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Main Street, America: Histories of I-95

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MAIN STREET, AMERICA
HISTORIES OF I-95

by

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DEDICATION

To my loving and endlessly supportive wife, Johanna.

You entered my life while I pursued this dream. As it becomes reality, we enter another, parenthood, together.

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ABSTRACT

"Main Street, America: Histories of I-95" fills a historiographical gap by arguing the Interstate Highway System can only be accurately understood through the study of local histories. The existing literature tends toward national, system-wide evaluations and consequently fails to capture the complexity of the Interstate Highway's interaction with the communities through which it passes. By focusing on the backbone of the Interstate Highway System, I-95, this dissertation demonstrates responses to Interstate Highways were dependent on the interplay of myriad local factors. Additionally, it argues that I-95's effect on communities was determined by local conditions. Studying individual communities along a single route results in a new way of understanding the Interstate Highway System. Rather than serving as a simple catalyst of economic growth or a harbingers of destroyed cities, I-95 (and by extension, the larger Interstate Highway System) emerges as a far more interesting subject, one with a history more complex than previously understood.

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List of Abbreviations

AAA ..... American Automobile Association (Heathrow, FL)

AASHO ..... American Association of State Highway Officials

BPR ..... Bureau of Public Roads

CPL ..... Claude Pepper Library (Tallahassee, FL)

DHS ..... Delaware Historical Society (Wilmington, DE)

DPA ..... Delaware Public Archives (Dover, DE)

HM ..... Hagley Museum (Wilmington, DE)

JFKL ..... John F. Kennedy Presidential Library (Boston, MA)

LV ..... Library of Virginia (Richmond, VA)

NJSA ..... New Jersey State Archive (Trenton, NJ)

NJSL ..... New Jersey State Library (Trenton, NJ)

MSA ..... Maryland State Archives (Annapolis, MD)

PHS ..... Princeton Historical Society (Princeton, NJ)

PKYL ..... P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History (Tallahassee, FL)

PRBSC ..... Princeton Rare Books and Special Collections (Princeton, NJ)

RBRL ..... Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies (Athens, GA)

RULSC ..... Rutgers University Libraries Special Collections (New Brunswick, NJ)

SAF ..... State Archives of Florida (Tallahassee, FL)

TPA ..... Taxpayers' Protective Association

VHS ..... Virginia Historical Society (Richmond, VA)

INTRODUCTION

THE ROAD BEHIND, THE ROAD AHEAD

In August of 1969, the Interstate Highway System was in its thirteenth year of construction. With 28,000 of the 42,500 originally-planned miles complete and 5,000 additional miles in development, the transformation of the American landscape was well underway. In many locations where segments of the system had opened to the public, community leaders, politicians, and the media praised the technological marvel. Elsewhere, Americans eagerly awaited construction; yet the news was not entirely positive: the target completion date established in 1956 loomed a mere three years in the future, the updated completion date of 1974 looked increasingly unattainable, and financing battles in Washington plagued the program. In addition, thousands of miles had been added to the original plan, exacerbating the problems. In some locations, opposition to highway construction had been increasing since the 1960s and now presented a public opinion obstacle the Interstate Highway System had not yet faced in its early years. In the midst of this tumult, *U.S. News and World Report* published an article highlighting scores of locations where the network's development had been delayed. The magazine called attention to specific trouble spots, such as a proposed cross-Manhattan segment connecting New Jersey and Brooklyn and a stretch of highway bisecting the French Quarter of New Orleans. In total, the article counted sixty-six disputes poised to disrupt 277 miles of highway construction. The article was damaging to the Interstate System at a moment it could not afford negative press.

"Trouble for Freeways" suggested the controversies listed were representative of increasing opposition to the entire project.[1]

J.O. Bowen, publisher of the construction trade journal *Dixie Contractor,* responded with a fiery letter to *U.S. News and World Report's* editor, noting factual errors and calling into question the representativeness of the article. Bowen's primary criticism of "Trouble for Freeways" was its implication that a number of local issues amounted to a system-wide problem. Bowen wrote, "On the national scale that you attempt to reflect, the difficulties in locating and building a freeway is not *a* problem, but a finely grained, heterogeneous complex of local problems that are susceptible of no major, national, or overall solution."[2] As a representative of the industry building the highways, Bowen's opposition to any coverage casting doubt on the network's progress and eventual completion was to be expected. However, Bowen's specific critique of the magazine's argument set him apart from most of his contemporaries.

Bowen's fellow commentators frequently extrapolated micro experiences to conclusions about the Interstate System as a whole. For example, in a status report of the Interstate Highway System published just two months prior to the *U.S. News and World Report* article, the *New York Times* suggested that the same concerns motivated opposition to Interstates in New York City and Philadelphia, and this experience would be replicated in additional urban areas when construction inevitably reached new city

[1] "Trouble for Freeways," *U.S. News and World Report,* August 11, 1969, 77.

[2] J.O. Bowen to David Lawrence, 26 August 1969. Herman Talmadge Collection, Subgroup C, Series VIII, Subseries A, Box 308, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens. Emphasis his. Bowen's article was never published. Archive hereafter abbreviated as "RBRL."

limits. Of New York and Philadelphia, the *New York Times* misleadingly wrote, "City officials and civic groups contend that certain Interstate urban links will destroy scenic and historic values, and cause undue hardship to the families and small businesses that will be displaced."[3] Not only were the protests in these cities not representative of the urban experience elsewhere in the United States, the opposition within these cities was diverse in motivation. New York's primary opposition was partially based on a fear that highways would destroy ethnic neighborhoods, as the *Times* article suggested, but there was also a vocal contingent of environmentalists who feared the effect of Interstate Highways on public transportation funding. Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, primary opposition came from individuals worried about property values.[4]

Similarly, other observers touted the benefits stemming from the highways without an appreciation of local context. This view assumed the Interstate Highways were so overwhelming as harbingers of positive change that they could overcome any local realities; experiences in one place would translate to another, regardless of how to the two locations may have differed. For example, as highway officials and civic leaders plotted the course of I-95 through South Carolina, Charleston's *News and Courier* told readers they could expect tremendous development where I-95 would eventually intersect I-26. As evidence, the newspaper pointed to Spartanburg, South Carolina, where the intersection of I-85 and I-26 had been "the greatest single catalyst to Spartanburg's recent

[3] Joseph C. Ingraham, "Status Report on the Interstate Road System," *New York Times*, June 8, 1969.

[4] For an overview of diversity in urban highway opposition, see Raymond A. Mohl, "Stop the Road: Freeway Revolts in American Cities." *Journal of Urban History* 30 (2004): 674-706.

economic growth."[5] The *News and Courier* overlooked the fact that Spartanburg's highways intersected fewer than ten miles from the city center while I-95 would intersect I-26 at least twenty-five miles away from downtown Charleston. The paper also discounted the tide of industrial development surging through Spartanburg prior to the construction of I-95 as compared to the economic stagnation in Charleston since the close of the World War II.

Observers across the United States eventually came to realize what Bowen had so eloquently expressed in his letter to *U.S. News and World Report*: Interstate Highways were the product of the diverse political, cultural, economic, and social environments they traversed. In 1965, for example, Georgia governor Carl Sanders commented that "the problems on I-95 have been locally based."[6] During the initial decades of Interstate construction, however, few seemed to share Bowen's insight. The historical record is replete with examples of individuals treating the Interstate Highway System as a homogeneous entity.

The historiography of the Interstate Highway System reflects the common tendency of historical actors to view the System as a network of roads without variation. Fueling the historiographical blindness toward heterogeneity is the philosophical slant of much of the earliest literature. Highway detractors authored many of Interstate Highway histories in the 1960s and 1970s, and their works are very critical of the System. Mark Rose characterizes most of the writers during this period as "social critics" who were not interested in the history of the Highway System so much as arguing against further

[5] "Bring I-95 Near the Sea," *News and Courier*, April 30, 1963.

[6] Carl Sanders to Sam L. Varnedoe, 20 September 1965, Carl Sanders Collection, Series I, Box 4, RBRL.

construction.[7] The contributors to this critical point of view generally saw highways as destroyers of cities and the cause of America's pernicious reliance on the automobile.[8] With the intent of arguing against Interstates in principle, these scholars were disinclined to treat the roads with nuance.

Some social critics maintained their campaign against Interstate Highways for several decades and continued writing long after the network was largely complete.[9] By the 1980s, however, a handful of Interstate Highway studies emerged that aimed to understand the complex history of the roads. Mark Rose's *Interstate: Express Highway Politics* (1990) and Tom Lewis' *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* (1997) stand as the best-researched and most thoughtful analyses of the Interstate Highways. More recently, Earl Swift's *The Big Roads: The Untold Story of the Engineers, Visionaries, and Trailblazers Who Created the American Superhighways* (2011) contributed to the limited collection of scholarly interpretations of

[7] Mark Rose, *Interstate: Express Highway Politics, 1939-1989* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), xiii.

[8] Jane Leavitt contends that the United States should stop building highways in most cases, as she says they are the primary cause of urban sprawl and the overall decline in the quality of urban life. In the introduction, Leavitt makes clear her position, proclaiming, "This book is about the men and institutions who promote highways and how they destroy our churches, schools, homes and parks." In making this case, Leavitt singles out Interstate Highways as the most harmful. Jane Leavitt, *Superhighway—Superhoax* (Garden City, NY: Ballatine Books, 1970), 9. See also A.Q. Mowbray, *Road to Ruin* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1968); Richard O. Davies, *The Age of Asphalt: The Automobile, the Freeway, and the Condition of Metropolitan America* (Philadelphia: Lippincott,1975); and Jon R. Meyer and Jose A. Gomez-Ibanez, *Auto Transit and Cities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press., 1981).

[9] In *Asphalt Nation*, for example, Jane Holtz Kay argues for a "depaving of America," a massive scaling back on road construction in favor of expanded public transportation. Kay sees the United States of the late twentieth century as disenchanted with highways, saying, "A landscape sacked by its highways has distressed Americans so much that even this go-for-it nation is posting 'No Growth' signs on development from shore to shore." Jane Holtz Kay, *Asphalt Nation: How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take It Back* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1997), 9.

the Interstate Highway System. Collectively, these studies provide an excellent account of the political, social, cultural, and technical contours of the most ambitious public works project of the twentieth century. They filled historiographical voids by detailing the major players at the national level, analyzing the debates in Congress that culminated in the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, and providing accounts of how the roads had affected Americans—positively as well as negatively.[10] These contributions, taken with earlier studies, have resulted in a body of literature that competently details the history of the Interstate Highway System at the national level.

The propensity to think about the Interstate Highway System only in national terms, however, has resulted in an incomplete and sometimes flawed understanding of the subject. Studies of the Interstate Highway System that attempt to analyze the network as a whole overlook or downplay the significance of local realities on the contour of the network's history. Lewis' *Divided Highways*, for example, uses episodes from across the country as it paints a picture of the Interstate experience. These local accounts are insightful and well-researched, but Lewis presents each as emblematic of the national

[10] Popularly known as the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act, the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 codified the financing structure that made the Interstate System possible and initiated construction. The history of this landmark legislation is very well documented in most studies of the Interstate System.

For an examination of intersection between highway planning and politics, see Bruce E. Seely, *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987). For studies of the effects of Interstate Highways on urban centers, see: Raymond Mohl, "The Interstates and the Cities: The U.S. Department of Transportation and the Freeway Revolt, 1966–1973, " *The Journal of Policy History* 20, no. 2 (2008), 193-226. A few interesting studies of Interstate Highways have come out of the field of Geography. These works tend to focus on the ways Interstates alter the patterns of urban society. See: Peter O. Mueller "Transportation and Urban Form: Stages in the Spatial Evolution of the American Metropolis" in *The Geography of Urban Transportation*, eds. Susan Hanson and Genevieve Giuliano, 59-85. 3rd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2004).

story. For example, Lewis commits a chapter to analyzing the urban revolts that plagued the Interstate Highway System in the 1960s and 1970s. He uses the resistance to I-10 in the French Quarter of New Orleans as his case study, and he provides an excellent account of the historical and political context for that specific highway battle. However, Lewis submits what observers came to call the "Second Battle of New Orleans" as representative of contemporaneous urban revolts while providing only a paragraph each to the struggles in Philadelphia, San Francisco, Washington, New York, and Boston.[11] Lewis misleadingly implies New Orleans is interchangeable with any of its contemporaneous highway protests when seeking an understanding of the urban revolts. The desire to write a national history of the Interstate Highways drives Lewis to write an account of *what* happened in locations across the country, but he cannot commit the space to explain *why*. Holding up one episode as an explanation is inherently flawed, as it implies an equivalency across communities that simply did not exist. Each location's experience with highways directly resulted from circumstances particular to that community, and to date, national accounts of the Interstate Highway System have failed to capture the deeply textured reality of the network's history.

[11] Tom Lewis, *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 179-210.

A handful of location-specific investigations do exist.[12] They successfully contextualize particular episodes in the history of the Interstate System and admirably explore the interplay between local reality and the highway; however, as stand-alone studies, they do not allow for comparison, and no conclusions can be drawn about the representativeness of the case study on the System as a whole. Ultimately, these accounts reveal much more about the community under consideration than they do about the Interstate. With national studies that fail to explain the significance of location on one hand and microstudies that fail to comment on the System, writ large, on the other, the historiography needs to bridge the gap and account for local texture while attempting to understand the broader history of the Interstate Highway System. One approach that satisfies this aim is to study individual roads. And, despite what has now become considerable literature on the Interstate Highway System, few works take this approach.[13]

[12]See: Joseph F.C. DiMento, "Stent (or Dagger?) in the Heart of Town: Urban Freeways in Syracuse, 1944-1967," *Sage* 8, no. 2 (2009), 133-161; Douglas H Haebuer, *The Baltimore Expressway Controversy: A Study in the Political Decision-Making Process* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974); Richard Henry Ginn, "Interstate-40 Through Overton Park: A Case Study of Location Decision-Making," Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1970; and John E. Seley, "The Kink in Nashville's Interstate-40," in *The Politics of Public-Facility Planning*, ed. John E. Seley (Lexington, Massachusetts: Rowan & Littlefield, 1983), 57-66.

[13] Roads predating the Interstate Highways have been the focus of dedicated studies much more than have the Interstate Highways. Route 66, in particular, has been the subject of an expansive body of literature. See, for example, Quinta Scott and Susan Croce, *Route 66: A Highway and Its People* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988) and Peter B. Dedek, *Hip to the Trip: A Cultural History of Route 66* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007). Books have been written with individual Interstate Highways as the subject; however, they are generally lacking in depth of research or analysis. See, for example, Diane Perrier, *I-81: The Great Warriors Trace* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2010).

I-95, the backbone of the Interstate Highway System, is the ideal road for such a study, as it traverses a diverse cross-section of the United States. It also warrants dedicated study in its own right given its singular significance to the country. Despite this, there are no dedicated studies to the road. Stretching 1,917 miles from south of Miami, Florida, to the Canadian border in Maine, I-95 passes through fifteen states, feeds forty-six seaports, and serves 103 commercial airports. On an average day, 72,000 vehicles drive on I-95, but traffic volume can reach 300,000 vehicles on holidays and other peak travel periods. Of all the miles driven on American roads, I-95 constitutes 35 percent. The I-95 corridor, consisting of counties that lie within twenty miles of the road, constitutes only 10 percent of the United States' land area but is home to 37 percent of the country's population, nearly 110 million people. This zone's economic output is staggering; it bears $4.7 trillion in economic production every year, which accounts for almost 40 percent of the national GDP. In fact, if the I-95 corridor were an independent nation, it would have the third largest economy in the world.[14] Despite its exceptional

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There are a few works that do a wonderful job exploring the history of individual roads. Angus K. Gillespie and Michael Aaron Rockland's *Looking for America on the New Jersey Turnpike* (Piscataway, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992) brilliantly argues the eponymous road reflects the values of the engineers who designed the road, the politicians who control it, and the citizens who travel upon it. More recently, Anne Mitchell Whisnant's *Super-Scenic Motorway* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) explored the role of the Blue Ridge Parkway in the economic development of southern Appalachia and the relationship of the road to the notion of "the public good."

[14] "I-95 Facts and Stats," I-95 Corridor Coalition, accessed February 13, 2011, http://www.i95coalition.org/the-coalition-2/i-95-facts/. Portions of website adapted from NPR analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Data. All figures accurate as of February 13, 2011.

importance to twentieth—and now twenty-first—century American history, no scholarly work has focused on it.[15]

I-95 proves to be an excellent lens for a study of the relationship between roads and the communities they traverse. I-95 passes through or near some of the most populous cities in the United States; it also cuts through farmland, small towns, and coastal communities. A drive up or down I-95 provides the tourist with an impressive view of the diverse American landscape, from the largest urban centers of the country to picturesque tobacco fields, from the pine forests of Maine to the palm groves of southern Florida. In some places, I-95 drew traffic off older highways, such as U.S. 1, and in other places, it connected communities via a major highway for the first time. I-95 aided in the economic development (or redevelopment) of some regions, such as the Research Triangle of North Carolina, and elsewhere destroyed the livelihoods of citizens who used to make a living off the travelers on old highways.

To say Americans welcomed or resisted I-95 would be grossly simplistic. In some places, observers celebrated I-95 as a herald of progress; in others, they resisted it as a noxious force. Some community leaders fought to route I-95 through their towns. In other locales, environmental and historical preservationists fought to keep precious resources out of its path. Some cities welcomed I-95 in hopes it would revive downtown economies; elsewhere municipal leaders and residents feared the highway would destroy

[15] Dianne Perrier's *Interstate 95: The Road to Sun and Sand* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010) purports itself to be a cultural history of I-95; however, the highway is mentioned preciously few times. The book instead focuses on the I-95 corridor, specifically its history prior to I-95's construction.

urban centers. An understanding of I-95 requires a complete understanding of the circumstances under which it came to be in its full complexity and texture.

A dedicated study of I-95 yields conclusions that other works on the Interstate Highway System have not been able to reach. The present study reveals community attitudes toward the highways were incredibly complicated and were dependent on a calculus of socioeconomic status, proximity to the proposed route, aspirations for one's community, and a number of additional factors. Since I-95 cuts through a diverse segment of the United States, the complexity of this calculus becomes especially apparent.

This study of I-95 also reveals that more local people favored the highway than the historiography indicates. While much of the literature paints a picture of concerned citizens standing up to business and political proponents of the highways, the story of I-95 suggests that citizens, both political and apolitical, frequently supported the construction of superhighways. Additionally, differences of opinion among politicians, businessmen, and other community leaders come to light. Highway supporters frequently cited the arguments employed by the highway lobby when convincing the United States to build the Interstates when explaining their support of I-95. This suggests the highway lobby's influence was far more pervasive than historians have previously argued. Whereas the current literature focuses on the lobby's influence over politicians and some civic leaders, the story of I-95 reveals the arguments trickled down through many layers of society due to previously overlooked efforts of the lobby, especially the American Automobile Association.

This study of I-95 also reveals that many observers saw symbolic value in the Interstate Highways from the moment of inception. The historical record is replete with individuals viewing the Interstates as symbols of progress, modernity, and wealth. Beyond this, Americans frequently framed I-95, specifically, as a symbol of national unity. At a time when the media and national leaders frequently reminded Americans of regional differences through accounts of civil rights activities in the South, many viewed I-95 as a thread that would bind the North and South together.

It is important to note that no study of I-95 can be truly comprehensive, especially one that aims to understand the local histories associated with the road. There are simply too many towns and too many people impacted by the highway for a fully inclusive investigation. Through carefully selected and representative case studies, however, a scholarly endeavor can tell a broad story with a limited scope. Anne Mitchell Whisnant's excellent *Super-Scenic Motorway* stands as proof. While the book does not account for every town the Blue Ridge Parkway passes or evaluate every opinion expressed of the road, Whisnant does a remarkable job of illustrating the complexity of the Blue Ridge Parkway's history by evaluating well-chosen case studies.[16]

No period in the life of I-95—or any Interstate—was as revealing as the time before construction begins. Before routes were made official and bulldozers began overturning earth, communities experienced periods of speculation and rumor, followed by the official planning phase, when engineers conducted studies and interested parties attempted to influence the route and other characteristics of the road. While the history of I-95 certainly transcends this stage, the period provides the most insight into what

[16] Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway*.

motivated historic actors and serves as the most fertile ground for investigation. As such, this study explores many routing controversies but also explores other stages of I-95's development.

Before delving into local context, it is important to establish the national contours into which I-95 appeared. In that regard, Chapter 1, "A New Vision Has Come to Motoring Man," explores highway advocates' arguments in favor of Interstate Highways. Drawing heavily from the collections of the American Automobile Association, this chapter briefly traces the events leading up to the 1956 signing of the Federal Aid Highway Act, which moved the Interstates from dream to reality. The legislative battle culminating in this landmark legislation has been well documented by several scholars, so this chapter provides only a cursory survey of the important milestones. Instead, it focuses on the efforts of the AAA and other highway proponents to espouse the benefits of Interstate Highways and explores the arguments used. Then, using two I-95 ribbon cutting ceremonies as case studies—one in Richmond, Virginia and one in a rural area on the Maryland/Delaware state line—the chapter demonstrates how the benefits that highway advocates chose to highlight were highly dependent on locality.

