maybe summed up by Aunt Ophelia's word, 'Shiftless!'"[70] This is often the reaction that people have as they drive through the city of Richmond and determine that it is not a "good" city. The twenty-first century car-window sociologist does not even need to go out of their way to see black communities because the highway was

[70] Dubois, William Edward Burghardt. *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. A.C. McClurg & CO., 1903. P. 154.

built directly through them in Richmond and elsewhere. This is perhaps a more extreme example of what DuBois imagined, but the untold numbers of cars that drive through Jackson Ward on I-95 either do not realize that it was once a community or they wonder why anyone would ever live there.

December 30, 1957 and March 3, 1958: Construction

In his article about nostalgia and memory, Greg Dickenson writes, "Places are often constructed to make claims about a society. As time passes, these places become rhetorical artifacts that can maintain rhetorical and memorial significance. These places evoke a whole range of emotion-laden memories while providing the possibility of bodily participation in the evocation of the memory."[71] Through this lens, the highway becomes a historical artifact that

[71] Dickinson, Greg (1997) 'Memories for sale: Nostalgia and the construction of identity of Old Pasadena', Quarterly Journal of Speech, 83: 1, 4.

makes a statement about the sort of society that we are in America. In other words, the highway should no longer be seen as a passive "path," but as an active monument to capitalism and the oppression of public works projects in the 1950s. Reading the highway as a historical artifact of 1957 begins to reshape the way in which the highway is experienced because it is no longer seen as neutral. The highway becomes active in segregating, silencing and moving people from one place to the next.

June 25, 1958: Completion

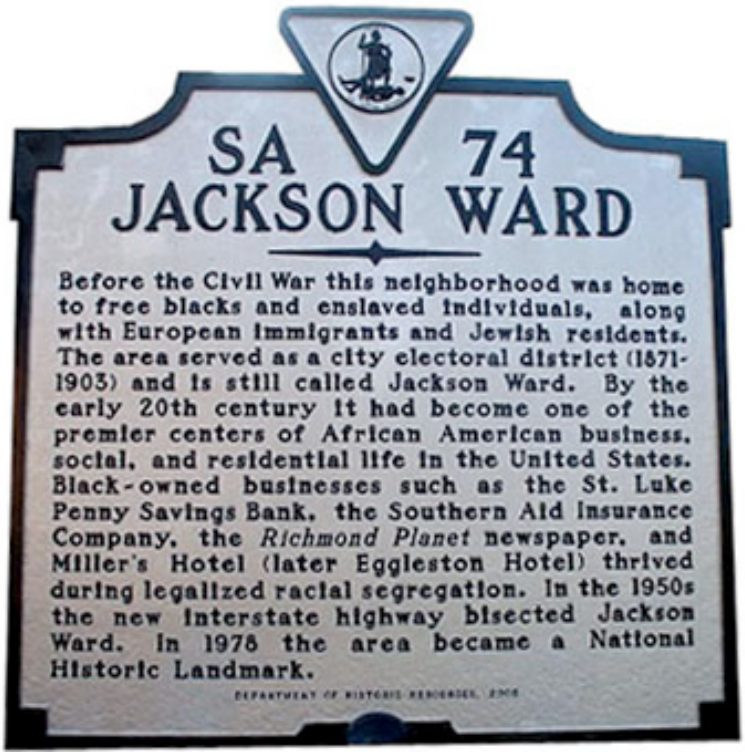
Upon their completion, the *Times-Dispatch* described the new roadways through the city of Richmond as "ribbons of concrete"[72] Readers at the time could certainly imagine silk ribbons gleaming in the sunlight and flowing through the city as a ribbon in the wind. Indeed, this image of the highway looks as thought it was always there. Only 16 months after the first work-progress photo was taken, the highway appeared just as planners, politicians, downtown businessmen, and civic boosters had always said it would. By the time this photo was taken, cars had already begun to drive on this road built directly through a neighborhood in order to get from one place to another. In the rush of construction, there was little time for remembering what had previously existed. Indeed, the past was not just forgotten, it was torn from the people of Richmond and

[72] Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, Aug. 2, 1955. Found in Silver, 193.