Chapter 2, "People and Progress in Wilmington, Delaware," examines a 1957 routing controversy in the industrial Mid-Atlantic city. As one of the first urban centers to receive I-95—or any Interstate Highway, for that matter— Wilmington presents an intriguing opportunity to study urban responses to the Interstate before the "urban crisis" of the 1960s and 1970s. In these early years of Interstate Highway construction, few people argued Wilmington did not need or want I-95. Rather, the Wilmington story is one of "Interstate hot potato," where every group argued the highway would be a great boon

to the city—so long as it was routed through somebody else's neighborhood. A proposed route along Jackson and Adams Streets drew considerable attention since it was favored by the Delaware State Highway Department and serves as the main narrative thread in this chapter. The discussions surrounding this route reveal how urban highway controversies proceeded before serious doubts about the benefit of Interstate Highways were prevalent. In an environment where the benefits of highway construction were rarely questioned, how individuals balanced their desire for community progress with personal preservation makes for a fascinating counter narrative to the dominant "urban resistance as urban revolt" narrative.

The value of Interstate Highways was not accepted as definite when Delaware moved to extend I-95 into Wilmington's northern suburbs in 1965. The communities of Arden and Ardentown took a vastly different approach to resisting the Interstate than did their southern neighbors nearly a decade earlier. Whereas the residents of downtown Wilmington generally wanted the road built so long as it did not route through their neighborhoods, Arden and Ardentown residents saw little value in I-95. The difference in attitudes between these two episodes in Wilmington's history was partly driven by the elapse in time and partly driven by the characteristics of the communities involved. Chapter 2 concludes by considering the factors that defined the different courses taken by the Jackson/Adams Street and Arden controversies.

Chapter 3 investigates resistance to I-95 in the communities between Trenton and Newark, New Jersey. With events transpiring over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, New Jersey's encounter with I-95 fell squarely into the urban revolt period and arguably stands as highway opponents' most successful campaign. The communities of Princeton,

Hillsborough, and Piscataway make for significant case studies because they provide an opportunity to understand how and why large towns—not major urban centers—responded to the threat of Interstate Highways. These communities have been largely overlooked in the literature on highway resistance, as past studies have favored revolts in metropolises. This chapter rectifies this historiographical gap and, in so doing, assesses how demographics, politics, and culture of these towns gave shape to the resistance efforts.

Not all communities opposed Interstate construction during the 1960s, and Chapter 4 uses southeast Florida coastal cities and towns to illustrate this. Concurrent with the opposition in New Jersey and Wilmington's northern communities, Florida held state-wide elections in which West Palm Beach, Fort Pierce, and other Florida cities became central subjects. At issue was whether the state of Florida had purposefully delayed construction of I-95 in order to maximize profits on a parallel toll road. In decrying the alleged actions by the state of Florida, the people of these coastal communities demonstrated an intense desire for I-95. The pattern of southeast Florida's development and structure of the region's economy served as the most significant engines behind support for I-95.

Chapter 5 explores a 1963 controversy in South Carolina where two communities, Charleston and Florence, engaged in rival lobbying efforts to sway the route of I-95 toward their respective borders. While the previous case studies reveal alliances between residents and politicians, churches, economic boosters, and others, everyday citizens were largely absent in South Carolina's routing controversy. This chapter seeks to understand the motivating factors that compelled Charleston and Florence's lobbies to push for

favorable routings and also considers why most residents chose to stay silent while politicians and economic boosters engaged in the debate.

Chapters 1-5 largely deal with planning and building the Interstate. Chapters 6 and 7 consider the effects of I-95. Once routings were finalized and the road was built, I-95 began the next phase of its life, affecting the future of communities and the day-to-day lives of its neighbors. Here, too, local realities played a critical role in the history of I-95. Chapter 6 explores the effect of I-95 on Jackson Ward, a predominately African-American community in Richmond, Virginia. Once considered the "Harlem of the South," Jackson Ward's thriving commercial, cultural, and social scenes were disrupted by the arrival of I-95, which bisected the neighborhood. This chapter considers to which extent I-95 facilitated the downfall of Jackson Ward and the extent to which Jackson Ward's local circumstances gave shape to I-95.

Chapter 7 examines coastal southeast Georgia to understand the effect I-95 had on communities it bypassed. McIntosh County, Georgia had built its economies—legitimate and illicit alike—off the traffic U.S.1 funneled through. I-95 drew these drivers a few miles to the west and left the people of McIntosh County searching for answers. The sudden absence of out-of-state drivers passing through McIntosh County also served to dethrone a corrupt police chief who had built significant power through his ability to control the activities along U.S. 1. Part of this power included bending the communities' race relations to his will; in this way, the appearance of I-95 just outside McIntosh County's borders dramatically changed the very underpinning of society in this region of coastal Georgia.

When taken in total, this dissertation aspires to what J.O. Bowen accused *U.S. News and World Report* of failing to do in 1969: it aims to understand the "heterogeneous complex of local problems" that plagued an Interstate Highway System.[17] It also transcends Bowen's call by attempting to illustrate that everything about I-95 is a "complex," the problems and benefits; the support and resistance; the local and the national. In short, I-95's history is far more complicated than previous research suggests. Forty years after Bowen recommended *U.S. News and World Report* take note of local circumstances when attempting to understand Interstate Highways, this study heeds his advice.

[17] "Trouble for Freeways", 77.

CHAPTER 1

"A NEW VISION HAS COME TO MOTORING MAN"[18]

American University President Paul F. Douglass was an unusual choice to deliver the keynote address at the Annual Meeting of the American Automobile Association (AAA) in early November, 1947. Since the AAA's founding in 1902, club members had come to annual conventions expecting speeches on topics ranging from road financing to the importance of increasing public awareness of the organization's activities. Dictated by the AAA's status as an inchoate organization whose future depended upon the growth of the personal automobile and the enthusiasm of its members, these past addresses served the purpose of giving attendees direction for the coming months. Past speeches had encouraged members to grow the organization's membership and informed delegates of AAA initiatives that would serve as selling points when recruiting new members. Previous speakers included local club leaders, fundraising experts, and policy wonks. Dr. Douglass, a renaissance man who dabbled in politics, city planning, law, and journalism, among other interests, was notably different from every past keynote speaker. His speech, likewise, broke from tradition. Far less bureaucratic

[18] Paul F. Douglass, "The Civilizing Road," (speech included in stand-alone document, "Annual Meeting of the Delegates of the American Automobile Association," Washington, D.C., November 4, 1947), AAA Archive, Heathrow, Florida, 75. The American Automobile Association possesses an extensive collection of publications and unpublished documents at its headquarters in Heathrow, Florida. The collection is not maintained by archivists and has no official organization. The "archive" is essentially a room with shelves upon which materials have been placed as they were discovered. As such, the citations for sources found in this archive will include as much information as possible to allow subsequent researchers to find said sources; however, research at the AAA, while rewarding, requires extensive hunting and patience.

and far more visionary, his address, "The Civilizing Road," audaciously challenged AAA members to imagine their efforts in the context of human history. Beginning with early man's advent of "direct paths over which men and animals moved to supply their immediate physical needs" and concluding with a vision of roads that would one day tie the world together, Douglass argued for the importance of roads in the story of mankind.[19] Underlying Douglass' account of the history of roads was the argument that the AAA stood to set the course for the next turning point, to take the next step toward a day when roads would promote freedom across the globe. For an organization that had, since its inception, focused on important but quotidian business of automobile ownership and use, Douglass' call seemed revolutionary.

Those who followed the various AAA publications, however, were not surprised by Douglass' message. AAA leaders had been planning for a superhighway push as World War II raged in Europe and the Pacific and had revealed portions of their plans throughout the 1940s. Those in attendance consequently understood the implicit message in Douglass' speech. Conference attendees would not simply return to their home towns and recruit new members; Douglass' address meant to inspire an army of advocates for a state-of-the-art highway system. "The Civilizing Road" served as the opening shot of the AAA's full-blown efforts to persuade the American people and Congress to construct what would become the Interstate Highway System.

The ensuing lobbying and legislative activities that culminated in the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, the law that approved financing of the Interstate Highway System and moved the network from dream to reality, has been very well documented. Most

[19] Ibid., 67.

notably, Mark Rose's *Interstate: Express Highway Politics* does a remarkable job of distilling the myriad interest groups and numerous compromises into a succinct and insightful narrative. Other observers have contributed additional research on this subject. Tom Lewis' *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* traces the historical antecedents of the system and offers illustrative biographical analysis of the key players. More recent works by Earl Swift and Dianne Perrier have provided further analysis of the Interstate System's formative years. Swift's *The Big Roads* accounts for much of the same material as Lewis' earlier *Divided Highways*, but introduces more players to the story. Perrier's work is a long history of I-95, which, among other topics, explores how Native Americans used the route of I-95 long before European settlers arrived on the continent and, later, how nineteenth century railroads sparked the tourism industry that would later rely heavily on I-95. As a result of these works and others, the origins and administrative history of the Interstates are well understood. The existing literature, however, has failed to adequately explore one of the most important aspects of the Interstate System's history. While the legislative battles and lobbying efforts were undeniably vital, they would have had little effect without the war for public opinion that began in the 1940s and continued long after construction commenced.

At an estimated cost in the billions of dollars, many Americans were not immediate supporters of the initiative to build a new nationwide highway system.[20] Such a construction project would require new taxes, additional federal involvement in state affairs, and tremendous financial obligations by the states. When Americans first heard of

[20] "Use of Super-Roads Predicted for 1958," *The Atlanta Journal*, June 27, 1956.

plans for the Interstate Highway System, countless questions arose. Questions about financing: Who would pay? Would non-users pay a disproportionate amount? Questions about administration: Who decided where roads would go? Would these be toll roads? But most importantly, questions about value: Why were these roads necessary? Were they worth the cost? Until highway advocates could convince the American people, the business community, state governments, and ultimately, Congress of the value of such an undertaking, there was little hope for realization of the plan. Convincing these groups of the Interstate Highway System's value required identifying arguments that would sway a majority of Americans and then wielding these arguments effectively.[21]

Those who joined the effort to actualize the unprecedented building program employed myriad arguments. The literature, with varying degrees of accuracy, notes the benefits of Interstate Highways according to advocates of the System. The arguments, when mentioned, are usually introduced as part of the legislative debates—not as arguments used to sway public opinion. The least sophisticated accounts have reduced the numerous and complex arguments in favor of a modern highway system to three: greater economic growth, increased driver safety, and improved national defense. These

[21] The existing scholarship largely overlooks the need to build and propagate a case for Interstate Highways. Some accounts of Interstate history ignore this altogether, implying support for the project was natural and universal. For example, Earl Swift commits half of *The Big Roads* to tracing the events leading to the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, but his account is almost entirely a story of the Executive and Legislative branches of the federal government. There is almost no mention of non-governmental entities' involvement in the story, nor does Swift address public sentiment. By Swift's account, there was debate within the government, but the debate was over the shape legislation would take; the question of whether the Interstates were necessary or worth the cost is absent. Other scholarship acknowledges the existence of non-governmental entities in the highway debate, but they are often introduced when their activities interacted with the governmental process. Mark Rose, for example, briefly accounts for Project Adequate Roads, which "hoped to establish a coalition of competing highway users, contractors, and engineers behind a program of scientifically based, tax-free road building" in 1954, but Rose fails to delve into their activities outside of the legislative arena. To the contrary of existing literature, garnering and sustaining support for the Interstate Highway system was as much a public opinion campaign as a legislative one.

studies also occasionally submit unsubstantiated claims that will, desire, or pride played a role in garnering support. In *The Roads that Built America*, for example, Dan McNichol argues "the roots of the System are militaristic and defensive, with a large dose of national pride thrown in."[22] Those inclined to believe McNichol's interpretation of the reasons America built the Interstate System are likely informed by the oft-cited story of how Eisenhower, upon seeing Germany's Autobahn in action during World War II, was determined to see America construct a competitive highway network. While the story of Eisenhower's experience is true, advocates of the Interstates rarely invoked national pride when making the case for the superhighways during the 1940s and 1950s. Instead, purported benefits were often more tangible. Rose and Lewis posit economic growth, driver safety, national defense, social progress, and the relief of urban traffic as the key benefits touted by highways boosters. While certainly the most complete list of benefits in the current literature, it is not comprehensive. Interstate advocates certainly submitted these five benefits when promoting the highway program; however, they also often employed additional pro-Interstate arguments that the historiography has overlooked.

This chapter begins by surveying the origins of the Interstate Highway System. In so doing, it provides a brief summary of the milestones covered in several previous histories of the superhighway network. This account, however, focuses on the public relations component of Interstate history. As such, the AAA appears prominently, as it played a significant role in the formation and proliferation of the pro-Interstate arguments. The AAA and its fellow highway boosters recognized the importance of

[22] Dan McNichol, *The Roads that Built America* (New York: Sterling, 2006), 10. McNichol's entire study is simplified to the point of incorrectness. He claims, for example, that Eisenhower originally envisioned the system.

tailoring the pro-highway message for specific audiences. While the general arguments in favor of the superhighway network remained throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, boosters highlighted particular benefits depending on the target audience. Often, boosters changed the message based on the particular historical, cultural, economic, or social environment of the locality they addressed.

Boosters did not cease promoting the benefits of Interstate Highways when the Federal Aid Highway Act passed in 1956; in fact, their efforts increased after they won the initial battle to build the System. Even though the Highway Act established a means of paying for the construction, financing was a perennial fight in Congress. The Highway Trust Fund became a target as some elected officials wanted to use the funds for other initiatives, which led to the Trust Fund serving as a pawn in Congressional battles. Each year, some member of Congress held the annual disbursement to the account as ransom in budgeting negotiations. As such, highway boosters never felt safe reducing the intensity of their advocacy, and their fear worsened through the 1960s as some urban areas began to vehemently resist Interstate development. Sympathetic congressmen, such as Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy, mounted campaigns to divert highway funding for public transportation and other "urban friendly" initiatives. This threat further motivated highway supporters to sustain their advocacy efforts. Despite this unrest—and perhaps due to the continual efforts of highway supporters—the Interstate Highway System developed, mile by mile, year after year. Segments of the Interstate Highway

System continued to open for nearly fifty years after the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956.[23]

The completion of segments of the Interstate System was the subject of much fanfare, an opportunity for civic leaders to celebrate their state or municipality's accomplishment and for local citizens to glimpse or even test drive the roads that promised to usher in a new wave of development and safety. Highway advocates seized upon these ribbon-cutting ceremonies as high-visibility spectacles from which they could champion the construction of additional miles of asphalt. Two ribbon-cutting ceremonies along I-95, one in Richmond, Virginia in 1958 and another on the Mason-Dixon Line between Maryland and Delaware in 1963, saw speakers and attendees extol the superhighway. These two events witnessed highway advocates not only celebrate the frequently cited benefits of highways but also draw attention to benefits that scholars of the Interstate System have generally overlooked. Additionally, these events provide excellent opportunities to explore how advocates altered the pro-highway arguments based on locality. Ribbon-cutting ceremonies, regardless of the location, were an opportunity to push for further highway construction and also to celebrate the long struggle that culminated in a stretch of brand new asphalt.

ANTECEDENTS AND MOMENTUM

The Interstate Highway System, as imagined during and immediately after World War II, was the latest manifestation of a persistent and long-running drive for good roads in the United States. Since the first man took the wheel of an automobile, the need for

[23] It is important to note here that the Interstate Highway System is still not complete as of 2015. Congress added additional miles to the network long after 1956. Additionally, the urban revolt succeeded in a few locations. Perhaps most notably, I-95 breaks in Princeton, New Jersey as a result of the opposition to the highway. This will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

better roads had been apparent. Prior to the rise of the personal automobile, bicycle enthusiasts were the primary group championing the construction of new roads or improvements to the existing. By the turn of the twentieth century, automobile advocates had grown in number to the point they appropriated the Good Roads Movement from the bicycle lobby. The Good Roads Movement, under the leadership of automobile enthusiasts, promoted the Lincoln Highway and later, the Dixie Highway, which provided car owners the ability to tour the United States while driving east and west, and then north and south.[24] These routes were part of the informal network of auto trails network that served as the best option to drivers in the early twentieth century.

By the 1920s, the inadequacy of America's system of auto trails was apparent. Usually privately funded and poorly maintained, these roads simply could not sustain the number of cars and trucks using them each day. The federal government, recognizing the economic benefit of roads capable of facilitating automobile traffic, instituted the United States Numbered Highways in 1926. Many of the auto trails established earlier in the century, the Dixie and Lincoln Highways included, became part of the system after considerable upgrades. As the nation's first integrated and government-maintained road network, this system pushed the United States into the modern age of transportation, which only fueled the popularity of the personal automobile. Even as the United States Numbered Highways developed, observers questioned their long-term effectiveness, as they were incapable of handling the ever-growing traffic of the United States and were

[24] Several good histories of these roads and the Good Roads Movement, in general, exist. See, for example, W.C. Hilles, "The Good Roads Movement in the United States, 1880-1916" (master's thesis, Duke University, 1958); Drake Hokanson, *The Lincoln Highway: Main Street Across America* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999); Howard L. Preston, *Dirt Roads to Dixie*: *Accessibility and Modernization in the South, 1885-1935* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991).

notoriously dangerous. The United States fell into a cycle of building roads intended for yesteryear. As Mark Rose observes, "The pace of road building never kept pace with traffic increases nor with visions for faster traffic, social and urban change, and economic improvement."[25] As the 1920s wore on, one truth became increasingly apparent: the United States required a system of highways built for the automobiles and traffic volumes of the future.

The Great Depression slowed the growth of the personal automobile ownership rates, but a new highway system remained on the minds of some American leaders. The Hoover administration briefly considered the job-creating potential of a massive highway building program, but it was Harold Ickes who first submitted a formal proposal for such an initiative. In 1933, Ickes proposed a state-of-the-art, limited-access, nationwide superhighway network as a New Deal public works project. The notion intrigued Franklin Roosevelt, who went so far as to develop a financing plan for the initiative, but the President ultimately opted to invest the government's resources elsewhere, declaring highway programs "do not provide as much work as other methods of taking care of the unemployed."[26]

Wartime restrictions on gasoline, oil, steel, and rubber had drastically reduced the opportunity—and thus, appetite—for recreational driving, and the public consequently deprioritized better roads during the early 1940s. Nonetheless, the idea of a postwar highway construction program persisted throughout WWII. Federal Roads Commissioner

[25] Rose, 13.

[26] Samuel I. Rosenman, ed., *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 8 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), 229.

Thomas Harris McDonald and his engineers began developing a plan for a national express network in 1941, but Congress stymied the program when it heeded the desires of farmers, who wanted rural routes developed and improved, and interstate trucking companies, who vehemently opposed the fuel taxes required to build such a system. The American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) similarly advocated a 40,000-mile expressway network in 1943 but ran into the same opposition as the Federal Bureau of Public Roads.[27] Automobile manufacturers, gasoline distributors, tire companies, and other enterprises also shared visions of a massive postwar road building program but found little success advancing beyond the idea phase. By the time Paul F. Douglass delivered "The Civilizing Road" to the Annual Meeting of AAA Delegates in 1947, the AAA and other advocates of a superhighway system had been watching roads fail to live up to expectations for nearly forty-five years and saw few signs the complex problems that had prevented previous initiatives from succeeding would relent any time soon.

The AAA developed the superhighway system strategy that ultimately succeeded, as marked by the passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, during World War

[27] I-95,at least in concept, had been long considered part of the Interstate network. Franklin Roosevelt's aforementioned crude plan for a new highway system included only six roads. One of the six was a route that closely mirrored the path I-95 would eventually take. Thomas Harris McDonald had suggested an eastern seaboard route would be essential to the network. A road tracing I-95's route was included in every proposed rendering of the Interstate System. The Interstate System routes did not receive their numbers until 1957, when the long-conceived route officially received the "I-95" designation.

II.[28] As the nation's preeminent club for automobile and driving enthusiasts, the AAA's interest in Interstate Highways was natural. The organization viewed the Interstate System as the catalyst that would bring the United States fully into the automobile age, further encouraging the proliferation of the personal automobile as the nation's primary form of transportation. The AAA presented its plan to the club's members throughout the war, and the strategy clearly demonstrates the organization understood why previous superhighway proposals had failed. The AAA did not make recommendations about how many roads should be built or the path they should take, choosing instead to focus on the framework necessary to push through the required legislation.[29] In February, 1945, AAA leadership presented some specifics of its plan in the organization's flagship publication, *American Motorist.* The AAA called for a unified network of roads of "national" and "interregional significance" administered by one federal agency that would coordinate efforts with the states; the federal Public Roads Administration would identify routes in conjunction with state highway authorities.[30] The AAA's deference to the Public Roads Administration and states on route development points to the level of comfort the organization had with the proposals the parties had developed previously. With the exception of Harold Ickes' and Franklin Roosevelt's ephemeral plan, which consisted

[28] In a 1958 speech to the Harvard Graduate School of Business, AAA Executive Vice President Russell E. Singer claimed President Eisenhower "decided upon [the] far reaching move" of "a 'grand plan' for highway building in America" in 1954. It is not clear why Singer would give so much credit to the President, especially since it is a well-established fact that many individuals had been promoting superhighways for decades prior to 1954. Singer's praise of Eisenhower may have stemmed from an era of good-will after the long-fought battle for Interstate Highways ended. Russell E. Singer, "The Motorists' Program for Better Highways: A Case History in Public Relations" February 27, 1958, Folder: "Speeches-Singer, Russell: 1961-1965", AAA Archive.

[29] No single document in the AAA archive contains a comprehensive plan as developed by the AAA. Instead, the plan can be pieced together across multiple sources.

[30] "AAA Looks to Future Highways," *American Motorist* 18, no. 2 (February 1945), 13.

only of three north-south and three east-west routes, proposals universally recommended connecting most major metropolitan areas. Both the Bureau of Public Roads and AASHO plans called over 40,000 miles of concrete, and this satisfied the AAA.

States had previously balked at any highway program that saddled them with construction costs. Under the AAA proposal, states would pay no more than half of the construction and maintenance expense, and federal funds would come from general revenue instead of a tax on fuel or automobiles. This strategy served the double function of placating the states and the interstate trucking lobby. Under the AAA's financing plan, trucking companies would benefit from more efficient roads but would not pay more than any other industry. The plan also capped the contributions required by the states, guaranteed significant federal contributions, and addressed concerns over the apportionment process. Apportionments for the United States Numbered Highway System were the subject of much consternation, as the federal government distributed funds for very specific components of projects instead of the project as a whole. As such, delays were common while funds were short for a single maintenance shack even though the overall road was under budget. In an attempt to improve the process, the AAA recommended the Public Roads Administration develop a total cost per state for highway construction, which would be distributed, earmark free, for highway construction and maintenance.[31] This plan also transferred significant control to the states, which reduced tension among those who feared a public works project of this magnitude gave Washington considerable opportunity to meddle in state administration.

[31] Ibid.

The AAA remained close to the legislation as it made its way through Congressional committees and the larger legislative process. However, pushing the legislation through Congress was not the AAA's primary activity during the 1940s and early 1950s. Instead, the AAA spent most of its time rallying support for a system of superhighways. This strategy was based on astute observations of the prior highway battles on the part of the AAA leadership. AAA leaders recognized the single greatest factor in the failure of previous legislation was a lack of vocal and enthusiastic support for the initiative. Regardless of the areas of contention, the AAA believed Congress would agree on legislation if business leaders and others with a vested interest in the Interstate Highway program grew vocal enough about their desire to see the roads built. To this end, the AAA was determined to rally road advocates for its postwar push and recruit as many new supporters as possible.

The organization began coalition building in the early-to-mid 1940s, with club members across the country soliciting the support of any businesses that would support the cause. Senior leadership took responsibility for securing the support of larger organizations that would provide the weight necessary to push through legislation. Lower-ranking officials and local clubs solicited the support of less influential businesses. To this end, AAA leaders spoke to as many businesses and organizations as possible that stood to benefit from a superhighway system. These addresses often took a similar shape. The speaker would paint a picture of advanced, almost futuristic, automobile travel in an attempt to make audience members doubt their ability to comprehend how different life would be when the new era of transportation arrived. In the case of businesses, especially, the future was to be very lucrative for those who

capitalized on the growth of automobile travel; those who did not seize upon the transformative power of the Interstate Highways would struggle to survive.

The AAA designed speeches to exploit audience fears that business would pass them by. For example, speaking to the Southern Hotel Association in 1944, AAA National Travel Director Elmer Jenkins encouraged the audience to imagine the future of automobile travel and its implications on the hospitality business. Noting that "we still have 80-mile an hour cars and 40-mile an hour roads", Jenkins imagined the nature of driving after the war.[32] In some regards, Jenkins' list of automobile enhancements demonstrated considerable prescience, as it included shatterproof windshields, air conditioning, and easy-care upholstery. In other regards, Jenkins' imaginings took longer to come to fruition or still remain the material of science fiction: tubeless tires, silent vehicles achieving fifty miles per gallon, transparent roofs, and cars that received traffic information via radio signal. These futuristic cars, Jenkins claimed, would be able to travel over one hundred miles per hour on a new system of superhighways; as driving became safer, more efficient, and more enjoyable, Americans would take to the roads in unprecedented numbers. And their driving would take them further from home more frequently. As they drove to distant locales for vacation, Americans would need lodging. According to Jenkins, the "hotel men" in attendance stood to grow their business exponentially if they advocated for the new highways.[33] The AAA delivered a similar message to affiliated and unaffiliated automobile clubs and organizations representing

[32] Elmer Jenkins, "Post-War Automobile Travel," free-standing document in "Speeches" drawer of file cabinet, AAA Archive, 3.

[33] Ibid. 2-4.

gasoline distributors, restaurateurs, automobile manufacturers, and business owners in would-be tourist destinations throughout the 1940s. In each case, the message was essentially the same: the audience would benefit greatly by supporting the AAA's efforts in pursuing a modern highway system and a future without a new highway system was far less lucrative.

The tremendous dedication of the AAA to coalition building and advocacy of a superhighway system is apparent in the official organization records from the 1940s and early 1950s. Senior leadership traveled extensively and on a near-constant basis as they attempted to stoke interest in the highways. For example, the AAA's Executive Committee meeting minutes from February 13 and 14, 1947 shed light on the fervor with which the organization advocated for a new highway system during the 1940s. Since the previous Executive Committee meeting, held just three months prior, AAA President H. J. Brunnier had traveled to Cuba to meet with the Federation of Inter-American Automobile Clubs, to Mexico to meet with a national club, and to Los Angeles, Columbus, and Toledo to speak to various clubs in the United States. Other officers maintained similarly busy schedules in their pursuit of support.[34]

Ultimately, numerous interested parties came together to advocate the AAA plan. In one sense, the alliance was formal. The "Road Gang," consisting of approximately 250 individuals representing scores of industries, met in Washington on a regular basis to discuss strategy. Tom Lewis notes that membership in the Road Gang was secretive, and the group left few records behind. Nonetheless, the group's players and their activities are

[34] "Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee: February 13 and 14, 1947," included in binder "Executive Committee, 1946-1959", AAA Archive.

easy to identify because, as Lewis notes, "what it did was so predictable."[35] Membership certainly included representatives of the AAA and the Automobile Manufacturers Association. It is reasonable to assume other represented interests consisted of oil, cement, asphalt, tire, and construction companies. Congressmen Albert Gore, Sr. of Tennessee and George Hyde Fallon of Maryland, arguably the two most important legislators to the eventual success of the requisite highway legislation and eventual cosponsors of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, likely participated as well.[36] In another sense, the AAA alliance was informal, consisting of individuals and organizations that never sat down as a unified body but threw their support behind the AAA. Included in the informal alliance were wealthy automobile enthusiasts, small scale businesses tied to the driving industry, members of the AAA and other automobile clubs, and various businesses associated with the tourism industry that were not represented by national organizations.

Despite the considerable support the AAA found with businesses and politicians, the organization's leadership soon realized capitalizing on business interests would not be enough to advance legislation that would fund the Interstate Highways. The framework the AAA proposed proved ineffective at curtailing all of the old complaints about a massive highway-building program. The AAA proposal's requirement that states match federal contributions dollar-for-dollar, as they had done since the first federal highway bill in 1916, became less palatable as cost estimates steadily increased. By 1955, the

[35] Lewis, 310.

[36] Outstanding detailed accounts of the legislative battle for the Interstate System are available. Among the previously cited works, Rose, Swift, and Lewis provide the best accounts of the legislative process. Also see the collected works of the Federal Highway Administration's "unofficial historian, Richard F. Weingroff, which can be found at https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/highwayhistory/interstate.cfm.

estimated cost exceeded $100 billion.[37] President Eisenhower advocated using tolls to pay for the construction (what he called "self-liquidation"), but highway engineers resisted anything that would slow the flow of traffic. Trucking companies and bus lines refused additional taxes on the equipment necessary to conduct their business, such as tires. The American Petroleum Institute opposed additional federal taxes on fuel. The AAA itself shirked any additional fees that would fall to personal automobile owners. As the various interest groups debated the appropriate approach to funding the program, Americans became increasingly uneasy about moving forward with highway construction.

A 1947 memo prepared by the AAA's Public Relations Committee for the AAA Executive Board captures the lackluster support for the Interstate Highway System after the first few years of advocacy. Despite the AAA's "all out" efforts "in support of a high priority for the 40,000-mile National System of Interstate Highways" the Public Relations Committee saw little reason to be enthusiastic about the support the nation's elected officials and state highway administrators had shown for the project. The AAA identified three primary problems. First, legislators were more interested in the development of local and farm-to-market roads. Second, "some highway officials appear[ed] to lack enthusiasm for giving any priority to the system." And third, the "most progressive state highway officials" were "appalled when they contemplate[d] the cost of the system and the conflicting demands and confusion of thinking in the fiscal area of road policy."[38] At this point, the AAA acknowledged the need to change course. Convincing those in

[37] "Tripled Program Seen for Roads," *Atlanta Journal* , February 7, 1955.

[38] AAA Department of Public Relations, "Current Legislative Trends (A Summary of Legislative Developments Affecting Car Ownership, Prepared for Meeting of AAA Executive Committee, May 14 and 15, 1947," contained in folder "Executive Committee", AAA Archive, 2.

decision-making capacities and America's business leaders to agree on terms for the Interstate System would be an uphill and potentially fruitless road. Instead, the AAA aimed to convince the American people—those empowered to exert their will upon the elected officials—that Interstates were imperative for the future safety and prosperity of the United States. The memo referred to this initiative as "missionary work," and the AAA would spend the next twenty years writing the Interstate Gospels and evangelizing to the nation.[39]

MANUFACTURING SUPPORT

In order to broaden the appeal of the Interstate System, the AAA began incorporating talking points on the major benefits of the network into almost all of its speeches and began appealing to entities outside the universe of businesses that would be affected by the building program. Hotel, gasoline, tire, and automobile enterprises would not constitute enough support to push through the legislation; somehow the AAA needed to sway other types of businesses, such as retail, and the general population. The AAA proved particularly adept at identifying which pro-highway arguments would resonate with which audiences. As Executive Vice President Russell Singer pointed out in 1958, "We in the AAA have a wide variety of publics and our efforts and our materials were aimed at special target publics in the hope of getting maximum cooperation from each."[40]

To support its public relations campaign, the AAA created and distributed media containing the pro-Interstate message. For those in decision-making capacities within the

[39] Ibid.

[40] Russell E. Singer, "The Motorists' Program for Better Highways: A Case History in Public Relations," (speech to the Harvard Graduate School of Business, Boston, MA, February 27, 1958), AAA Archive, 13.

transportation arena, "The Motorists' Program for Better Highways" contained the complete AAA vision and a comprehensive explanation of the Association's proposal. The brochure "How to Get Better Highways NOW" took aim at opinion leaders outside the motor club and highway fields and contained highlights of the AAA's program. A leaflet entitled "You Can Help Get Better Highways" was included with all AAA mass-mailings to both members and non-members. The AAA's popular Trip-Tik, detailed maps of specific routes used by drivers on road trips, began including information on Interstate Highway benefits. When drivers felt frustrated with the slow pace or heavy traffic on the old U.S. Numbered Highways, the Trip-Tik would tell them where the closest motel was *and* would remind the driver how much better the trip would be if the Interstate Highways existed. The Trip-Tik included a tear-out postcard pre-populated with a message on the benefits of Interstate Highways and was designed for easy mailing to members of Congress. The AAA also prepared two scripts for radio use. One was general in nature, intended for use if a news program interviewed a local club executive. The other script highlighted "the family interest in better highways" and was intended to sway women. Additionally, the AAA produced countless signs, billboards, and other media all promoting reasons the Interstates would benefit the United States.[41]

While the AAA and other highway advocates tailored speeches, magazine articles, newspaper editorials, and other means of communicating the pro-highway message to myriad audiences, the one theme that appeared in almost every salvo was the connection between Interstates and economic development. In the earliest years of the

[41] Ibid., 8. Most of the publications mentioned in Singer's speech can be found in the AAA Archive.

AAA's lobbying effort, passing mention was made of the economic benefits of Interstate Highways. A 1944 issue of *American Motorist* suggested that the construction program would employ "large numbers of men" and would save federal and state governments money though lower road maintenance costs.[42] After the AAA launched its campaign to win the American people over to the Interstate Highway cause, the suggested economic benefits of the highways multiplied. Not only would the Interstates directly and indirectly employ legions of men and women, the Interstates would increase land value. A 1967 economic benefit study of I-26 outside of Columbia, South Carolina commissioned by the federal Bureau of Public Roads and the local Bureau of Business and Economic Research found the construction of I-26 negatively impacted some land value, but in total, had significantly increased the value of the property it touched. The report pointed to a fifty-three acre tract of land that appraised for one thousand dollars per acre in 1956 and sold for three thousand dollars per acre in 1961. The major change in the intervening years, of course, was the appearance of I-26.[43]

Road proponents usually presented the economic benefits of Interstate Highways as simple logic: better roads meant more travelers, more travelers meant increased demand for gasoline, restaurants, and hotels. Better roads eased the movement of goods from factory to store, reducing costs and increasing sales. In fact, the mere activity of shopping was to be more enjoyable—and therefore more frequent—after the construction of Interstate Highways, as the trip to the store would be less stressful. At a speech

[42] "What the $3,000,000,000 Road Building Program Means to Postwar America," *American Motorist* 18 no. 4 (April 1945), 8.

[43] Guilbert R. Graham, *South Carolina Economic Impact of an Interstate Highway Land Values and Uses*, eds. Guilbert R. Graham and C. McFerron Gittinger (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina,1963).

marking the fortieth anniversary of the Interstate Highway Act of 1956, AAA President and CEO Robert L. Darbenet reflected upon the need for the Interstate System at mid-century. He noted:

> World War II was over. The Korean "conflict" had come to an end. And the country had enormous pent-up demand for goods and services. Despite this potential for prosperity, economic growth would be hampered unless the country had a safe and efficient network of arteries through which the lifeblood of commerce could flow.[44]

Once built, Interstates would encourage Americans to buy new cars. They would travel greater distances, consuming more fuel and tires. They would employ the services of additional mechanics. In total, Interstate highways would completely transform the American economy by creating new industries and providing an enormous boon to others.[45] According to the AAA and its allies, the Interstate System would serve as the beating heart of the twentieth-century economy.

Tourism undoubtedly stands as one of the industries whose mid-to-late twentieth century development was largely dependent upon the Interstates. Likely because the image of American families loading up the station wagon for a trip to Florida was more

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[44] Robert L. Darbelnet, "Speech Given for the 40th Anniversary of the Interstate Highway System," (St. Charles, MO, August 10, 1996), located in binder "Crises Ahead: America's Aging Highways and Airways," AAA Archive.

[45] Stephen Ambrose, in his biography of Eisenhower, argues the president also saw the Interstate Highway program as a tool to be used to mitigate the vicissitudes of the American economy. As Ambrose writes, "By tailoring expenditures for highways to the state of the economy, Eisenhower could use the program to flatten out the peaks and valleys in unemployment."[45] In other words, the Interstate Program would give Eisenhower the ability to either pump federal dollars into the economy, thus spurring hiring during down periods, or scale back building projects during "hot" cycles of the economy. By Ambrose' estimation, Eisenhower's entire reasoning for the Interstate System differs from the popular account, noting, "Back in November 1955, the President had talked to [economic advisor Gabriel] Hauge, then informed [Secretary of Commerce Sinclair] Weeks that he wanted [the] Commerce [Department] to plan to use the Interstate System for managing the economy. As Hauge put it, 'That was the fundamental purpose of the plan in the initial instance.'" Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President (Volume 2)* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), 250, 301.

accessible than the abstract notion of money multipliers and gross domestic product, tourism was also the example of Interstate-fueled economic development most frequently invoked by proponents of the Interstate Highway. The arguments made in the name of tourism consequently permeated the national conversation about highways. In 1969, a Georgia resident wrote to Senator Herman Talmadge to complain about an experience she and her husband had while driving through Savannah. Calling Highway 17, I-95 predecessor in the area, a "disgrace," Mrs. William Bellah questioned, "How could any tourist want to come to Savannah after driving that old-fashioned, outmoded road?" She concluded her letter by stating, "Anyone entering Georgia by this route can tell how far behind we [Georgians] are."[46] Mrs. Bellah's letter reflects the reach of the Road Gang's message. Upon experiencing a less than ideal road, she knew to immediately think of the impact on tourists. Then, through conditioning, she knew Highway 17's problem was its age; it was, she believed, too old to be acceptable. Georgia, if it wanted to be perceived as modern and in-line with the rest of the country, needed to invest heavily in its roads. Senator Talmadge, in response, knew what Mrs. Bellah was suggesting. His only resolution to her complaint was to say, "As you know, Interstate 95 is scheduled to replace Highway 17 when completed."[47] The answer, it seems, was new roads. Highway 17 would remain an open road even after I-95 opened to the public, but Talmadge, as an advocate of the Interstate System, saw only the promise of the new highways.

[46] Mrs. William Bellah to Herman Talmadge, 23 June 1969. Herman E. Talmadge Collection, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies (Athens, Georgia).

[47] Herman Talmadge to Mrs. William Bellah, 3 July 1969. Herman E. Talmadge Collection, RBRL.

The United States embarked upon its program of Interstate Building during a period when leaders saw incredible value in tourism. To be sure, much of the value was economic. But in the wake of World War II and in the throes of the Cold War, some believed the experiences gained through traveling would provide a humanitarian benefit as well. In a short essay discussing the experiences of Americans traveling through Europe in the mid-1950s, John Steinbeck wrote, "I believe that tourists are very valuable to the modern world. It is very difficult to hate people you know."[48] Steinbeck and others believed the tensions that dominated the post-war years could be alleviated if people simply took the initiative to meet those who did not share their backgrounds, culture, and value. In the United States, leaders applied Steinbeck's opinion to domestic travel. In this way, another benefit of the Interstates closely tied to economic development was the frequently employed argument that Interstates would increase connectivity and by extension, improve society. Highway supporters frequently spoke of the shorter travel times the Interstate System would permit and argued this would allow for closer ties between people and communities. The Interstates would, they argued, allow smaller satellite cities and towns to become more united with the larger urban center. People in neighboring communities would exchange ideas and experiences more readily. Ultimately, boosters argued, Interstates would make the country a more united nation, literally and figuratively. The wish to see Interstates tie communities together was widespread as the highway program developed. A 1972 issue of *American Motorist*, for

[48] John Steinbeck, "The Yank in Europe," *Holiday* 19.1 (January 1956), 24.

example, suggested I-95 would serve a greater purpose, as "it connects and pulls together diverse sections of the Nation…It truly joins the North and South."[49]

In 1954, Vice-President Richard Nixon, dedicating a new AAA headquarters in Florida, addressed the safety and timesaving benefits of the highway network that was then making its way through Congress. His comments focused, however, on the "more intangible" benefit of the increased travel the roads would permit. "It has tended to break down sectional barriers, it has brought our people together, and by bringing our people together, it has made our people understand each other better than they had previously," he said.[50] Other Americans adopted the philosophy that tourism could help address social issues as well as boost the economy. John F. Kennedy was arguably the most vocal proponent of this mindset. Kennedy's See the U.S.A. program encouraged foreigners to travel to the United States as a means of improving the United States' balance of payments but also to realize the humanitarian benefits Steinbeck discussed.[51] As a companion initiative, Kennedy introduced "See America Now," which aimed to "encourage Americans to see more of the historic and scenic areas of our country and to stimulate their wider use of our magnificent recreational facilities."[52] While certainly

[49] "Closing the Gaps: I-95," *American Motorist* 41 no. 7 (October 1972), 6.

[50] "Remarks by Vice-President Richard M. Nixon at Dedication of New AAA Headquarters Building," 4 March, 1954, folder marked "Speeches" in filing cabinet, AAA Archive.

[51] In a 1963 message to Congress, Kennedy listed a growing of the American tourist sector second in his list of strategies for improving the balance of payments. Number one was, expectedly, "increase exports." "Special Message on Balance of Payments," 18 July 1963, Timothy J. Reardon, Jr. Subject Files, box 4, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, Massachusetts (hereafter denoted as "JFKL").

[52] Ibid.

aimed at further improving the United States' balance of payments, See America Now was also designed to alleviate regional tensions.