dumped in a pile somewhere outside the city. After a decade of debating nearly every positive and negative aspect of the highway plan, it seems that there would have been nothing left to say. The highway was complete. The city cared little to do a follow-up research on the success of the project as Silver writes, "There was no serious study by local planners concerning the impact of the turnpike, once it was completed, on either traffic congestion, downtown revitalization, or the distress wrought upon neighborhoods that lay along its route. Completion seemed to be an end in itself."[73] As the photos progress through time, the destruction of Richmond gradually shifts to the construction of a highway. Looking back on the event, the latter was the only aspect of the process that was ultimately remembered. Not only was the physical space destroyed, but the highway also destroyed the intangible aspects of the city: community, culture and cohesion to name a few examples. To finally conclude this entire highway battle, the purpose of the highway was ultimately determined from outside Richmond. On August 17, 1958, the NYT ran an article titled, "Last Five Miles of Pike Are Opened in Virginia." In this brief article, the author states that this construction finally "eliminates another bottleneck on the New York-to-Florida highway."[74] Thus, it seems that after years of theoretically debating the purpose of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike, The New York Times made the definitive statement. The purpose of the highway, all rhetorical posturing aside, is to provide a path for people and trucks driving through the city of Richmond.

[73] Silver, Christopher. *Twentieth-Century Richmond,* University of Tennessee Press, 1984. P. 196.
[74] "Last Five Miles of Pike Are Opened in Virginia." New York Times, Aug. 17, 1958.

Writing History, Excavating Memory



Today, the period of time between 1946 and 1958 is represented by just one sentence on a historical marker. The marker itself was not in Jackson Ward during the time described, because Jackson Ward had not yet been deemed "historical." A couple of decades after it was destroyed by the highway, Jackson Ward was finally deemed historical and eventually this sign was placed on the once-famous and culturally vibrant "Two Street." Perhaps a deeper understanding of this formative period of time will allow for a deeper understanding of the nature of our cities and our lives as Americans today. Additionally, we may begin to understand how intimately our identity is linked to the highway when we engage the open road on a more meaningful level. The memory of the places that were destroyed by the highway should be

recorded and collected nearby so that former members may be able to visit some form of what the place once was. A museum to "Richmond before the highway" would allow former residents to visit and recall the place as it once was.

Greg Dickenson writes extensively about the connection between memory and place and the significance of both of these on personal identity. He writes, "Our attention turns to memory places—those sites where the cites necessary for the invention of the self are located. Analysis of these places serves as a crucial part of the analysis of the intersection of public discourse and personal lives. And the place itself becomes a part of this discourse."[75] The place itself becomes a part of the discourse … that is the ultimate desire for this research in the context of the highway in Richmond. This concept of memory places is also significant for two reasons: First, it reminds us of the profound loss that residents of Jackson Ward and other neighborhoods experienced when the highway was constructed through the city. The loss of place is a loss of the identity and memory that were linked to that place. Second, the concept of memory places is significant in analyzing the highway itself for its qualities and performative nature. The end goal is truly developing an understanding of "what the highway is saying" to each person who walks beside or drives on this asphalt road.

What is needed for Jackson Ward is not cheap nostalgia such as the historical marker at the top of this section. Dickenson writes, "In a post-traditional period, a time of deepening memory crisis, secured place becomes harder and harder to maintain, giving rise to nostalgia to cover the discomforts of the present."[76] This nostalgia is often manufactured in order to give the illusion of historical significance to places that have long been removed of such meaning. This

[75] Dickinson, Greg (1997) 'Memories for sale: Nostalgia and the construction of identity of Old Pasadena', Quarterly Journal of Speech, 83: 21.
[76] Dickinson, Greg (1997) 'Memories for sale: Nostalgia and the construction of identity of Old Pasadena', Quarterly Journal of Speech, 83: 5.

cheap nostalgia does not substantially cover the deep meaning of the history and compartmentalizes complex history into single, condescending sentences.