The civil rights strife of the 1960s had piqued American cognizance of regional differences between the North and South. As Dewey Grantham noted:

> An aspect of…resurgent sectionalism was the intensifying emotional involvement of white Americans in other regions [than the South], whose reactions to momentous racial events of the decade included rising antipathy toward white southerners, mounting sympathy and support for black southerners, and increasing identification of the South as the source and embodiment of the race problem in the United States.[53]

With tensions on the rise, Kennedy looked to tourism to help alleviate the strain on the country. The Johnson Administration advanced Kennedy's initiative after his untimely death, re-branding the program as "Discover America." In a contribution to a 1965 edition of *American Motorist*, Vice President Hubert Humphrey claimed, "Your President and this government are taking a positive, affirmative, active interest in travel, in tourism, in seeing to it that more Americans get to know about their country."[54] Humphrey then revealed the true thinking underlying the program:

> I might add that there is a certain political therapy in this. When people get to know more about their America, they are less critical of it. They have a better understanding of the other fellow's problems. They have a little better appreciation of his mores and cultural habits. This is a great, big country, and it is so big that few of us have had time to even sense its greatness or its diversity.[55]

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[53] Dewey W. Grantham, *The South in Modern America: A Region at Odds* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 203.

[54] Hubert H. Humphrey, "Discover America," *American Motorist* 34 no. 4 (July 1965), 6.

[55] Ibid.

It is clear the Johnson Administration saw humanitarian value in increasing travel within the United States. Johnson could wield increased tourism as he fought the regional divide, and the Interstate Highway System would be a powerful weapon in this fight.

Humphrey's *American Motorist* article included a photograph of the Vice President partaking in exactly the sort of cultural exchange he hoped other Americans would experience if they used the new Interstate Highways to see their country. In the photograph, Humphrey stands on the ground in Colonial Williamsburg. He is dressed in a suit and is shaking hands with a young African-American man dressed in colonial attire. The young man is riding a horse, which puts him significantly above the Vice President. Looking up, Humphrey is smiling. While the words of Humphrey's article made no mention of race or segregation, the accompanying photograph says everything the Johnson Administration hoped Discover America would accomplish.

After economic development, the most frequently mentioned benefit of the Interstate Highways by boosters was "progress." The theme was not limited to social progress, such as the improved race relations hinted at in Humphrey's *American Motorist* article. Progress, as Robert Collins has noted, became something of a hegemon in the postwar American mindset, as "progress for the sake of progress" became the norm. Whether militaristically, diplomatically, socially, technologically, culturally, or economically, progress was the goal of mid-century America.[56] Or, as the prescient Lewis Mumford wrote of the American pursuit of progress in 1934, the country perceived

[56] Robert Collins, *More: The Politics of Economic Growth in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 106.

progress as "a good in itself independent of direction or end."[57] Highway boosters strove to tie the notion of progress to the Interstate System through an unrelenting effort to mention progress, in all its forms, whenever they discussed the superhighway program. As Lewis and Rose note, advocates did attach the Interstates to social progress, but they also intended for would-be supporters to view the highways as progress in whatever realm they were passionate about, whether it be social, economic, or other.

Among the more practical benefits of Interstate Highways, the AAA positioned driver safety as one of the chief benefits of the new system. Driving had grown increasingly hazardous in the United States in the 1940s. By 1956, the United States experienced one automobile-related injury for every 670,000 vehicle miles and one death for every eighteen million vehicle miles.[58] The Interstates would, the AAA argued, make driving more safe for two reasons. First, the roads would be designed to handle modern cars at higher speeds. Second, the Interstates would be characterized by limited access, meaning drivers could only enter and exit the road at designated spots. This increased control of the flow of traffic would make for a safer driving experience. In 1960, the AAA estimated that 4,000 lives annually would be saved by way of the Interstate Highways.[59]

The growth in traffic had not only made driving a more dangerous activity by mid-century, it had also created tremendous traffic in America's urban areas. The 61

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[57] Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 186.

[58] Burton W. Marsh, "The Critical Need—That We Become Nation of Better Drivers" (1956), found in folder "March, Burton W.: Reprints, Speeches, etc. #1," AAA Archive.

[59] Russell E. Singer, "1961: Year of Decision for American Highway Building: An Open Letter to the 87th Congress," *New Highways*, No. 2. November 1960, 1.

million passenger cars on the road by 1960 had shifted America's residential patterns. The 1950 census showed a thirteen percent increase in "central city" population but a thirty-five percent increase in suburban growth.[60] The existing highways were not designed to handle the new traffic patterns, and gridlock became a defining characteristic of the urban experience. The AAA positioned the Interstates as a solution to the growing urban traffic congestion. Pointing to the Los Angeles Freeway as an example of what modern roads could do for a city "frequently cited as the horrible example of over-motorization," the AAA argued what had been constructed of the Freeway had already "speeded up rush-hour traffic and reduced the load on nearby surface streets."[61] When critics pointed to the gridlock that immediately formed on sections of the Interstates that had opened, the AAA argued this was the result of an incomplete network and that "a completed freeway system will distribute traffic."[62]

Americans have come to associate the Interstate Highways with national defense, and for good reason. "Defense" is in the official name of the network; today, it is known as the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and *Defense* Highways, and it was enabled by the National interstate and *Defense* Highway Act of 1956. Additionally, the story of Eisenhower finding inspiration for the roads when he saw how well the German Autobahn moved military equipment and personnel during WWII is well known. Some also know that Eisenhower participated in a military exercise in 1919 designed to

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[60] "Highway Transportation in the National Defense Emergency: A Statement to Charles E. Wilson, Director, Office of Defense Mobilization," February 1951, folder: "Wartime Transportation Plans," AAA Archive, 2.

[61] Russell E. Singer, "Changing Patterns of City Traffic," *New Highways* No. 3. December 1960, 3.

[62] AAA Public Relations Department, "Metro: Toward a Brighter Future," stand alone document, AAA Archive, 15.

test the American roads for military readiness. A three-mile long caravan of personnel and vehicles traveled from Washington, D.C. to San Francisco. It took sixty-two days, averaging five miles per hour. Unsurprisingly, the 1919 roads were declared inadequate, as the caravan spent considerable time pulling vehicles out of the mud— a disastrous situation if circumstances required the movement of troops across the country as quickly as possible.[63] Furthering the popular association of the Interstates with "defense" was the AAA, who included national defense as a benefit in many of its attempts to rally support for the Interstate program. Defense served as a strong selling point during the 1940s and 1950s, as it played on Cold War fears and helped the system appear as an imperative instead of a luxury.

A 1951 memo prepared by the AAA for Charles E. Wilson, the Director of the War Department's Office of Defense Mobilization, clearly demonstrates the AAA recognized the effectiveness of defense as an argument in favor of the Interstate Highway System. The War Department had historically treated highways as expendable, which the AAA viewed as a key reason highway construction halted during World War II. In the memo, the AAA attempts to convince Wilson to consider roads as critical to American mobilization efforts. The memo reveals the inadequacy of the early 1950s highway system. The network included 7,500 bridges that were too weak to handle military vehicles. The system also featured 668 grades too steep for some military trucks. Much of the network was also too narrow for military vehicles. In summary, the AAA declared, "Everyone concerned with the defense emergency MUST be impressed by such great

[63] This episode is chronicled in several sources, but Lewis does a particularly good job. *Divided Highways*, 89-91.

deficiencies."[64] Leveraging Cold War jitters, then, was not solely employed on civilians, but the military establishment as well.

The national defense argument carried considerable weight and appears to have found many sympathizers. When the Kennedy administration contemplated using 1.5 percent of highway research funds "for general transportation planning and research in urban areas," an internal memo argued against the idea, noting the Department of Defense "would resist tampering with highway trust funds."[65] Additionally, AASHO cited national defense as the most important reason to complete the Interstate System in 1967.[66] Among all the segments of the Interstate Highway System, I-95 was most frequently discussed in the context of national defense given the high percentage of the national population living within proximity of the route and the number of military bases along the east coast. When citizens in Princeton, New Jersey revolted against I-95 in 1976, H.R. Del Mar, a Major General in the United States Army, wrote to Senator William Harrison A. Williams, Jr. expressing the military's desire that the wishes of the community be ignored. Noting that I-95 "extends the entire length of the East Coast," Del Mar claimed a break of I-95 in Princeton would "degrade the strategic value of the network."[67]

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[64] AAA Report to Charles E. Wilson, "Highway Transportation in the National Defense Emergency" (February 1951), folder: "Wartime Transportation Plans," AAA Archive, 3. Emphasis in original.

[65] "Legislation Program 1962 Transportation Recommendations – Analysis 1," 1962, Theodore C. Sorensen Papers Legislative Files Box 57, JFKL.

[66] A.E. Johnson to Members of the 90th Congress, 3 October 1967, Herman Talmadge Collection Subgroup C, RBRL.

[67] H.R. Del Mar to Harrison A. Williams, Jr. 29 April 1976, Harrison A. Williams Papers Box 233 Folder: "Defense," Rutgers University Rare Books and Manuscripts (New Brunswick, New Jersey). Hereafter cited as RULSC.

In the end, the Road Gang's arguments in favor of Interstate construction gained considerable traction. One need only review the newspaper and magazine articles of the 1940s and 1950s to see how pervasive the arguments became. A very representative 1955 article in the *Atlanta Journal* notes that superhighways were "long overdue for defense and safety reasons" and goes on to note the roads would serve as a "pump-primer" for the nation's economy.[68] The public relations campaign proved incredibly successful at overcoming decades of inertia. The compromise that ultimately resolved the impasse and secured the funding for the Interstate Highway System came about in 1956. The final hurdle, namely the fiscal apportionment between the federal government and the states, fell when the Boggs-Fallon Bill and the Highway Revenue Act emerged from Congressional subcommittee. Combined, they created a Highway self-liquidating Highway Trust Fund, which theoretically overcame the risk of the traditional "pay as you go" approach to highway financing by eliminating the threat of the funding disappearing at any moment. The Trust Fund gave pro-road Americans confidence the project would not be derailed by political divisions while construction was underway.[69] These bills also put a 90-10 split in place between the Federal government and the states, thus alleviating state concern that they would be burdened with expense obligations they could not meet. With the financing question solved, the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 came to fruition. Eisenhower, recovering from a heart attack at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, signed the bill into law. He gave the AAA one of the pens used to sign the

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[68] "Georgia Stake Big in Ike's Road Plan," *Atlanta Journal*, 8 February 1955.

[69] In reality, the Highway Trust Fund became a subject of significant debate, as allegations of "raiding" the Fund were common throughout the 1960s. When opposition to the Interstates increased during the 1960s and 1970s, some politicians argued the Trust Fund should pay for public transportation.

legislation as acknowledgement of his appreciation for the role the organization played in bringing the Interstate System to fruition.

It should be noted that a compelling competitive thesis on the forces that resulted in the public throwing support behind the Interstate exists. In the conclusion to *Motoring,* a fascinating account of the psyche that gave rise to American car culture, John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle challenge the thesis that defense or even economic arguments ultimately convinced the United States to move forward with constructing the Interstate Highway System. Instead, they argue "what enabled passage [of the 1956 Highway Act] was less the potential to move military equipment and personnel than the potential to move pleasure-seeking motorists."[70] Jakle and Sculle are not speaking of tourists, per se, but rather any American that gets pleasure out of driving an automobile. By their account, Interstate Highways ultimately came about in 1956 because, by that point, enough Americans had developed a desire for the ability to travel safely at high speeds that the nation could no longer put the action off. Statistics suggest timing played a key role as well. In 1950, 60 percent of American families owned an automobile. By 1956, the rate had increased to 70 percent. By 1960, 77 percent of American families would own an automobile.[71] As they write, "Highways may have been justified on grounds of military defense or economic prosperity…but the growing numbers of motorists…made highway building not just politically feasible but *compelling*.[72] By their account, the United States federal government ultimately funded and built the Interstate Highway System because it

[70] John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *Motoring: The Highway Experience in America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 218.

[71] Lewis, 81, 105.

[72] Ibid., 5. Emphasis mine.

became politically prudent for them to do so when the number of constituents demanding the roads outweighed the number resisting them. And the constituents did not support construction out of a desire to protect the nation, grow the economy, or save the lives of drivers, as the AAA would have preferred they done; instead, Jakle and Sculle argue the average American began to support the Interstates once he or she owned a personal automobile and discovered the pleasure and autonomy of driving.

If Jakle and Sculle are correct, the public relations campaign and interconnected pro-highway arguments outlined in this chapter were effectively moot; according to *Motoring*, Americans did not need to be convinced to support highways, as their growing penchant for driving was enough fuel to push through Interstate Highway legislation. While an interesting argument, Jakle and Sculle weave a troubled logical web, as they cannot prove elected officials did not need to be convinced of benefits. Nor can they discount the effect of the pro-highway public relations campaign. If elected officials passed the Highway Act of 1956 because it was politically compelling, there would have been little reason to justify it in speeches, constituent correspondence, and other channels years before and years after 1956. Most likely, the public's desire for Interstate Highways was inexorably linked to highway proponents' efforts to convince the United States of the network's value. After all, highway advocates aimed the public relations campaign at the populace as well as politicians.

THE RESULTS OF RHETORIC: TWO CASE STUDIES

Despite the significant public debate and conversation about Interstates dating back to World War II, the residents of Richmond, Virginia did not know what to expect when they turned out for the dedication of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike on June

30, 1958. This segment of highway, which had been championed since 1947, had struggled to gain traction until the Interstate Highway Act of 1956 provided the requisite funding. As part of the nascent Interstate Highway System, and at a total cost of seventy-six million dollars, the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike took the designation of I-95 and gave the city a direct, high speed connection to Petersburg, about twenty-five miles to the south.[73] One of the first segments of Interstate Highway open to the public, I-95 opened in Richmond amidst a seemingly united, optimistic, and jubilant citizenry.[74]

The dedication festivities were an opportunity for the local community to celebrate the city's status as one of the first urban areas in the country with a thirty-mile segment of operational Interstate Highway. The day before the road officially opened, local businesses inundated the *Richmond Times Dispatch* with notes of celebration and self-congratulation. Thalhimers, a local department store, purchased a full-page ad featuring a stylized "Good going, friends" against pictures of a toll plaza and an illustration of I-95 weaving through Richmond's downtown. The E.G. Bowles Contracting Company spent advertising dollars to declare, "We're proud to have played a part in the construction of the new expressway." The Atlantic Bitulithic Company proclaimed, "Virginians are proud of their new expressway…we are proud to have furnished miles of asphalt used in it's construction" [sic].[75] The moment inspired a local

[73] "This is Virginia: 1958 Edition," *Virginia News*, January 3, 1959. WRVA Radio Collection, 1925-2000, Library of Virginia. Richmond, VA. Hereafter referenced as LV.

[74] Much the land seized for I-95 in Richmond had been occupied by the city's African-American population. Chapter 3 analyzes I-95's destruction of the preeminent black neighborhood, Jackson Ward. While members of the black community had opposed the course of I-95 through the city, none of this discontent was apparent when Richmond dedicated the highway. See Chapter 6 for more detail.

[75] All advertisements appear in the June 29, 1958 edition of the *Richmond Times Dispatch*.

hardware store to encourage residents to "have confidence in the knowledge that you are a citizen of this magic metropolis with a potential far greater than our father's ever dreamed was possible."[76] An insert in the *Richmond News Leader* invited the public to attend the opening ceremony and "see …what makes your capital city move, breathe, and grow."[77]

The crowd included two former Virginia governors and the current governor; members of the city's business elite; the local, state, and regional media; and thousands of curious and enthusiastic citizens. The proceedings featured only two speakers, T. Coleman Andrews, the president of the Richmond Retail Merchants' Association, and Mayor F. Henry Garber. Andrews' status as the first speaker says volumes about the pretense under which I-95 was sold to the Richmond community. Above all else, supporters of the project argued that the Interstate would serve as a catalyst to the city's retail stores. Specifically, highway boosters fingered downtown retailers, whose department stores lined 7th and Broad Streets, as the beneficiaries of I-95. These retailers, in turn, rallied behind the project.

I-95 entered Richmond in the midst of an economic boom. Since World War II ended, Richmond's downtown had experienced growth and a dramatic increase in wealth. Between 1948 and 1950, construction outlays in the city increased more than $15 million, or nearly forty percent. Approximately 85 percent of construction outlays went to new construction, not renovation. Additionally, manufacturers added $304 million in

[76] "The Way to a Great Future," *Richmond Times Dispatch* 29 June 1959.

[77] "Ride a Magic Carpet" *Richmond News Leader* 29 June 1959.

industrial output.[78] As was the case across the country, much of this development came at the expense of existing businesses in the city center. While manufacturing and commercial development was strong within Richmond's core, the city's residential center steadily slid into the suburbs. Between 1946 and 1956, Richmond's metropolitan population increased from just over 300,000 to 400,000; yet, almost all of the growth was outside of the city center. Meanwhile, car registrations increased dramatically. By time I-95 opened, there almost the same number of cars as telephones in Richmond.[79] Thalhimers and other Richmond department stores had experienced a steady growth in business in the immediate postwar years, but as 1960 approached, they saw business increasingly flowing to the strip malls of the bedroom communities just outside of the city.

The Richmond retailing community believed better transportation would solve the problem. As Andrews said in his dedication speech, "One of the problems of retailing today is inadequate arteries to provide the smooth and convenient flow of traffic to and from metropolitan areas."[80] I-95 was to be the key artery pumping citizens who now resided between Richmond's core and Petersburg back to the city for their shopping needs. With easier travel, the logic went, shoppers would return to shop even if they no longer lived within the city. The AAA and other highway proponents espoused this opinion when they spoke of the economic value of Interstates. In a 1960 brochure published by the AAA with the aim of addressing the questions surrounding the effect of

[78] James K. Sanford, ed. *Richmond: Her Triumphs, Tragedies & Growth* (Richmond: Metropolitan Richmond Chamber of Commerce, 1975), 192-193.

[79] Ibid., 185-209.

[80] "Richmond Celebration of Turnpike Opening, June 30, 1958."

increased car ownership and highway construction on downtowns, the organization argued that highways were the only way to keep businesses alive in city centers. Without increased highway access to city centers, "the trend toward neighborhood rather than downtown shopping would be greatly accelerated," the brochure claimed. It continued, "Central business districts face many problems…but there would seem to be no more direct route to economic suicide than to eliminate the business they now enjoy from automobile passengers."[81] Richmond's downtown retail establishment accepted the AAA's argument and tied their future to the belief I-95 would counteract the shifting residential pattern. As Richmond officially opened I-95 to traffic, the retailers' spokesman believed the future was secure, as he proclaimed the Turnpike "the greatest single achievement in Richmond during our generation."[82]

After Andrews' speech, Mayor Garber took the podium. "This will, I am certain, be my last public appearance as mayor of this city," he stated. "I can think of no more important occasion—no occasion fraught with more potential for our future."[83] Garber, who as a city council member had organized some residential communities against the route I-95 would take through the city, had ultimately failed. Ed Grimsley, the only member of the Richmond media who consistently covered the potential damage I-95 could cause, said of Garber's efforts, "On the sidelines fighting a long and futile battle against the toll road," Garber's group "was not powerful enough to pose a serious threat

[81] AAA Public Relations Department, "Metro: Toward a Brighter Future" (1960), stand alone document, AAA Archive, 8.

[82] "Richmond Celebration of Turnpike Opening, June 30, 1958," WRVA Radio Collection, 1925-2000, LV.

[83] "Richmond Celebration of Turnpike Opening, June 30, 1958."

to the project."[84] Nonetheless, by time I-95 opened to the public, Garber was an adamant supporter of the highway. While the route was not one he preferred, Garber could not deny the value I-95 presented for the city of Richmond.

Garber's speech was full of praise for those who had advocated the highway since the 1950s and predictions of economic prosperity. But while Andrews' talking points focused almost completely on the importance of I-95 to the retail district and wider economy of Richmond, Garber focused on unifying potential of highways. "It is my hope that this new link connecting the cities of Richmond, Colonial Heights, Petersburg, and other communities will be a bond that brings us even closer together as we face the future," he said.[85] Since automobiles became a dominant mode of transportation, the region had struggled to produce a road that could safely and efficiently move people and goods between Virginia's capital and its neighboring urban centers. An early twentieth century road suffered years of delays and, right before opening to the public in 1926, a key bridge collapsed into the Chopawamsic Creek, thus ensuring decades with no adequate road in the region. U.S. 1, the backbone of the United States network of Numbered Highways, provided the first reliable, paved route connecting Richmond to Washington, but it was built for slower automobiles, and the high death toll between the cities resulted in the popular nickname for U.S.1 in the area as "the Killer." A 1965 article in *American Motorist* hailed I-95 as the answer to Richmond's long struggle with inadequate regional transportation, saying the road "offers a speedy, safe, and scenic trip that would have surpassed the wildest imaginings of the sorely tried travelers of the past."

[84] "New Housing Is One Result of Turnpike," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 29 June 1958.

[85] "Richmond Celebration of Turnpike Opening, June 30, 1958."

With I-95, the article went on, Richmond had direct access to Washington, Baltimore, and the New Jersey Turnpike, resulting in "reduced traveling time, decreased cost, and increased safety."[86] According to the author, I-95 filled a long-standing transportation need and fulfilled all of the Road Gang's talking points for what made a great highway.

While the Richmond ribbon-cutting ceremony focused on the city and its immediate vicinity, there were signs event organizers were aware of I-95's broader impact, including the role Richmond's segment of I-95 would play in connectivity on the national scale. The organizers almost certainly drew inspiration from highway boosters' argument that Interstates would draw the nation together. After the speakers had finished proclaiming the bright future Richmond had in store thanks to the new highway, attention turned to the ribbon spanning the asphalt. A single ribbon crossed the four lanes in front of a toll plaza beneath a large banner imploring drivers to pay the exact change of twenty cents. On the northbound side of the road, the ribbon was blue, while grey fabric spanned the southbound lanes. Public radio reporters explained the significance: the blue ribbon represented the "Union Army—or at least it's significant that those heading north are going toward Yankee Land." Meanwhile, the grey ribbon represented "those that will be traveling south, further into Dixie." The *Richmond News Leader* mentioned the variegated ribbon in its coverage of the proceedings but did not speculate on its significance.[87] The radio broadcast is the only evidence anyone in attendance considered the symbolism; yet, there is no doubt the ribbon was purposeful, as the broadcasters

[86] Virginia Tyree Woodward, "Our I-Route," *American Motorist* 33 no. 12 (March 1965), 17.

[87] "Police Set to Assist Free Rides," *Richmond News Leader*, 30 June 1958.

prefaced his commentary with "I am told."[88] Who explained the significance is not clear, but the organizers wanted to suggest—however subtly—that Richmond played a major role in the nation's past and that I-95 would allow it to remain a significant location in the United States' future. I-95 would bind the North and South, and communities like Richmond would serve as a gateway between the regions.

After the widows of the Richmond Turnpike Authority's first chairman and first general manager cut the ribbon, a beauty queen crowned as "Miss Turnpike" christened the asphalt with a bottle of champagne.[89] The bottle was only one third full by time the bottle broke on account, the *Richmond Times Dispatch* suspected, of the eighty-five degree heat.[90] Following a parade grand marshaled by the president of the Richmond Retail Merchants' Association, highway officials allowed drivers to "inspect" the road for five hours without paying the toll. In anticipation of a "crush" of curious drivers, fifty-three state police officers assembled to maintain order.[91] Thousands of motorists turned out to drive the new highway, resulting in significant backups throughout the city. Just hours after Mayor Garber promised residents the Turnpike would usher an era of better commuting, there were mile-long lines of cars at every onramp in the city. Police ultimately had to shut down a few key onramps in order to clear the congestion. While built for upwards of 25,000 motorists at a time, the *Richmond Times Dispatch* estimated

[88] "Richmond Celebration of Turnpike Opening, June 30, 1958."

[89] A picture of the ribbon cutting is available at the Velentine Richmond History Center. Folder: Places: VA. Roads: Toll Road Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike 60.38.144. The names of the ribbon cutters found in "Police Set to Assist Free Rides," *Richmond News Leader* 30 June 1958.

[90] "Gigantic Traffic Jams Pile Up on New Turnpike," *Richmond Times Dispatch,* 1 July 1958.

[91] "Police Set to Assist Free Rides."

"this figure was probably exceeded by several thousand" on account of residents' excitement and curiosity.[92]

Highway ribbon cuttings continued to draw crowds long after Richmond's dedication ceremony. When I-95 opened in a rural area on the Maryland and Delaware border five years later, nearly 10,000 people turned out. These attendees came not just to marvel at the new highway but also to hear President John F. Kennedy speak at the road's dedication.[93] While the Richmond highway dedication was a local celebration featuring local players, the ribbon cutting of the Delaware Turnpike or Northeastern Expressway, as I-95 was called in Delaware and Maryland, respectively, was ostensibly a national affair. Kennedy's presence was the most obvious sign that the November 14th ceremony had national implications, and the selection of Robert Moses as the emcee of the event further indicated the larger import. Undoubtedly the most prominent and influential advocate of highway construction in the twentieth century, Moses' presence provided the day's events with a sense of engineering and civil planning significance in addition to the political significance suggested by the President's presence. Given the speakers of the I-95 ribbon cutting, it would be easy to overlook the local flavor of the day's events. Despite the national figures and their attempts to make the dedication of I-95 on the Maryland/Delaware state line a national event, however, it is important to note local history, local players, and local circumstance influenced the festivities in key ways that reflected the local nature of I-95.

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[92] "Gigantic Traffic Jams Pile Up on New Turnpike."

[93] The attendance estimate comes from William P Frank, a local reporter. "JFK Dedicates Del., Md. Turnpikes," *Wilmington Evening Journal*, 15 November 1963.

When Delaware Governor Elbert Carvel and Maryland Governor J. Millard Tawes began soliciting Kennedy's participation in the dedication ceremony in October 1963, they believed pointing out their segment of I-95's significance to the national transportation network would lure the President.[94] In a letter to Kennedy, Governor Carvel noted the Delaware Turnpike "eliminates the last major bottleneck between Boston and Washington on the present super highway system." He went on: "There is no other project of this magnitude to be completed during the next few years…which will mean so much to the traveling public."[95] The Chairman-Director of the Maryland State Roads Commission noted the segment of I-95 would "close the gap in the important Atlantic seaboard expressway system and…make a vital contribution to the economic strength of the nation."[96] Tawes wrote, "We of the two States consider this a most important milestone in the development of a transportation system that is needed to move people and goods, and to strengthen the economy of the Atlantic Seaboard."[97] This strategy worked, and Kennedy agreed to attend the ceremony, believing it to be a good opportunity to push his larger transportation agenda and to highlight what his administration had accomplished in regards to Interstate Highways. An early draft of his dedication speech recounts how the Kennedy Administration worked to resolve the

[94] At least one of the governors, Carvel, appears to have invited all fifty governors to the event, further highlighting the national importance he saw in the highway. The Delaware Public Archives holds the invitation responses from most governors. Letters from governors to Carvel (1963), Elbert N. Carvel Papers, Turnpike Divn. 8-4-3-3, Delaware Public Archives (Dover, Delaware). Hereafter cited as DPA.

[95] Letter, Elbert E. Carvel to John F. Kennedy, 11 October 1963, White House Central Subject Files, Box 990, JFKL.

[96] Letter, John B. Funk to John F. Kennedy, 12 October 1963, White House Central Subject Files, Box 990, JFKL.

[97] Tawes to Kennedy, 4 November 1963, Governor General File 1963-1964 (MSA S1041-1577) Box 52, Maryland State Archives (Annapolis, Maryland). (Hereafter cited as MSA).

Interstate funding crisis of the early 1960s and advanced a plan to overhaul the federal transportation tax structure.[98]

Kennedy could not have selected a better location to discuss the Interstate financing crisis of the preceding years. The Northeast Expressway / Delaware Turnpike had always been envisioned as a part of the Interstate Highway System, but when a recession in the late 1950s created a Highway Trust Fund shortfall, funds to build the road turned to a trickle. Not wanting to delay construction of a road that had been in the works since the mid-1950s, Maryland and Delaware collectively decided to move forward with building the road without federal funds. Instead, the states installed toll booths, and the proceeds paid for the highway. The segment still tied into federally-financed portions of I-95 to the north and south, and consequently the portion of highway in question carried the I-95 designation even though it came to existence outside the confines of the Interstate System.

Kennedy's plan to use the Northeast Expressway ribbon cutting as a platform from which to promote transportation policy remained in place until the last minute. At a briefing for reporters attending the trip to the ribbon cutting ceremony, Kennedy Press Secretary Pierre Salinger revealed he did not know precisely where the ceremony would be held. When one reporter asked for the specific town, Salinger joked, "It is on the highway between here and there." Another reporter informed the first—and Salinger—that the ceremony was "on the Mason-Dixon line between Elkton, Maryland and Newark,

[98] Draft Speech, "Remarks of President at Dedication of Northeast Expressway and Delaware Turnpike," 12 November 1963, Theodore C. Sorensen Papers: JFK Speech Files, 1961-1693, JFKL, Box 73.

Delaware."[99] It is unclear if this was the first time the Kennedy Administration considered the historic significance of the ceremony site, but the next draft of the dedication speech used the setting as a springboard for a speech about the Interstate's historical significance and potential for the future of the region.[100] The realization informed every moment of Kennedy's visit to the ceremony site, as every step Kennedy took was orchestrated to acknowledge the significance of the border.

Shortly before four in the afternoon on a chilly November 14, 1963 a series of three helicopters appeared on the horizon. After two bouts of disappointment upon realizing the first helicopters did not carry the President, it took the crowd a few moments to mount a fully enthusiastic greeting when the third chopper landed. It touched down in a field straddling the state line. President Kennedy emerged, and flanked by Carvel, Tawes, and a congressman from each state, followed a "freshly laid grass pathway" toward a platform that had been erected especially for the event.[101] The platform, too, spanned the border. The podium from which speakers would address the ten thousand indviduals in attendance stood in the very center of the podium, right on the symbolic dividing line of North and South.

For its entire history, the Mason-Dixon Line was a demarcation of difference, meant to draw distinction between what was on one side versus the other. Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon established the line as a means of settling a border dispute between

[99] News Conference Transcript, 13 November, 1963, White House Staff Files: Papers of Pierre E. G. Salinger, Box 53, JFKL.

[100] Speech, "Remarks of the President at Dedication Ceremonies of the Delaware-Maryland Turnpike: Delaware-Maryland State Line," 14 November 1963, Theodore C. Sorensen Papers: JFK Speech Files, 1961-1693, JFKL, Box 73.

[101] "JFK Dedicates Del., Md. Turnpikes," *Wilmington Evening Journal*, 15 November 1963.

the colonies of Pennsylvania and Maryland in the 1760s. The Penn and Baltimore families quarreled over the boundary for nearly a century before Mason and Dixon attempted to establish a clear line of demarcation. Over time, the line became the symbolic dividing line between free and slave states and between North and South.[102] Maryland and Delaware, formed out of three Pennsylvania colonies, eventually moved past the border dispute, but the six-hundred pound limestone Mason-Dixon Boundary Stone marking the border remained a constant reminder the colonies—and eventually states—were fundamentally different.

Local newspapers were among the first to publicly discuss the significance of the Northeast Expressway and Delaware Turnpike converging on the Mason-Dixon Line. William Frank, the most prolific journalist in Delaware during the 1960s, saw the highway's opening as a historic moment with significance far greater than the transportation needs of the twentieth century. "The governors of Delaware and Maryland are about to undo…what Mason and Dixon began to do exactly 200 years ago," Frank wrote.[103] A political cartoon in the *Wilmington Evening Journal* depicted Carvel and Tawes shaking hands across a line drawn in the earth. In the cartoon, each stands upon the text of his state's respective portion of I-95 (Tawes on "Maryland Expwy" and Carvel

[102] Recent research by Max Grivno proves the Line was far less rigid in reality than on paper, and distinctions between the two sides of the Mason-Dixon Line were largely imperceptible to those at the border. Max Grivno, *Gleanings of Freedom: Free and Slave Labor along the Mason-Dixon Line, 1790-1860* (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2011).

[103] William P. Frank, "Burying old Hatchets: Mason-Dixon Pike Stone Unity Token," *Wilmington Evening Journal*, 18 October 1963.

on “Delaware Tpk.”). Behind the governors, Mason and Dixon are perched on rocks scowling at the men breaking down the border they created.[104]

On the chilly November afternoon in 1963, Kennedy’s spoke from the platform carefully constructed across the Line. Kennedy’s speech was, on the whole, unremarkable but does reflect the pervasiveness of the arguments advanced by the AAA and its allies. Like others who participated in dedication ceremonies, Kennedy employed the highway lobby’s arguments in favor of Interstates. The system would, Kennedy said, save eight thousand lives each year. He also touched on the economic benefits of the road, noting nothing other than transportation infrastructure “has a greater impact upon the Nation and no industry has a greater opportunity to affect our economic progress.”[105] Kennedy spoke of the importance of the Northeast Expressway to the interconnectivity of the region, noting the road would be a key thoroughfare when “the whole area, stretching from Washington to Boston, will be one gigantic urban center.”[106] The President was not alone in his use of AAA pro-highway arguments when speaking of I-95 in this region.

A Maryland State Roads Commission news release, published a few weeks before the I-95 dedication, also demonstrated an acceptance of the highway lobby’s arguments in favor of Interstate Highways. The release primarily focused on the safety benefits of the Northeast Expressway. Citing the one thousand commercial and private access points on U.S. 40, the road largely replaced by the Northeast Expressway, the Maryland Roads Commission argued I-95 would significantly reduce the 1,450 accidents and 950

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[104] Jack Jurden, untitled political cartoon, *Wilmington Evening Journal*, 18 October 1963.

[105] Speech, “Remarks of the President at Dedication Ceremonies of the Delaware-Maryland Turnpike: Delaware-Maryland State Line.”

[106] Ibid.

automobile-related personal injuries each year due to the new highway's limited access structure.[107] The release also noted I-95 "is expected, because of its strategic location in the Boston-Washington corridor, to play an important role in lifting the economy of Baltimore City, as well as the counties of Baltimore, Harford, and Cecil." Additionally, the release went on to say the highway "is expected to be used by a large group [of] commuting workers who have their jobs [in the city] and maintain their residences in the Baltimore area."[108] Clearly, the Road Commission accepted the argument that Interstates would strengthen regional economies through the easier flow of goods and people and that they would allow residents to easily travel back and forth between their downtown jobs and suburban homes.

Governor Carvel appears to have been equally swayed by the pro-highway arguments. A fact sheet he disseminated to any constituents who inquired about the Delaware Turnpike called out the safety benefits of the new road as opposed to U.S. 40: "In 1960 there were 25 people killed on the Route 40 stretch, 1,134 persons injured and 1,950 traffic accidents. The left turn problems, crossover movements, [and] stopping for signal conditions will not occur on the new expressway."[109]

While I-95 in Richmond and on the Mason-Dixon Line opened at different times, to different crowds, and to different fanfare, both ribbon cutting ceremonies gave officials—local and national—the opportunity to express their views of the Interstate. The media, in their coverage of the events, revealed another interpretation of the road's

[107] Maryland State Roads Commission Bureau of Highway Information, Release 1741, 25 October 1963, Governor General File 1963-1964 (MSA S1041-1577) Box 60, MSA, 1.

[108] Ibid., 2.

[109] "Facts about Delaware Turnpike," undated, Carvel Governors Papers (1963) Box 7, DPA.

significance. Finally, letters to the editor and politicians' constituent mail provide insight into a third take. Taken in whole, these sources suggest that those who chose to celebrate the opening of I-95 were generally optimistic about the future the highway would help forge. The value people saw in the road, however, varied wildly. Many saw economic benefit, others viewed I-95 as an asphalt symbol of progress. To the most pragmatic, I-95 represented an easier commute to work. To the most visionary, I-95 offered a chance for a divided nation to reunite.

Events marking the opening of I-95 were overwhelmingly positive affairs. Yet, if one studies the events carefully, underlying discord becomes apparent. In Richmond, nearly one thousand homes and a black commercial district fell as I-95 carved through the heart of the city. Largely ignored as I-95 demolished one of the most prosperous black middle classes in the South, Richmond's black population was excluded from the city's ribbon cutting ceremony. On the Maryland/Delaware state line, the Wilmington NAACP picketed, calling out the irony of pushing for interstate and interregional cooperation while ignoring the need for interracial civility.[110] Meanwhile, Governor Carvel received a letter from one constituent asking for an invitation to the dedication ceremony so she could see how the land stolen from her was to be used.[111] While the speeches celebrated the benefits of the highway as presented by the AAA and the rest of the highway lobby, and businesses along with other community members celebrated their communities' progress, I-95 had already made its share of enemies. Whether these

[110] "Ceremony Pickets Hit Del. Democrats, not President," *Wilmington Evening Journal*, 15 November 1963.

[111] Anna O. Lloyd to Carvel, 6 November 1963, Box 7, DPA.

enemies would mobilize and whether they would be heard varied greatly from place to place as I-95 bulldozed its way through the eastern United States.

CHAPTER 2

PEOPLE AND PROGRESS IN WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

In late September, 1957, a most curious spectacle appeared in the Shipley Street shop window of Matthews Brothers in Wilmington, Delaware. Whereas a passersby might stop on an average day to gaze at the store's offerings, and a small crowd might come together to admire a Christmastime display, the most recent presentation drew a much larger gathering of individuals clamoring for a good vantage point. Matthews Brothers, shortly after the Delaware State Highway Department unveiled the route I-95 would take through the city, displayed the state's official model of the superhighway. Measuring nearly seven feet long and three and a half feet wide, the model was an impressive demonstration of the momentous change on Wilmington's horizon. The model itself was also an admirable feat. The city's buildings were accurately and painstakingly miniaturized, as were the tracks and trains of the B&O Railroad. Tiny shrubs and trees implied the beautification to be pursued along the highway.

Within a few minutes of its unveiling, a crowd had appeared and looked on with a variety of emotions. Some were impressed by the grand scale of the road. Others thought of the opportunity the highway presented for the city. Still others played a round of "where's my house?" For some, the game reached an upsetting conclusion upon realization their streets were not on the model. The homes in which some of these

bystanders lived vanished beneath the eight lanes entering Wilmington from the southwest and carving a path through the city's western neighborhoods.[112]

Those distraught by the absence of their homes on the Matthews Brothers display were among the first Americans to experience the destructive potential of Interstate Highways. By 1957, state governments across the country had acquired considerable land for the development of Interstate Highways, but most of this land was rural and did not require the destruction of homes. Urban development was far more impactful, both in terms of magnitude of change and number of families affected. In time, urban communities would learn how to most effectively resist Interstate development or—more basically—engage the government on the topic of Interstate routing and construction. Wilmington, as one of the nations' first metropolitan areas to undertake urban Interstate construction, served as a laboratory for the urban experiences that would follow in the 1960s and early 1970s. In Wilmington's story, one sees communities wrestling with whether construction was desirable, government entities forging highway construction policy, and individuals like those staring into Matthews Brothers' window deciding how to respond. While other urban centers would eventually face similar controversies and engage in similar conversations, Wilmington's experience was the unique product of a particular time and place.

Between 1957 and 1965, two significant controversies arose as I-95 carved a course through Wilmington. The first dealt with the path I-95 would take as it entered the city from the south. The other, later, controversy took place in the Arden and Ardentown

[112] "Model of Freeway Shown In Mid-City Store Window," *Wilmington Morning News,* 20 September, 1957.

communities of northwest Wilmington and questioned whether an exit and road-widening project was necessary if the residents presumably serviced by the exit did not want it. Taken together, these controversies paint an intriguing tapestry of the variables at play when individuals considered whether to support or resist Interstate Highway development. In these debates, Wilmington residents took sides based on how the route affected their homes, businesses viewed the routes through the lens of commercial opportunities, political leaders considered long-term plans for Wilmington (and short term implications for their reelection prospects), and other stakeholders introduced additional rationales. Additionally, the debates illustrate the inherent conflict between highway officials, who put a premium on engineering principles, and residents, who valued their quality of life.

EARLY RUMBLINGS: THE BANCROFT PARKWAY AND AN EASTERN OPTION

By the time financing became available to move forward with Interstate Highway construction, state officials across the country were several decades into their search for possible routings. Most states had decided on potential—but not finalized—routes by 1956. Delaware was no exception, and in February of 1957, Delaware's State Highway Department unveiled three options for Interstate construction in and around Wilmington. The first option entered Wilmington center along the Jackson and Adams Street corridor on the city's west side. A second option traced the route of the extant Bancroft Parkway further to the west of the city center, and a third option swung around the city's eastern edge.

As other scholars have noted, engineers applied the norms of their profession when making decisions regarding Interstate Highways.[113] These individuals, usually operating as employees of state highway departments, believed the roads' design should provide motorists and the government maximum benefit since they would fund the construction. During the early discussions about the construction of a new federal highway system, engineers had advocated limited access highways since they would provide the best driving experience. Once the Interstate Highway Act received Eisenhower's signature and the planning phase officially began, engineers argued that routes ought to be selected for traffic flow and cost efficiency because these characteristics best served the perceived stakeholders—those who would fund and use the road.[114] The Delaware State Highway Department's engineers planned Wilmington's Interstates with these aims in mind. When citizens or concerned groups raised questions outside the scope of traffic flow and cost efficiency, engineers paid them little attention. For example, when a conservation group questioned whether the health of the Churchman's Marsh had been considered when developing the Bancroft Parkway plan, the Deputy Chief Engineer responded only that engineers liked the route because it required a relatively low level of costly property acquisitions and would be a cost-effective route. He made no mention of environmental concerns despite the question to which he was responding.[115]

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[113] Bruce Seely's *Building the American Highway System* stands as the most thorough investigation into the role engineers played in the development and construction of the Interstate Highway System.