Since the places have already been destroyed, their memory was destroyed with them. While the former inhabitants of places such as Jackson Ward may remember some aspects of life, these memories will eventually fade and die with each passing generation. In its place, the highway remains as a force silencing the memory of the places that once existed. The highway is now the primary rhetorical artifact at this location broadcasting within the city a particular way of thinking, of recording memory and of identity formation. This way of thinking has been called "modernization theory" or the American modernization narrative. This was a perspective which emerged after World War II during America's ascent to power. At first, modernization insisted there were "…two forms of developmental pathology: degenerative backwardness, on the one hand, and cancerous communism, on the other. In contrast to both these, modernization theory defined healthy modernity as a fully realized new Deal America: a god-fearing but secular society in which race and gender were of little import; a privately run, full-employment economy of well-paid workers, all of whom owned a house and a car; a formal democratic system in which widespread agreement existed about societal goals, the details of which would be worked out be technically trained public service elites."[77] This theory was not only a political theory that guided government practices, but it became much more influential and began to affect American identity and the recording of American history.

To this end, Gilman continues, "These discourses from sociology and political science also resonated with the dominant historiographic trend of the era. The intellectual historian John Higham coined the term "consensus history" to refer what he saw as a recent historiographical

[77] Gilman, Nils. "Modernization Theory, The Highest Stage of American Intellectual History." Eds. David Engerman, Nils Gilman, Mark Haefele, and Michael Latham. *Staging Growth.* University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst. 56.

tendency to argue that American history was characterized by relative agreement on political matters, and that American society was relatively conflict free."[78] This was the modernization narrative shaping the way Americans viewed themselves. It is of course an arrogant historiographical tool, but more importantly the research method itself is a relic of American society dating back to the highways and automobiles of the 1950s. It's a way of thinking that assumes that America is a collaborative and productive nation that has been improving throughout the years. This is the narrative of progress. Within this narrative, moments of crisis or destruction are often viewed as coming from outside of this nation because the "good" America would not do something like this to itself. If you will recall Dabney's history of natural disasters from the introduction of this paper, you may begin to imagine the effect that the lens progress could have on memory. Also, recall when Sims writes, "Several times, during hostile invasions or as a result of floods or storm the city has been set back, but each time a new start has been made. Richmonders from other eras have struggled, and built, and lived in what we now call home."[79] Remember the silences associated with studying highways in Richmond. For some reason, the highway itself does not seem to have been determined historically significant to various historians. Instead, crisis related to natural disaster is deemed worthy of record.

And what of a highway that caused significant crisis in the lives of many? The highway was (and is still) framed as American progress and thus does not seem significant among the multitude of examples of progress in history. The voices of crisis were lost as soon as the highway was finished. The gleaming ribbons of concrete replaced the memory of the process that it took to get to this point. And so the fight which continued until the construction of the highway was lost. And then it was finished. The proponents won. What was a prejudice against the heart

[78] Ibid. 60.
[79] Sims, Lynn. *Chronology of Richmond 1607-1980.* Carter Composition Co., Richmond, 1980. P. 1.

of the American city begat the idea of urban highways, begat a plan for Richmond, begat vast destruction and a road which begat a river of people in cars channeling the original prejudice against the city. These people now find themselves driving through “what was” into the land of “what could be.” And that is essentially the message of progress that the highway imparts on the driver: Always moving from what was to what could be, but never arriving to a place of comfort and never slowing down enough to care.

Restoring the City

Extracting the city from its past

When studying the physical spaces of this city, one is actually studying all of the policies and forces of the past which have been built directly into the physical landscape of the unique place we now call "Richmond." To reconstruct this space is to rewrite actions of the past. In the case of the city and the highway, to reconstruct the actual space of the road is to finally rescue the city from the bondage of the legacy of the 1950s. Reconstructing the highway can also be seen as extracting the city from its past. It will not be enough to conclude that the highway in Richmond was inadequate or ill-advised because these two conclusions have already been reached on a national level. Richmond was destroyed for a highway that many claimed would bring prosperity to the region. But it is difficult to determine who exactly has reaped the benefits of t he highway and even more difficult to understand who has most significantly suffered.

The act of rebuilding this section of the city will require the admission that the original construction was unjust. There are three ways that seem appropriate for describing the nature of the highway as it passes through Richmond. Before something can be rebuilt for the purpose of restoration, its nature must be fully understood.