[114] See Rose, 9 and 22; Bruce E. Seeley, *Building the American Highway System.*

[115] William J. Miller, Jr. to Allston Jenkins, 10 October 1957, Executive Department, Government Papers 1302.7 (1957), DPA.

At times, Delaware's engineers were blatantly dismissive of the concerns of residents. One longtime Wilmington resident characterized the Highway Department's initial approach as paternal: "They at first stated that if we did not behave they would call Papa and, he, the Federal Government, would come in and condemn our property." Acknowledging a change in tone since the earliest public outreach efforts, the resident described the new message as less insulting but no more compromising:

> Suave, politely spoken (and no doubt well-intentioned) representatives of the State Highway Department are telling us that, despite the public protest, we need some new super highways (as large as the New Jersey Turnpike) and that, like it or not, we are going to get them—and where the Highway Department says.[116]

Even the most diplomatic of Highway Department employees could not mollify angry residents. Deputy Chief Engineer William J. Milller, Jr. explained to one such individual, "Unfortunately, it is impossible for us to locate such highways without some property damage if they are to truly serve the areas in which they are to be located."[117]

The Jackson-Adams Route would provide easy access to the city center and, by the Delaware State Highway Department's estimates, would serve eighty percent of Wilmington's local traffic. On the downside, the path required the condemnation of nearly one thousand homes, scores of businesses, and would require destroying sections of five parks and recreational areas.[118] On the other hand, the eastern option required far

[116] Garrett Burckel to the Editors, Journal Every Evening, 28 February 1957, 1302.7 Gov Papers G to H H087465, DPA.

[117] William J. Miller, Jr. to Alfred J. Banks, 1 April 1957, 1302.7 Gov Papers G to H H087465, DPA.

[118] "Pros and Cons of Proposed Routes," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 7 June 1957; "Bancroft Route Opponents Urged to Back New Road," *Wilmington Morning News*, 20 September 1957.

less destruction.[119] In fact, most of the land required to build along this route was either undeveloped, vacant industrial space, or a landfill. According to Wilmington's highway engineers, this route would displace few people and businesses, be among the most cost-effective options in terms of land acquisition expense, and posed few construction obstacles. The tradeoff, however, was that the route did not provide easy access to the city center and consequently provided significantly less user benefit.[120] The westernmost option involved upgrading the extant Bancroft Parkway to meet Interstate Highway standards. The path would skirt the city's western edge, requiring far less destruction than the Jackson-Adams option but, like the eastern option, would effectively bypass the city.

Wilmington residents overwhelmingly struck out against both options that circumvented the city, and the Bancroft Parkway and eastern option only gained the support of those who opposed the Jackson-Adams Route for personal reasons. State engineers interpreted the public response as a call for a route that provided maximum usefulness to drivers, even if the utility came at a higher cost. Those who would be most directly affected by the road—those whose communities and property would be sacrificed for I-95—could not convince Wilmington's engineers that their concerns should influence the determination of an optimal route. By the late spring of 1957, the Delaware State Highway Department, placing a premium on the extent to which the road would benefit the majority of the city's businesses and residents, threw its support behind the Jackson-Adams Route for I-95. As a result, the city of Wilmington entered the

[119] In 1975, the eastern option came to fruition as I-495.

[120] "Pros and Cons."

summer of 1957 with the intention of building along the route that would displace the largest number of people and businesses.

THE JACKSON-ADAMS STREET CONTROVERSY

When word leaked that the Delaware Highway Department had developed a preference for the Jackson-Adams route, the working class white families who lived in the neighborhood quickly mobilized and formed the Delaware Expressways Committee, with Judge Thomas Herlihy, Jr. as chairman and counsel of the organization. On May 6, the Expressways Committee presented its criticisms of the downtown path at a public hearing sponsored by the Delaware State Highway Department. Technically, the hearing's aim was to receive public opinion on all three routes under consideration, since no route had been publically sanctioned by the Highway Department. In actuality, the meeting was a forum for those opposed to the Jackson-Adams route. Speaking on behalf of the Committee, F.L. Brevoort, Jr. said the Jackson-Adams plan would "result…[in the]…biggest traffic jam Wilmington has ever known" because it would feed drivers simply trying to get from one side of the city to the other directly into the most congested part of town.[121] Other speakers argued for the merits of alternate routes in an attempt to dissuade the Highway Department from the only downtown route under consideration.

Despite initial opposition, the Delaware State Highway Department and city of Wilmington officials reached a tentative agreement on the Jackson-Adams Route on June 29, 1957. The decision immediately met additional resistance, especially from the Republican City Council President. Close to retirement, Frank J. Obara was serving his

[121] F.L. Brevoort, Jr., "A Graphic Presentation of the Recommendations of the Delaware Expressways Committee," 6 May 1957, Daniels Collection Box H4, Delaware Historical Society (Wilmington, Delaware). Hereafter cited as DHS.

last days in office when the Council endorsed to the Adams-Jackson Route, and without the tempering influence of a political future, Obara lambasted everyone involved in the decision. By his estimation, the agreement was bad for the people of Wilmington, bad for his Republican Party, and bad for any of the officials who voted in favor of the agreement. Calling the City Council's decision "the stupidest in its history", Obara railed, "Not only did they condone an improper act, displace 3,500 people from their homes, [and] disrupt church planning, but they also took the incoming Democrats off the hook at one and the same time."[122] Wilmington's Republicans were serving as lame ducks after losing an election earlier in the year, and by Obara's account, made an unpopular decision for their political rivals. Obara's fellow Republicans seem to have approved the route because they truly believed it was the best option for Wilmington's future. Knowing the decision would be politically imprudent, they planned to give the route official endorsement because they had the luxury of not answering to voters for the action. These Republican councilmen knew the route would face greater obstacles if they left the decision to City Council-elect.

As the Republican City Council and Delaware Highway Department took steps to formally approve of the route, the Expressways Committee looked to legal action as a first response. Following the protocol established in the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, the state Highway Department planned on hosting a public hearing on the Adams-Jackson route on July 10th. Once this obligation was met, the proposal could be formally made to the Bureau of Public Roads. On July 3, the Expressways Committee met in

[122] "Adams-Jackson St. Decision Called 'Accomplished Fact'," *Wilmington Sunday Bulletin*, 30 June 1957.

Herlihy's offices to discuss legal action that would bide those in the community who disfavored the Jackson-Adams Route time. Representatives of the Committee canvassed the Jackson-Adams Street neighborhood to solicit support, and a group of leaders presented their case to the Governor "with promise of no publicity."[123] Meanwhile, the Taxpayers' Protective Association, representing those whose businesses or property values would be harmed by the route, joined the fight against I-95.

Almost immediately, route opponents encountered unexpected complications, as the congregation of the Zion Lutheran Church, whose building stood in the path of the proposed route and would almost certainly be demolished to make way for the highway, began to publically undermine the resistance's efforts. Not only was the edifice of Zion Lutheran Curch endangered by the Jackson-Adams route, so was the congregation. Most of the church's members lived among the estimated 3,500 people who would be relocated as a result of the construction. Jackson-Adams Route opponents assumed that, for these reasons, the church would support the actions of the Expressways Committee and Taxpayers' Protective Association. To the contrary, the Zion Lutheran Board publicly argued the Jackson-Adams Street route was the best option for Wilmington, even if it meant relocation for the church and its members. Stating the church had come under "extreme pressure" from outside the congregation to oppose the route, the Zion Board laid out a list of reasons it supported the initiative. First, the Church argued Wilmington needed an Interstate route on the west side of the city in order to maximize the economic benefits of the Interstate system. Second, the Church argued, "We cannot argue that exact location is so important that progressive development of all aspects of city life must be

[123] Handwritten untitled notes, (Undated), Daniels Collection Box H4, DHS.

prohibited from disturbing us."[124] In other words, Zion claimed it supported the Jackson-Adams Route for purely altruistic reasons, that it would martyr itself for the advancement of Wilmington.

Zion Lutheran stated it reached its decision in the spirit of community, but few believed the claim. The Taxpayers Protective Association, for one, chastised the Church for changing its position and attempting to vilify the TPA in the process. As the story played out the news, it became apparent that the Zion Church had partnered with the TPA in 1950 when the Wilmington State Highway Department planned a different road as part of a different highway system in roughly the same corridor as the Jackson-Adams route of I-95. When the debate reignited under the guise of the Interstate Highway System, the TPA reached out to the Church once more, assuming the two groups would renew their alliance. According to the TPA, Zion Church refused to reinstate its alliance with the TPA and characterized the request as "extreme pressure."[125]

St. Paul's Methodist, which also stood to lose its building as a result of I-95, joined Zion Lutheran on July 5. St. Paul's released a statement that provided insight into its decision to move and—presumably—helped explain the sudden shift by the Board of Zion Lutheran. In the statement, the St. Paul's board of trustees wrote that it supported the demolition of the current St. Paul's structure and "that a new St. Paul's be erected in some other location, preferably in the growing suburban areas of our city."[126] While Zion

[124] "Freeway Gets Church Okay", *Wilmington News-Journal*, 3 July 1957.

[125] "TPA Regrets Zion's Action", *Wilmington News-Journal*, 4 July 1957.

[126] "2nd Church OK's Moving for Freeway," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 5 July 1957.

implied it conceded to move for the betterment of Wilmington, St. Paul's clearly signaled the decision to move was in the churches' best interest.

Like the rest of urban America, Wilmington experienced dramatic suburbanization over the course of the 1950s. In 1930, Wilmington was home to ninety percent of Delaware's urban population. By 1950, that number decreased to fifty-eight percent. Meanwhile, Wilmington's suburban regions—the Brandywine Hundred, Christiana Hundred, Mill Creek Hundred, and New Castle Hundred—which had been home to twenty-four percent of New Castle County's residents in 1930, had grown to account for forty percent of the County's population by 1950.[127] Driven by "a reliance upon the private automobile, upward mobility, the separation of the family into nuclear units, the widening division between work and leisure, and tendency toward racial and economic exclusiveness," Wilmington's residential patterns fell very much in line with the rest of urban America.[128]

The plan to route I-95 through the property of St. Paul's and Zion's churches was fortuitous timing from the congregations' perspectives. As the 1950s wore on, more and more church members moved away from the neighborhoods the churches had historically served. With attendance at low and falling levels, the plan to build I-95 offered the churches a palatable solution to their dilemma. The government would, by law, pay market price for their existing property, and the churches could use these funds to reestablish themselves in the suburbs, closer to the new homes of their past

[127] U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Schedule, 1880-1950. For detailed analysis of Wilmington's changing residential patterns, see: Susan Mulchahey Chase, David L. Ames, and Rebecca J. Siders, *Suburbanization in the Vicinity of Wilmington, Delaware, 1850-1950; A Historic Context* (Newark, Delaware: Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, 1992).

[128] Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 4.

congregations. The construction of I-95 provided churches an opportunity to increase attendance and realign themselves with modern demographic patterns without losing money on the sale of the existing property.[129]

The leadership of St. Paul's Catholic Church took the opposite position of its Protestant neighbors. Father John H. Walsh argued the human needs of the people of Wilmington must take precedence. "St. Paul's Catholic Church supports progress and realizes the necessity of relieving the congestion of traffic…but not at the price of 800 homes, nearly 200 businesses, and the disruption of the religious life of the people of St. Paul's parish", he wrote.[130] Sacred Heart Catholic Church, located just off the projected path of I-95, did not take an official stance as an organization, but the church's leader, Father Paul F. Huber, used his respected position in the community to express concern for the people who would be harmed by the construction of I-95 along Jackson and Adams Streets. On July 25, Father Huber submitted a letter to the Wilmington City Council, noting that he would be "remiss in…[his]…duty" if he did not speak out on behalf of his parishioners. By his count, the proposed route of I-95 would consume ten of the fifty-nine residential blocks that made up his parish, and 281 of his 800 parishioners lived in the ten blocks to be demolished.[131]

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[129] Whether the church's motivations were understood by the local media is unclear. News stories and editorials commented on the churches' decisions and acknowledged they would likely relocate to the rapidly developing suburbs, but no articles stated outright the thinking driving their decisions. One article, after laying out the facts, commented, "They have risen above personal and parochial considerations to look beyond to the problems of the community as a whole. This is good citizenship." "A Tale of Two Churches," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 9 July 1957.

[130] "Priest Asks Cancellation of Freeway Okay by City," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 10 July 1957.

[131] "Priest Says 3rd of Parish Lives in Freeway Path," *Journal-Every Evening*, 25 July 1957.

The Catholic churches faced very different situations than the Protestant churches; whereas the actual structures of Zion Lutheran and St. Paul's Methodist stood in the proposed I-95 route, St. Paul's and Sacred Heart stood just outside the path. Land acquisition mandated by the Jackson-Adams route gave the Protestant churches an opportunity to reorganize in the suburbs, closer to the people. The Catholic Churches, on the other hand, would remain in the Jackson-Adams neighborhood but with far fewer residents nearby. Regardless of arguments made, all four churches ultimately chose sides based on the effects I-95 would have on their ability to prosper in a changing urban landscape.

Much like Wilmington's churches found themselves of opposite opinion when it came to the Jackson-Adams controversy, the people of Wilmington were similarly divided. Samuel Evans, who lived several miles from the Jackson-Adams corridor, called on those who tacitly approved of the Jackson-Adams route by questioning whether the Highway Department and city officials considered the human cost of their decision to route I-95 through a densely populated section of Wilmington. "These people," Evans wrote, "can be considered in no other light but as victims of the few ruling the many." He went on to propose a simple philosophy the city and state highway officials could use when routing roads: "place the speedway where it will do the least harm to the smallest number of people."[132]

Mayor Eugene Lammot argued the Adams-Jackson route accomplished Evans' aim, saying it "causes the minimum amount of disruption to the existing neighborhood patterns" of Wilmington. Lammot never publicly stated why the Adams-Jackson route

[132] "Letters to the Editor," *Journal-Every Evening*, 10 July 1957.

was the least disruptive, but he did acknowledge the road was the most expensive.[133] Rather than engage those opposed to the route on the merits of the Adams-Jackson path, Lammot employed a red herring by asking what would happen to Wilmington should the city not build the road. "Is the price too great for us to pay?…Is the chemical capital of the world to be left behind as other cities grow in value and prestige? This, of course, is up to our citizens," he claimed.[134] Of course, Lammot's rhetoric overlooked the obvious fact that those opposed to the Jackson-Adams route were not necessarily opposed to the road in principle, and resisting the selected route was not equivalent to canceling the entire construction project, but Lammot was less interested in genuine debate and more interested in moving forward with the construction of Delaware's newest superhighway. For this reason, Lammot also turned a deaf ear to others who questioned the construction of I-95 along the Jackson-Adams corridor. Francis Duszak, President of the Pulaski Legion, a fraternal civic organization with over fifty years of history in Wilmington, wrote to Lammot in September of 1957. Noting that the Jackson-Adams route would displace the Pulaski Legion's headquarters, and the amount offered as compensation would not allow the organization to continue offering all of its services to the city, Duszak argued that any route that passed through Wilmington's center would ultimately do more harm than good. Whether or not Duszak's arguments were sound, Lammot's letter in response was dismissive.[135]

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[133] "Mayor Sees Adams-Jackson Route causing Least Havoc," *Wilmington News Journal*, 11 July 1957.

[134] "Mayor Gives Cautious Nod to Adams-Jackson Route," *Journal-Every Evening*, 13 July 1957.

[135] Francis Duszak to Eugene Lammot, 5 September 1957; Boggs to Duszak, 10 September 1957, Executive Department, Government Papers 1302.7 (1957), DPA.

Mere weeks after the new Democratic City Council took office, its members began to position themselves as opponents of the Jackson-Adams Route. The *News-Journal* polled the twelve members of the City Council after a meeting on July 17, and ten of the officials went on the record as being opposed to the plan.[136] One councilman, Hubert Kenny, declared support for an attempt to rescind the agreement made between the previous city council and the state highway department.[137] These changes, coupled with the general unrest of the citizenry, led the State Highway Commission to postpone a mandated public hearing until September 9. As the *Journal-Every Evening* wrote of the decision:

> Two months' notice is ample time for both advocates and opponents to marshal arguments….The Commission's willingness to face up to the "human values" involved in uprooting families from the FAI-2 route shows a realization that its responsibility does not end with building highways.[138]

Indeed, just three weeks after the initial announcement of Wilmington's agreement with the State Highway Department suggested the route was inevitable, the tide began to change. Those opposed to the route at least had reason to hope they could affect the path of I-95 in their city. The optimism was tempered by some, however. Councilman Kenny suspected opposition efforts would ultimately yield few results, and he was certain to tell the people of Wilmington that he could not guarantee success. He suspected the project

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[136] "Council Asks Lynch Speed Route Opinion," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 18 July 1957.

[137] "Councilman Would Change Agreement," *Journal-Every Evening*, 13 July 1957.

[138] "Help Along the Freeway Route," *Journal-Every Evening*, 13 July 1957.

could be delayed, but "expressed little doubt that it would be constructed."[139] One resident declared, "The freeway is going to be forced on us no matter how we feel."[140]

To the extent I-95 would be "forced" in the Jackson-Adams Street corridor, the cause was the growing certainty among the Delaware State Highway Department and some Wilmington officials that the route provided maximum benefit to the city of Wilmington and the wider region. Working from the position that suburbanization was a more-or-less permanent trend, and residents would not return to the downtown areas in large numbers, most city leaders accepted a different future for Wilmington's city center. Rather than a wealthy, residential downtown, these leaders envisioned a future where residents who lived in the suburbs would enter the city for entertainment, dining, and shopping. To this end, I-95 would be a key conduit funneling residents from their new neighborhoods into the city.[141] The project also had implications for the entirety of northern Delaware, and political leaders may have been more willing to disrupt the lives of some city residents if it meant securing a more prosperous future by tying the suburbs to the city. When Mayor Lammot added individuals from the suburbs and other nearby communities to his Citizens' Advisory Council, he tacitly acknowledged Wilmington's future was as dependent on those who lived outside the city as within.

Bill Frank, arguably the most influential journalist in Wilmington, wrote a series of pleas in his weekly "Frankly Speaking" column in 1957 urging the people of the city

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[139] "Kenny Will Vote to Kill Road Pact," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 13 July 1957.

[140] "Heartaches and Tears," *Wilmington News-Journal,* 8 July 1957.

[141] This vision of Wilmington's future and the role I-95 would play in bringing it to fruition was challenged by the Delaware Expressways Committee, who continued arguing an urban I-95 would only further the demise of Wilmington's urban merchant core. See: Delaware Expressways Committee,*Summary Engineering Report Proposed Location of FAI-2,* 12 September 1957, Daniels Collection Box H4, DHS.

to support the Adams-Jackson Street route. He usually echoed Lammot's position that I-95 had to run this course because it served the greatest utility to the greater Wilmington metropolitan area. At other times, he chastised opponents for being selfish. In one such article, he wrote, "I see now where we have not one but almost a half dozen anti-freeway groups, made up of citizens whose properties lie along the route of the highway." He then reminded readers that when other neighborhoods were targeted for demolition to make way for other roads, these citizens were completely silent. "While it is not becoming for anyone to make fun of or poo-pooh their concern for their homes, it must be rather ironic for the Union Park Gardens and the Bancroft Parkways folks who may want to ask: 'Where were you in your denunciations when we were in a jam?'"[142]

Frank was perhaps the most visible member of a large contingent of Wilmingtonians who actively supported the Jackson-Adams route. A group calling itself the Delaware Citizens for Freeways believed the route would "stimulate economic growth and a higher standard of living, [since] Where transportation facilities have improved, new industries have moved in." The group went on to hypothesize that, once constructed, the road would attract new industry, create jobs, and improve the overall quality of life for Wilmington. Citizens for Freeways made known their support for a downtown route, since it best satisfied the governing principle of Interstate construction, as they saw it: "The test of any legitimate, sound, and valid argument for or against the principles proposed for our consideration as regards FAI 2 is whether or not it is serving the greatest good for the greatest number of people."[143] Wilmington's business leaders

[142] "Frankly Speaking," *Wilmington News-Journal,* 15 July 1957.

[143] "Statement of Delaware Citizens for the Freeways," Box 11 Frank Collection.

came out in support of the Jackson-Adams route and seconded Mayor Lammot's argument that the proposed path struck the appropriate ratio of usefulness and people affected. As an organization focused primarily on profits, the human cost of I-95 was of less importance to the members of the Wilmington Businessmen's Civic Association. Noting that "no matter where a freeway is eventually located, it will necessitate the relocation of some people," the Association believed "the closer such a freeway came to the heart of the metropolitan shopping district, the better it would serve all the citizens of our city, county, and state."[144] The organization never substantiated the claim that the route disrupted a minimal number of lives.