First, the highway is in fact an artifact of political oppression. The city was not given a voice in the planning of the road and hardly given a voice in minor changes to the plan once it was approved. Today, it stands as a testament to that era of exclusion and oppression.

Second, the highway is a stigmatized void in this city that failed to stimulate the economy of the CBD and the heart of Richmond. As in Rae's New Haven and many other cities in

America, the intersection of two highways in Richmond decentralized the city and destroyed the urban core.

Finally, the highway is the physical manifestation of the self-fulfilling power of the modernization narrative in American society. Many believed that highways would solve our problems and make America a greater nation. Remembering the original purpose of the highway allows us to then compare it to the effects that the highways have had to this day.

In the middle of the image to the right, the vertical dark line of green space is where Shockoe Valley sits relatively empty to this day. The railroad that travels north through Shockoe Valley curves west (the dark line to the left) at a higher latitude than the highway and then passes under the highway at the other end. This image reveals the green space and sparse industrial centers scattered just north of Jackson Ward that remain vacant to this day. The highway to the south remains vacant as well aside from the cars moving through.

As citizens develop a better understanding of this highway, what is the next logical step?

First we must excavate the memory of the highway from the urban landscape by remembering the highway's construction as a part of recent history. This structure was not always a part of the urban landscape. We begin to remember that this structure transformed a space in a way that made it completely unrecognizable. Then, once the memory of the place has been recovered, the physical space must be restored. There is always an option of protest in order

to have the highway removed entirely. Imagine a million-man march on Washington up I-95. This would be an incredible statement about public space and would force the American government to choose between cars and "the will of the people." Besides the protest, there is a model in Dallas, Texas which could begin to teach Richmond about restoring old urban highways. In Dallas, citizens and politicians have begun to develop the land around Woodall Rogers Expressway and have now decided to cover the highway entirely. This transformation has been dubbed, "The Park"[80] The screen shot (left) of the Web site for The Park gives a glimpse into the plans for this space which had previously be uninhabitable because of the cars below. Of course, the greatest contrast between this section of Dallas and Jackson Ward in Richmond is the presence of Gilpin Court, a very large public housing unit just along the northern side of the highway as it passes through the neighborhood. This housing project changes the way people will consider investing in the neighborhood and it also means that the old, beautiful houses were destroyed. In this way, Gilpin Court is also an artifact of the past. Perhaps Gilpin Court will be the subject of another paper, another time.

[80] http://featuresblogs.chicagotribune.com/theskyline/2011/03/a-work-in-progress-dallas-arts-district-gathers-trophy-buildings-in-one-area-but-still-searches-for-.html

Appendix: A Note on The Afro-American

The AFRO American was a prominent weekly Black newspaper at the time the highway was being planned and constructed in Richmond. It would seem that such a publication would constitute a valuable source for research related to the planning and construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike. Perhaps a more thorough reading of the AFRO archives will later reveal a developed perspective on the progression of the highway story, but at this point a thorough critique of the highway has simply not been found. Christopher Silver, the author of *Twentieth-Century Richmond*, does not cite the AFRO in his analysis of the highway. This omission is most likely a result of the dearth of references to the expressway rather than an oversight on Silver's part.

While the Richmond Times-Dispatch provides many varied perspectives each day on the planning and construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike, the AFRO offers only scattered and brief references to the plans or the construction of the highway itself. Perhaps this relative silence on the issue could be attributed to the fact that the AFRO was simply more in touch with the black communities in Richmond and accurately confident that the expressway referenda would fail. In the edition before the first referendum, the Afro reported, "The almost solid vote of colored citizens against the proposed Segoe Expressway ordinance, combined with those of thousands of whites who also opposed it are expected confidently to defeat the proposal in the referendum on Tuesday"[81] This confidence stands in stark contrast

"I SHALL NOT BE MOVED" is the theme of Sixth Mt. Zion Baptist Church at St. John and Duval Sts. (See Scouting with Scotty for story.)