The Wilmington Businessmen's Civic Association's statement drew the ire of at least one resident who attempted to organize a boycott of all downtown merchants. Arguing that the members of the Civic Association only hold their position because their homes were not at risk of demolition, the boycotter proclaimed an intent to "do all my shopping in the suburban areas, [as] They do at least respect the people who are fighting for their cause."[145] The boycotter's proposed punishment to those businessmen who did not side with the residents of the Jackson-Adams Street corridor illustrates how little those most impacted by the proposed project understood of the situation and their opponents' motivations. It was a direct consequence of the gradual shift of shopping patterns to the suburbs that Wilmington's downtown businessmen wanted I-95 in the Jackson-Adams Street corridor. Organizing a movement to concentrate more economic activity in the suburbs would only strengthen the merchants' resolve.

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[144] "Businessmen Back Mayor on Freeway, *Wilmington News-Journal*, 17 July 1957.

[145] "Boycotter," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 14 July 1957.

The *Wilmington News-Journal* published many letters in which Wilmington citizens tried to illustrate the human cost of the Adams-Jackson route. No matter how many times the routes' advocates argued the path minimized the human cost, those humans in question responded with pleas for the people of Wilmington to recognize their plight, to recognize them as neighbors instead of dehumanized numbers or the even more abstract "most opportune to be relocated." One resident, writing under the name "A Human Problem," wrote to Haber:

> Let me show you through my home where I have lived for 40 years, in which I was raised, and where I hope to raise my family, also through some retired families' homes, through some widows' homes—widows who live on social security. Perhaps then, Mr. Haber, you and the rest of the State Highway Department will know the exact price of this great open road which, in your opinion, stands as progress.[146]

These appeals—and many similar to it—appeared in newspapers daily in the summer of 1957.

Despite the effort of those to be affected, most within Wilmington either favored the Jackson-Adams route or approved of it with silence. Mayor Lammot claimed that, between July 11 and July 23, he had received ninety-two messages in favor of the route and ten opposed.[147] Very few Wilmingtonians wrote to newspapers in support of Jackson-Adams residents, and there are no accounts of anyone living outside the neighborhood joining protests. State Highway Commissioner Hugh Sharp encouraged those who supported I-95 as planned by the State to "stand up and be

[146] "The Price," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 18 July 1957.

[147] "Adams-Jackson Route Favored," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 23 July 1957.

counted…[for]…we cannot let the growth of our city and the progress of all our citizens be subordinated to the fears of the few."[148]

On July 24, a group calling itself the Central Adams-Jackson Streets Civic Association, newly formed in response to the I-95 threat, submitted a letter to the City Council. The Association argued that the resolution passed by the former City Council during a lame duck session was a "violation of people's rights," as the route represented a "ravaging of the City of Wilmington by bisecting its heart with a new super freeway and the destroying of well-established homes and businesses as well as interfering with churches and schools." Since the resolution had been passed by outgoing representatives and no public hearing was held prior to the voting upon the resolution, the Central Adams-Jackson Streets Civic Association would join the Taxpayers' Protective Association, the Northern Adams-Jackson Citizens' Association, and the Delaware Expressways Committee in filing a lawsuit to block the construction of the road.[149]

At the very moment it appeared Wilmington was preparing for a long, arduous, and ultimately inconclusive fight over the proper route of I-95, the all-Democrat City Council upset the apparent trajectory of the debate. At a Council meeting the evening of July 25, the City Council voted eleven votes to two to reverse the decision made by its predecessor, all-Republican council. Confirming the fears expressed by Frank Obara when the Republic Council signed the Adams-Jackson route agreement, the city's Democrats successfully made the unpopular referendum a purely partisan matter and

[148] Hugh P. Sharp, Jr., Speech delivered to Masonic Club September 6, 1957, Executive Department, Government Papers 1302.7 (1957), DPA.

[149] "Civi Group Claims Basis to Rescind OK on Freeway," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 24 July 1957. Text of resolution found in Daniels Collection Box H4, DHS.

tagged the Republicans with the controversial decision. A resolution passed at the meeting declared that the previous contract agreement should be rendered invalid "by reason of not having been authorized and negotiated by means which constitute due process of law."[150]

Underlying the Wilmington's City Council's action was the belief that the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 failed to ensure due process when selecting routes for the Interstate Highways. The legislation required only one public hearing before finalizing a route, and the hearing was not held until after the State conducted its studies and settled on a route.[151] In other words, the law required the State to gather public input only after investing significant time and resources into researching routes. The law therefore encouraged route selection without due regard for public concerns. The Wilmington City Council's claim that this law violated due process was an interpretation of the law based on the belief the procedure all but guaranteed the Delaware State Highway Department made its decision prior to holding public hearings.[152]

In striking down the previous agreement between the city and the State Highway Department, Wilmington's City Council did not offer any plans for a new route; instead, Council President John Babiarz told a reporter, "The next move is up to the State

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[150] "Text of Revolution Against Housing, Freeway Projects," *Wilmington Morning News*, 27 July 1957.

[151] *Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956*. U.S. Code 23 § 128.

[152] Wilmington was certainly not the only community to challenge whether the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 violated due process. By the late 1960s, the federal Department of Transportation proposed changes to the law that required multiple hearings since, as Department's Executive Assistant Director stated, "Present procedures have not adequately ensured that highway decisions reflect community values and objectives." Emory C. Parrish to Mason O'Neal, 2 December 1968, Series III, Subseries A, Box 10, RBRL.

Highway Department…I wouldn't want to predict what the ultimate development might be."[153] Wilmington's City Solicitor, who served the Democratic mayor, argued the previous arrangement was legal and binding. If the Democratic Council wanted to stir up a partisan battle, they did not have all of the city's Democrats on the same page. One Wilmingtonian questioned whether the Council had put politics over the welfare of the city: "Whatever they are up to, the Democrats have already done an incalculable amount of damage to the city's good credit and prestige. A city whose government recklessly repudiates contracts…is not going to have much luck marketing its bonds."[154] Another writer described the Council's attitude as "public-be-damned."[155]

One week after abrogating Wilmington's agreement with the Delaware Highway Department, the City Council voted to rescind a second resolution that gave the city authority to enter into an agreement with the State Highway Department for the purposes of constructing highways. This resolution empowered the city to negotiate with the state for the purposes of highway construction. With the resolution nullified, it was not clear how Wilmington would proceed with highway construction, as no department within the city government had the legal grounds to pursue the legally mandated agreements with the state Highway Department and federal Bureau of Public Roads.

According to City Solicitor Stewart Lynch, the City Council's resolutions did not carry any legal force or effect. One observer noted, "Is there any reason to take the antics of the present City Council seriously?…They are misleading the public by claiming

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[153] "Confusion Follows City Effort to Kill Projects," *Wilmington Morning News*, 26 July 1957.

[154] "Civic Chaos," *Wilmington News-Journal,* 26 July 1957.

[155] "Two Ways to Do," *Wilmington Morning News*, 26 July 1957.

powers which their own legal experts have told them emphatically they do not possess." The observer went on to argue the City Council was devaluing the city of Wilmington by scaring creditors and misleading the public.[156] One year later, Chief Engineer Haber submitted to the General Counsel of the State Highway Department the same City Council resolution, and this lawyer agreed with Lynch's reading point-for-point. In an eight-page letter explaining his reading of the resolution, S. Samuel Arsht argued the resolution's charges of "unmitigated fraud" were "completely refuted by the record" and that most of the charges of wrongdoing were "personal conclusions which…neither the facts nor the law will support."[157]

The City Council claimed it received fifty cards supporting its stance on the Freeway.[158] Those within Wilmington who supported the Jackson-Adams route of I-95 responded with a petition of 2,500 names asking that the state move forward with the original plan.[159] Keeping with Wilmington's history, these supporters came from districts of the city not immediately in I-95's path; they would receive the benefit of the road without the facing the most brutal of consequences, relocation. Others within the city seemed befuddled that those within the road's path would shirk the opportunity I-95 presented. One individual, writing to the *News-Journal* under the name "Spectator" argued, "The move offers the fine opportunity to reestablish a new home in a fine new community—possibly suburban or even country—where children can have healthful play

[156] "All Sound and Fury," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 2 August 1957.

[157] S. Samuel Arsht to R.A. Haber, 4 March 1958, Bill Frank Collection, Box 11, DHS.

[158] "State to Act Next Week on Freeway," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 2 August 1957.

[159] "Petition Planned to Back Freeway," *Wilmington Morning News*, 2 August 1957.

areas and surroundings—and the man of the house may raise vegetables, berries, and fruits to supplement the family income."[160] This letter speaks to the disconnectedness among Wilmingtonians. The writer left no evidence of his identity or the section of the city in which he lived, but he obviously could not empathize with those in the way of the Jackson-Adams Street route. Depending on how one reads the letter, his comments could be interpreted as presumptuous or insensitive. He seems to indicate the Jackson-Adams Street corridor is not a desirable place to live, and if one cannot live in the same section of Wilmington as he, he ought to leave the city all together. Indeed, Wilmington's resistance to or support of I-95 was divided almost entirely by where individuals lived. The benefit of the road was not in question; only the relative value of the human cost seemed to matter, and many residents saw I-95 as a good value so long as the human cost was somebody else's life.

On August 8th, Joseph Piekarski, president of the Taxpayers Protective Association, published a detailed explanation of his opposition to the Adams-Jackson Street route of I-95. He began by refuting the charge that the route best served the economic needs of downtown Wilmington and would benefit urban merchants. Since this was one of the most commonly cited arguments in favor of the route, it makes sense that Piekarski would look to discredit it first. By his estimation, the Jackson-Adams route would draw traffic nine blocks, over a half mile, further away from the Wilmington merchant district. Arguments that the route would funnel travelers into the urban shopping district were misleading, Piekarski argued. Not only would the road draw customers further away from the merchants, the route actually served the opposite

[160] "Let's Get Forward," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 2 August 1957.

purpose of giving residents of Wilmington and outside travelers easier access to suburban shopping venues.[161]

Piekarski continued by arguing that both locals and drivers on long distance trips disliked traveling through cities, and Wilmington had the opportunity to route traffic around the city all together. By Piekarski's estimation, it made little sense to force drivers through the city, which would increase traffic and cause harm to Wilmington's citizens. Piekarski also pointed out one of the least frequently mentioned arguments against routing highways through urban centers; Interstates did not yield property or income taxes, but the houses and businesses they overtook did. By demolishing blocks of housing and commercial development to make way for the highways, cities effectively lowered their tax base. Proponents of urban highways would argue the increased sales tax more than offset the decreased other taxes, but Piekarski did not accept this argument in the case of Wilmington.[162]

Rather than force hundreds of Wilmington citizens out of their homes, shutter many businesses, decrease the city's tax base, and harm the urban merchants, Piekarski argued Wilmington would be much better served by an Interstate routing along the

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[161] "Frankly Speaking," *Wilmington Morning News*, 8 August 1957. Bill Frank, the owner of this column was a supporter of the Adams-Jackson Route, but he frequently ceded his column space to guest writers. In this case, he allowed Piekarski, who opposed him on the matter of I-95 routing, to use his space in the newspaper to make a case against the route.

Piekarski's belief that the Jackson-Adams route would actually hurt urban merchants rather than save them was shared by others who opposed the routing. A resident of West Tenth Street, for example, argued "I think the retail merchants will get in a progressively worse condition as years go on…But an Adams-Jackson Freeway will be sudden death to them…Why would anyone with a car bother to go down-town? Just get on the Freeway and go to the big country shopping centers." Irving Warner to Hugh R. Sharp, Jr., 23 September 1957, Accession 1518, Papers of Irving Warner, Personal Papers, General Subject Files, Box 17, Hagley Museum (Wilmington, Delaware). Hereafter referenced as HM.

[162] Ibid.

Delaware River, to the south side of the city. This route would direct traffic around Wilmington, permitting I-95 to serve the needs of Wilmington without any of the negative consequences. By Piekarski's estimation, this routing could be accomplished without displacing a single resident or business.[163]

A week and a half later, Leon Weiner, President of the Citizens' Committee for the Freeways, an organization formed to combat the Jackson-Adams resistance, responded to Piekarski's arguments. Weiner's critique of Piekarski's stance relied upon different interpretations of the same evidence. First, Weiner believed the Jackson-Adams route would aid merchants but did not offer much support to his claim. He also chastised Piekarski for treating the Jackson-Adams route of I-95 and the FAI 3 route that would bypass Wilmington's downtown to the south and east as an "either/or" proposition, since both routes were planned and necessary, according to the initial studies of Wilmington's Interstate needs.[164] While Piekarski lobbied that a resolution could be reached where no Wilmington residents would be displaced, Weiner dismissed the concerns of these individuals outright and went so far as to argue some of them wanted to be relocated on behalf of I-95. "Such opposition has been based primarily on personal economic considerations," Weiner wrote, as if to imply these were not valid considerations. He then claimed that the entire debate had been clouded by misrepresentations, "distorted stories," and "rumors." "What are the facts?" he asked. "Actually, some persons who are affected are looking forward to selling their home or business…[but]…They fear expressing this openly because of the opinion of some of their neighbors. Weiner claimed

[163] Ibid.

[164] "Frankly Speaking," *Wilmington Morning News*, 19 August 1957.

those who wanted to sell did so because the value of their homes at present was greater than the purchase price.[165] Weiner's attempts at softening the human blow only served to further enrage those who viewed the highway building project as a inhumane and unfair pursuit in the first place.

The tumult resulting from the City Council's actions and the public discourse resulted in the State Highway Commission scheduling a new hearing for September 30 instead of September 16, thus giving all sides ample opportunity to build their cases. The decision to schedule another hearing was not universal on the Commission, however, with one commissioner, Benjamin Ableman, asking, "Why a hearing? We've signed a legal contract…To say we will hold a public hearing will mislead the public."[166] In a subsequent statement, Ableman declared the Jackson-Adams route a "settled matter."[167] Regardless of the reservation of some members, the Highway Commission as a whole came to accept they could not simply push on in the face of growing opposition.

With battle lines drawn, each side of the Jackson-Adams route debate had a governmental entity on its side. Those opposed to the route pointed to the City Council as its defenders and argued the City Solicitor and State Highway Commission refused to accept the will of the people by ignoring the Council's actions. The number of people in this camp was unclear. On August 20th, the Taxpayers Protective Association claimed to have the support of 25,000, but three days later submitted a petition including under 800

[165] Ibid.

[166] "New Dates for Freeway Hearings Set After Dispute," *Wilmington Morning News* 15 August 1957.

[167] "Ableman Wants Freeway Meeting, Not 'Hearing,'" *Wilmington Morning News*, 16 August 1957.

names.[168] As one Wilmington resident stated, "Their delaying action in not accepting the vote…shows contempt and disregard for the representatives truly elected by the people."[169] The State Highway Department and many who livid outside of the Jackson-Adams neighborhood attested the City Council jeopardized the future of Wilmington by refusing to allow construction to proceed as planned. On another level, what developed was a question over representation in the Interstate Highway Process. Those charged with making decisions about routes were generally not elected by the people but rather appointed by those who had been elected. Since their jobs were not dependent on pleasing the people, they instinctively advocated the routes that made the most sense on paper. Engineering principles took precedence over human interest.

Irving Warner, a resident of West Tenth Street in the Jackson-Adams neighborhood, wrote hundreds of letters from 1957 until well after construction of I-95 began, attempting to obtain an injunction against the downtown construction. As he corresponded with local and national officials, he came to understand the extent to which human costs did not factor into the engineers' calculus. A Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Public Roads told him the Jackson-Adams route was preferred because it was "reasonably direct, and could be developed to facilitates which will safely and economically handle the ever increasing volume of traffic." When faced with the human cost of the decision, the Deputy Commissioner explained "Public Roads encourages the States to locate highways to minimize property damage and

[168] The 25,000 in opposition number quoted in "Freeway Letter Sent to Lammot," *Wilmington News-Journal* 20 August 1957; the smaller number is noted in "798 Protest Freeway Route in Petition to City Council," *Wilmington News-Journal* 23, 1957.

[169] "A People's Council?" *Wilmington News-Journal*, 14 August 1957.

inconvenience to local interests wherever possible *consistent with good engineering practice and sound economic principles*."[170] Since Delaware's engineers had decided servicing Wilmington's commercial center and facilitating traffic into and out of the city center were the primary objectives, and since they prioritized this route because it could be achieved at a lower cost than other downtown options, no level of human collateral along the Jackson-Adams route was a match for the pursuit of engineering principles.

One Wilmington resident, speaking on behalf of small-government minded individuals throughout the city—and perhaps country—viewed the Jackson-Adams Route controversy as symptomatic of a rising socialist threat:

> The great loss of private property rights inherent in the housing and highways laws are a serious loss of individual liberty. Property rights are the basic different between a socialist and a capitalist society…The right to own property is now seriously undermined.[171]

To these individuals, the policy of eminent domain exercised by the government to claim land for highway construction harmed individuals on a personal level but also threatened the underpinnings of American government. Some even perceived eminent domain as the vanguard to a larger government threat.[172]

As September began and the public hearing on the route of I-95 loomed in the future, the Wilmington City Council did not seem content to sit idle but could not make any real impact. Consequently, some of the members resorted to antics that critics viewed as childish. When the State Highway Department submitted a letter to the Wilmington

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[170] G.M. Williams to Irving Warner, 11 June 1957, Accession 1518, Papers of Irving Warner, Personal Papers, General Subject Files, Box 17, HM. Emphasis mine.

[171] "Not Accidental," *Wilmington Morning-News* 17 August 1957.

[172] The writer of this letter, Marjorie C. Brennan, seems to have confused the tenants of socialism with communism, but her intent is clear nonetheless.

City Council acknowledging receipt of the Council's resolution rescinding the contract made by the previous officials, the Council voted on and approved a motion that the letter be "received, recorded, and thrown in the waste basket."[173] At a second meeting, the Council approved a motion to "hamper, hinder and obstruct" construction of the highway along its currently proposed route.[174]

Surprisingly, the entire debate up to this point was held over a theoretical path I-95 would take through Wilmington, as the State Highway Department had not formally selected the plan. When State formally announced the route on September 17—five days before the mandated public hearing—it took the opportunity to go on the offensive, laying out its reasons the Jackson-Adams route made the most sense for the city of Wilmington. Hugh R. Sharp, Jr., State Highway Commissioner, spoke to the Wilmington Lion's Club on the day the state released the official I-95 route. He charged that Wilmington required both FAI 2 and FAI 3 (the easterly route), as Interstate traffic through Wilmington was set to double by 1975.[175] The proposal's formal release also, for the first time, replaced speculation with solid numbers of what was at stake. The Jackson-Adams route would require the acquisition and demolition of 652 buildings, 507 of which were residential; 312 of the buildings were owner-occupied. 926 families would be displaced. The total value of seized property was just shy of four million dollars. The city

[173] "City Council Tosses Highway Dept. Thanks in Wastebasket," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 30 August 1957.

[174] "City Council Pledges Fight on Freeway," *Wilmington Morning*

[175] "Sharp Praises Freeway Route Before Lions Club," *Wilmington Morning News*, 18 September 1957.

of Wilmington would lose just shy of $100,000 in tax revenue each year due to the demolished properties, and New Castle County would lose an additional $17,000.[176]

At the public hearing where the State Highway Department officially unveiled Jackson-Adams route, Leon Weiner, the chairman of the Delaware Citizens for the Freeways, noted one group who should have been very happy with the plan. Those opposed to the rumored Bancroft Parkway Route should have been elated, by his estimation, since all of their concerns were assuaged by the Jackson-Adams Route. The planned route moved closer to the center of the city; it required the seizure of thirteen acres of parkland opposed to the forty-two required by the Bancroft route; no schools would be affected and most at-risk churches had voiced support for the route; and finally, the Bancroft Parkway would stay open to the public. Perhaps most importantly, the selection of the Jackson-Adams meant those who lived near the Bancroft Parkway would not be displaced. Weiner concluded by inviting Bancroft route opponents "to join with us in support of the Adams-Jackson alignment…to speak out loud and clear as they did earlier this spring."[177]

By most accounts, the hearing, held at P.S. DuPont High School, was attended overwhelmingly by those opposed to the Jackson-Adams route, with the Taxpayers Association of the Delaware Freeway Committee occupying most seats. Per federal law, the State Department of Highway representatives in attendance listened to criticisms of the route, all of which they had been presented with previously. One observer

[176] "Freeway Would Take $3,916,443 Worth of Private Property," *Wilmington Morning News,* 19 September 1957.