[81] Afro-American, June 10, 1950.

to the incredible debates in the Richmond Times-Dispatch, but does not seem unfounded as the expressway referendum does indeed fail. The week following the rejection of this referendum, the AFRO issued an equally confident statement near the tail-end of an article about a Black councilman being ousted. It reads, "The defeat of this proposed freeway through the city was predicted in a story in last week's AFRO."[82] Perhaps because it was confident (and rightly so) that the highway plans would fail, the AFRO simply did not see a need for covering the story of the highway debates in depth.

This absence begins to feel more serious as the highway is actually being built and there is still little mention in the AFRO. For example, the photo of Sixth Mount Zion Church (to the right) is accompanied by a caption that mentions that the church "will not be moved," but does not specifically mention the highway itself.[83] While it is a legitimate success story to tell, the AFRO does not mention the reason the church was almost destroyed. The highway and its collateral damage would seem to be the most pressing and important story to a community being dramatically displaced at the time the highway was being built. Silver writes that with the destruction of the neighborhood around this church and other black neighborhoods in Richmond, a total of 10% of the Black population was displaced by the highway. Still, the highway is not mentioned.

EVERYTHING'S ON THE MOVE now that the Toll Pike and other civic and federal projects are taking shape. With the clearing of land, the home shown above like many others had to find a new nesting place. This house was moved from 2400 block Seldon St. to the 2100 block N. 29th St.

On April 6, 1957, the AFRO also published a photo of a house attached to a tractor and a caption that states, "Everything's on the move now that the Toll Pike and other civic and federal projects are taking shape.

[82] Afro-American, June 17, 1950.
[83] Photo of Sixth Mt. Zion. Afro-American, April 6, 1957.

With the clearing of land, the house shown above like many others had to find a new nesting place." While this particular house was not located in the path of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike, the caption incorporates the construction of the highway within what is presented as a general trend of displacement. Again, the photo was not accompanied by a news article with more information. In addition, there was not found an opinion article published on this day or any other day critical of this trend and its affect on the African American community. The movement of people and houses is presented as a routine activity in the black community.

John Moeser, senior fellow at the University of Richmond Center for Civic Engagement and professor emeritus of urban studies and planning at Virginia Commonwealth University, stated that this silence was surprising. It might seem that this sort of debate would have taken place publicly in community organizations such as churches, but he writes, "Usually what was a hot political topic in church would find its way into the paper."[84] Unfortunately, in the case of the expressway, the AFRO doesn't seem to have had an overwhelming response. There are a few potential reasons for this silence

In "The Critique of Vernacular Discourse," Sloop and Ono write, "In describing the historical and political specificity of African American culture, Todd Boyd suggests that African Americans are not so much acculturated into mainstream society as they are involved in a *cultural syncretism* that affirms various cultural expressions while at the same time protest against the dominant cultural ideology."[85] This critique illuminates the phenomenon of the AFRO as it seems to have been published in the 1950s. While the newspaper was certainly outspoken against issues of racism this difference from the White paper helps to explain why perhaps the black newspaper might have not considered the highway a newsworthy topic. In this

[84] Personal correspondence, March 3, 2011.
[85] Ono, Kent a. John M. Sloop, "The Critique of Vernacular Discourse." 21

way, the most likely reason for the contrast in content between the AFRO and to the RT-D that is related to a more general contrast between the white and black communities at the time: Violent and offensive racism. While there is little coverage of the expressway, there are often references to lynchings, segregation and other forms of racial oppression at the time.

There is also a possible concern that the black community was so caught up in the movement toward modernization and progress that they ignored the destruction of large sections of the city. There is a strange political cartoon that can be read to imply that the AFRO was thinking about highways in a positive light. The title of the cartoon, "A Paved Road Eases the Journey,"[86] is supposed to be a metaphor for all of the civil rights activists that have "paved the way" for the next generation, but in the context of the pending destruction of Jackson Ward it seems out of place.[87]

Regardless of the reason for the absence of a body of writings about the expressway in the AFRO, the absence is surely felt in any attempt to draft a legitimate historical or rhetorical criticism of the expressway and its reception in the city of Richmond. The Black communities in Richmond certainly made their voices heard by voting against the two referenda, but the same strong opposition to the expressway is not revealed in the printed text.

[86] Afro-American, February 12, 1955.
[87] "A Paved Road Eases the Journey!" Political Cartoon. AFRO, February 12, 1955.