[177] "Bancroft Route Opponents."

summarized the meeting in two notions: route opponents said, "Let us have an expressway through Wilmington, but it must be put in someone else's backyard and not mine" and when rhetoric broke down, they sought to "discredit and insult highway personnel present."[178]

While there was certainly opposition to the Jackson-Adams route, it could not prevent the construction of I-95 along this path. The reasons for this are many. Perhaps most importantly, those opposed to the route were almost entirely residents who would be immediately affected, and residents of other sections of Wilmington were happy to see the road built through the Jackson-Adams corridor if it preserved their neighborhood. The near universal agreement that Wilmington required a downtown route did not help the opposition's case. Moreover, Wilmington's highway engineers, operating under a framework that encouraged the construction of a highway that met objectives without regard to human cost, were largely unchecked and proved an unmovable force. I-95's opponents eventually gained traction and even garnered the support of some political leaders but could not overcome a Highway Department, empowered with federal requirements that mitigated the influence of the people, committed to the route who could argue only a minority of residents were not in favor. Timing also played a key role, as one of the first urban communities to build a downtown Interstate link, Wilmington could not reflect on the experience of other communities as it made decisions.

By 1965, the state of Delaware had constructed I-95 through Wilmington. The Jackson and Adams Streets had begun the process of acclimating to the new reality of living adjacent to an eight lane superhighway. Those displaced had begun their new lives

[178] "A Travesty of Justice," *Wilmington News-Journal* 27 September 1957.

in new homes, occasionally in new neighborhoods. Wilmington experienced some of the benefits I-95 was purported to bring, such as better access into and out of the city, but the downtown merchants continued to struggle. Whether this struggle was the result of I-95 whisking potential shoppers past their stores at sixty miles per hour or whether their decline was foretold by the preceding suburbanization, I-95 had not delivered one of the primary benefits it was supposed to bring to the city.

THE FIGHT FOR ARDEN

Six-and-a-half miles north of Jackson Street, I-95 crossed over an unassuming two-lane street called Harvey Road in the first verdant area one encountered heading north out of Wilmington. Had an off-ramp existed at the intersection, one could have driven one mile northwest on Harvey Road and found an area called Arden, what the *Wilmington Morning News* called "perhaps the most unique community in the east."[179] Founded in 1900 by a sculptor and an architect with the intent of putting theory to the test, Arden was established on the theory that communities could be self-sustaining if citizens paid for the land they used, and shared the earning power of the land. Sixty-five years after its founding, Arden found this a successful model, requiring no property or sales taxes. The community held all land in the 160 acre community in deed, and the citizens held ninety-nine year leases on parcels of the land. They paid rent back to the community, and the town administration had enough resources to support numerous parks and a thriving arts scene. Immediately adjacent to Arden was Ardentown, which lived by the same principles but technically stood as an independent community due to some differences in administration. Together, these communities stood as unique and

[179] "Arden: Unique, Quaint, and Verdant Oasis," *Wilmington Morning News*, 23 September 1965.

prosperous examples of alternative approaches to city administration and, in fact, operated on an alternate take of the government/citizen paradigm.

As could be expected, the people or Arden and Ardentown valued their separation from neighboring communities. They enjoyed relative proximity to Wilmington and other Delaware communities but preferred to operate as independent and somewhat secluded enclaves. When the State Highway Department announced in 1965 a desire to widen Harvey Road in order to accommodate an interchange with I-95, the people of these communities found themselves thrust into similar debates their neighbors six miles to the south had experienced not a decade earlier.

By the Highway Department's plans, I-95 would not enter Arden or Ardentown proper; instead, the highway would skirt the communities about a mile to the south. The only impact the towns would feel was the widening of Harvey Road. Even this was enough to enrage the population, as a four lane highway would dramatically alter the feel their community had worked decades to cultivate. A road widened to accommodate I-95 would change Arden from a quaint community of meandering blacktop roads among spacious lots and luxurious homes by running a notably less quaint street through the heart of the neighborhood.

The Delaware State Highway Commission met on November 10, 1965 to decide whether to proceed with building the interchange. A group of Arden residents spoke fervently against the interchange and corresponding widening of Harvey Road. Donald Stephens, longtime resident of Arden, lambasted the Commission with an impassioned speech in which he promised the "toughest fight" the Commission had yet faced and concluded by quoting John Paul Jones: "We have not begun to fight." Perhaps exhibiting

the hubris one earns when steamrolling community after community regardless of the opposition put forth, the Commission was almost insulting in its dismissiveness. After the Ardenites left, one commissioner asked the highway department's legal counsel "what chance" the protestors would have in halting the interchange construction. S. Samuel Arsht, who as a Wilmington lawyer had watched the Jackson and Adams Street communities fight a fruitless battle, held up his hand, formed a zero by touching his pinky to his thumb, and smirked.[180]

In 1966, a group of Arden residents filed suit against the Highway Department and Highway Commission. Even though the Harvey Road interchange was to be built in a relatively rural area, several of the complaints levied in the suit resembled those from the earlier Jackson-Adams Street controversy. Here, too, the state of Delaware failed to hold public hearings in the spirit of federal law. Also, the suit claimed construction would decrease the value of residents' property. Interestingly, the residents of Arden did not own their property, but the trust did. The Ardenites' lawsuit also made claims about the destruction of natural beauty and the interference with a way of life.[181]

Some residents of Arden, outside of the lawsuit, waged a more intellectual campaign against the road. One resident, Sandra Hurlong, penned a letter to the *Wilmington Morning News* in which she argued the Harvey Road interchange would hurt more than trees and property value; instead, she claimed, the real victim should the project continue as planned, was the identity of Ardenites. "The community which

[180] "I-95 Interchange Still On," *Wilmington Morning News*, 11 November 1965.

[181] "Ardenites' Suit Fights Interchange on I-95," *Wilmington Evening Journal*, 28 September 1966.

provides a source of security for its members through historical ties and a common sense of identification is a dwindling phenomenon in America," she wrote. "Arden is part of the everyday life of its members, not because it is just a place to park your car, have your dinner, or sleep, but because it is part of the intellectual and emotional being of all of us."[182] Arden, as a community of people who had ideological as well as financial ties to the land, saw I-95 as a threat to more than their wallets and homes. I-95 was a threat to a way of life, to an ideal, and to the bonds that tied people together. While the Delaware State Highway Department may have been able to bulldoze through urban Wilmington by capitalizing on divisions within the city—neighborhood versus neighborhood, primarily—in Arden it found a community uniform in its opposition to the road and fully mobilized in defense of their way of life. Another Arden resident proclaimed, "This is not planning, it is genocide."[183]

The state's desire to build an interchange on Harvey Road did not make immediate sense to observers. In the middle of the 1960s, Arden was relatively secluded from the rest of Wilmington, separated by acres of trees and fields, as much its own community as part of greater Wilmington. To the residents of Arden and others who supported their opposition to the interchange, the state's claim the interchange was necessary in anticipation of future growth seems like a spurious argument. They suspected "building for the sake of building," a phenomenon witnessed elsewhere in the country and foretold by Lewis Mumford, among others. One Ardenite captured this fear

[182] "Harvey Road: The Other Point of View," *Wilmington Morning News*, 29 September 1966.

[183] "Still Another Word on That Harvey Road Project," *Wilmington Morning News*, 17 November 1965.

eloquently when he wrote, "Do not let us awaken 20 years from now to find that, while we were on the way to becoming the greatest 'going-to-be' nation the world will ever see architecturally, we were being fitted with a concrete girdle which was squeezing the very joy of life from us whir purporting to serve our convenience."[184]

Eighty residents of the Arden communities gathered on October 17th and unanimously empowered their leadership with broad authority to take all legal steps necessary to halt the widening of Harvey Road and constructing the I-95 interchange. Those in attendance passed a resolution which summarized their logic for resisting the development. An expanded Harvey Road, the resolution explained, "cuts in two the Arden communities and destroys the natural beauty built up by the Ardens in the last 65 years." In addition to the destructive force of the road, the signatories argued the widened road invited "greater use of the roads beyond the requirements of regular commuters going to and from work."[185] Bill Frank summed up the Arden position well by mimicking the community:

> We the people of this particular rural or suburban village, were happy with old narrow country roads. Now, all of a sudden…the highway department wants to widen our lovely rural roads into monstrous strips of concrete, planned for 20 years ahead and at the same time making it easier for more and more to pour through our town. We don't want it.[186]

Frank, ever a supporter of highway construction in Wilmington, spoke to the Arden gathering on October 17th. He told the gathering that any resistance effort would be in

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[184] "Relentless Flow of Concrete," *Wilmington Morning News*, 10 October 1966.

[185] "Ardenites Act to Block I-95 Harvey Road Interchange," *Wilmington Evening Journal*, 18 October 1965.

[186] "The Common Lesson of Arden," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 19 October 1965.

vain because the Highway Department was so far into the planning process.[187]This was echoed by an Arden resident with an inside source at the Highway Department and further proves the planning procedure laid out in the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 did not do enough to protect due process.[188]

Desperate, Arden's leadership reached out to Lady Byrd Johnson, who it believed would be an advocate since, as First Lady, she had been a staunch advocate of highway beautification She, in turn, wrote to the Federal Bureau of Public Roads who agreed to look into the situation. In response, Rex Whitton, Federal Highway Administrator, explained that the interchange was justified, but he encouraged the State Highway Department to reevaluate the road widening. In November of 1966, the Delaware State Highway Department agreed to only widen Harvey Road in the immediate vicinity of the I-95 interchange, thus preserving the two lane road through the Arden communities. It is not clear if the political weight of Lady Byrd Johnson forced what was essentially a compromise between the state of Delaware and the residents of the Arden communities, or if the State only agreed to postpone widening Harvey Road because it could revisit the issue in the future. It is also quite possible Arden had the benefit of good timing the Jackson-Adams residents did not; in the middle of the 1960s, the urban revolt was gaining steam throughout the country, and Highway Departments were rapidly losing the ability to steamroll residents.

Raymond Mohl has noted, "The anti-expressway movement…must be located and interpreted within the wider context of the shifting political, legislative, and

[187] "Ardenites Act to Block I-95 Harvey Road Interchange."

[188] "Like a Dagger in Arden's Heart," *Wilmington News-Journal*, 20 October 1965.

bureaucratic environment."[189] The Jackson-Adams controversy exemplifies a period when the cards were proverbially stacked against residents who held reservations against particular highway routings. The Jackson-Adams opposition could not overcome the power wielded by the State Highway Department. By the middle of the 1960s, not a decade later, the residents of the Arden communities were able to broker a deal with the State Highway Department, largely due to the changing political landscape. However, there were additional, more local, factors at play as well. The Jackson-Adams opposition was fractured and lacked clear leadership. Neighboring Wilmington neighborhoods actively supported the construction of I-95 and advocated the Jackson-Adams route. Meanwhile, Arden was united in its opposition to the widening of Harvey Road and construction of an I-95 interchange. Additionally, there were no neighboring communities to support the State's plans. While the political landscape certainly evolved in a way that led to different outcomes, local factors also played critically important roles.

[189] Raymond A. Mohl, "The Interstates and the Cities."

Figure 2.1: The Jackson/Adams Route, indicated by the solid red line passing through Wilmington's city center[190]

[190] Delaware Expressways Engineering Sub-Committee, "A Graphic Presentation of the Recommendations of the Delaware Expressways Committee" (6 May 1957), Daniels Collection, DHS, 6.

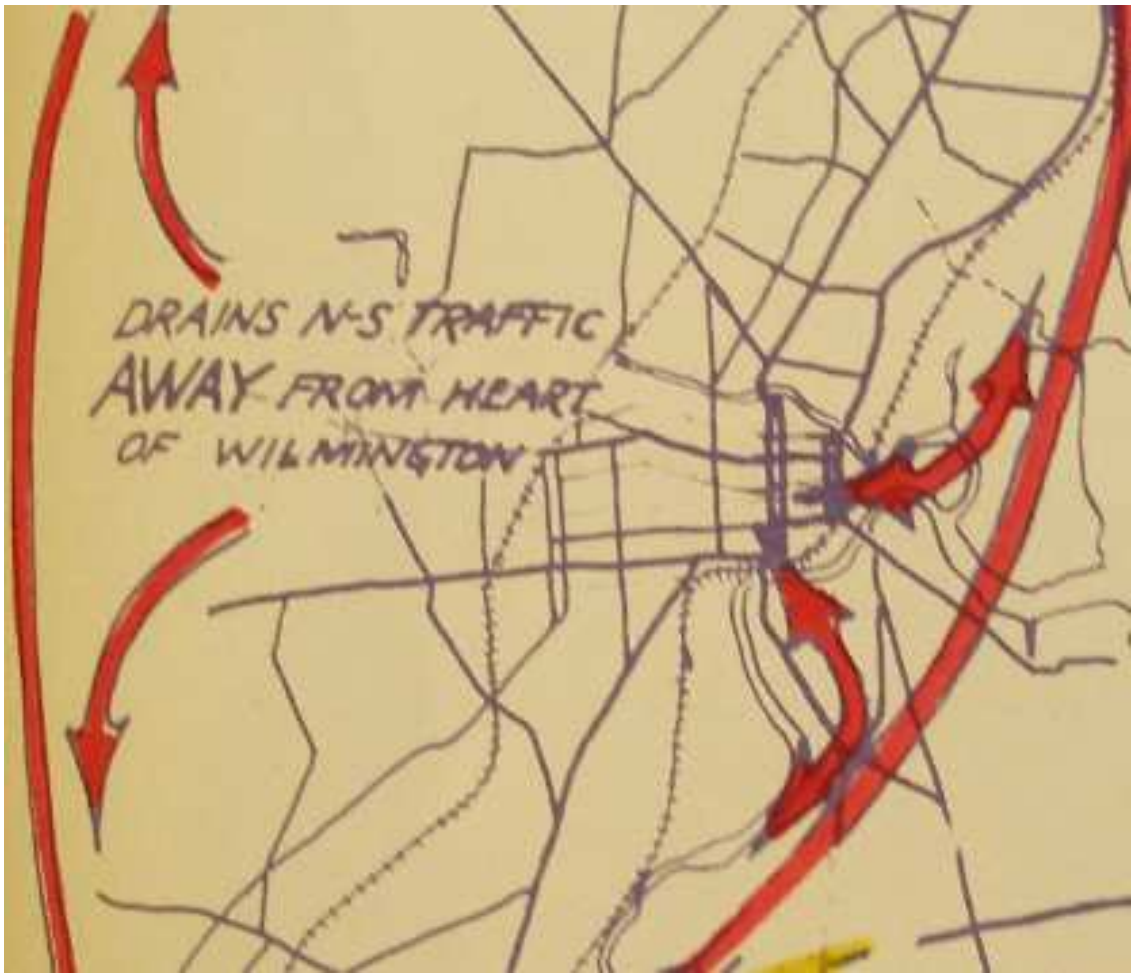

Figure 2.2: The Bancroft Parkway (left) and Eastern Option (right) relative to Wilmington's downtown[191]

[191] Delaware Expressways Engineering Sub-Committee, "A Graphic Presentation of the Recommendations of the Delaware Expressways Committee" (6 May 1957), Daniels Collection, DHS, 9.

CHAPTER 3

RESISTANCE IN NEW JERSEY

A drive along I-95 in New Jersey leaves the traveler with the clear impression that the road is somehow different in the Garden State than elsewhere. There is simply something peculiar about the experience; oddities—some subtle, others not—accrue until the driver is left convinced that somehow, the road came together differently in New Jersey than anywhere else in the country. First, there are tolls. While New Jersey is not the only state to feature tolls on I-95, they are not common along the eastern seaboard. In New Jersey, the tolls are frequent and significant. For a long stretch, it is not clear if the driver is on I-95, the New Jersey Turnpike, or somehow both at the same time. The signs simply do not make sense. Then there is the odd, nearly inexplicable, route the road takes through the state. If entering New Jersey from Delaware, the driver can travel a relatively direct path to New York. If entering from Pennsylvania, however, there is no way to get to New York without exiting I-95. If heading from New York south on I-95, one can exit the state via two different routes, both of which are labeled as I-95.

I-95's odd state of existence in New Jersey is the result of a unique set of circumstances in play between the 1950s and early 1980s. While Wilmington was one of the first cities to resist highway construction, New Jersey was one of the few places where opponents scored a decisive victory. This triumph, influenced by and combined with local factors, resulted in I-95's peculiar routing. Partly rooted in the context of highway revolts (alternatively called urban revolts), New Jersey's efforts to oppose I-95

were colored with a heavy dose of local circumstance. While many cities experienced highway revolts, very few of the campaigns were successful when Interstate Highways were the target. Opponents of urban road construction experienced some victories against state highways, secondary roads, and other projects, but Interstates appeared to be untouchable. Even though I-95 met resistance in Wilmington, Boston, Miami, Richmond, and other cities, residents were only able to completely prevent highway construction in central New Jersey.

ANOTHER ROAD IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

When New Jersey residents looked at the first maps of the Interstate Highway System, many struggled to understand why the Garden State needed another road. By many accounts, asphalt and concrete already choked much of northern and central New Jersey, a product of the same conditions that made the state prosperous. Since colonial days, those traveling between New York, Boston, and other New England communities to Philadelphia, Wilmington, and farther south made their way through the townships of New Jersey. With time, New Jersey's well-worn paths evolved into passable trails, then roads, and finally highways, with the New Jersey Turnpike standing as a model of engineering ingenuity and symbol of the automobile age. The history of I-95 in New Jersey begins not in 1959, when the first leg of the Interstate System bearing I-95 signage opened to the public, nor with the 1956 passage of legislation that permitted the construction of the road; rather, New Jersey's complicated history with I-95 began in the early 1940s, with the construction of the New Jersey Turnpike.

New Jersey began planning the Turnpike in earnest in the 1940s, and the road opened to the public in 1952—four years before the Interstate Highway Act came to pass

and during a period when a federal Interstate Highway system seemed unlikely to come to fruition. New Jersey split the cost of building the Turnpike evenly with the federal government, the best financing deal available to states making infrastructure improvements in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Turnpike Authority operated the road as a toll road to recover the state's investment (and make a profit). When the Interstate Highway System was born in 1956, and with plans to build I-95 in the vicinity of the Turnpike, New Jersey faced a dilemma. While the state did not want to miss out on the 90/10 financing split the Interstate Highway System offered, building I-95 also would have violated the agreements the state made with the Turnpike Authority and Turnpike bondholders. A Deputy Commissioner of the New Jersey State Highway Department, speaking before the United States House of Representatives in 1966, acknowledged, "There is no doubt in our minds that had the Interstate Program been set up in 1946 instead of 1956, the Turnpike would today be in operation as a free highway."[192]

Yet, the Turnpike was open to traffic in 1956, operated as a toll road, and was accountable to bondholders who had helped finance its construction. Still in its relative infancy, the Turnpike had not yet generated enough revenue to pay back its shareholders. The Interstate program—I-95 in particular—posed a threat to Turnpike bondholders and the Turnpike Authority, which raised considerable funds for the state of New Jersey through the collection of tolls. In early 1957, the Turnpike Authority Chairman "called attention to the fact that the federal highways program has brought nearer the time when

[192] Mullen, Russell H, Speech before the Special Subcommittee on the Federal-Aid Highway Program and the Subcommittee on Roads of the US House of Representatives (1 June 1966), William T. Cahill Congressional Papers, MC 1225, Box 57, RULSC.

the Turnpike would face competitive, comparable free facilities."[193]I-95 would essentially serve as a free alternative to the Turnpike, as initial renderings saw the roads enter and exit the Garden State at roughly the same location; if operated as a toll-free route, I-95 would certainly draw traffic off of the Turnpike, thus decreasing the toll revenue and ensuring lesser returns to investors. For a few years, the state considered two primary options. For one, New Jersey could disregard the agreement it had made with bondholders and build I-95 in parallel to the Turnpike. This option would have welcomed significant legal ramifications, and I-95 would have been delayed for years as the courts sorted out the matter. The second option was for New Jersey to build I-95 on a path that did not harm the Turnpike's business. The option proved problematic because Turnpike advocates and New Jersey's highway engineers could not agree how distant I-95 had to be from the Turnpike to present no competition. Additionally, the state was uncertain I-95 could fulfill its objectives if built too far from the Turnpike. The corridor occupied by the Turnpike served as the most direct link between New York and the urban centers to New Jersey's south. It also passed through the major urban areas of New Jersey, including Trenton. Noncompetitive routes would have been of far less benefit to the state, its citizens, or the millions who traveled through New Jersey each year.

The stalemate initially broke when the state of New Jersey and the Turnpike Authority agreed not to build I-95 until the Turnpike was "not only self-supporting but actually over-saturated with traffic."[194] Original plans to designate the Turnpike as I-95

[193] New Jersey Turnpike Authority, *Minutes of the New Jersey Turnpike Authority*, Vol. 10, New Jersey State Archive (Trenton, New Jersey), 6503. Hereafter cited as NJSA.

[194] Ibid., 5.

were short-lived, however, as the Turnpike's point of over saturation came much sooner than expected. By the early 1960s, it was abundantly clear that the Garden State not only could benefit from—but actually needed—another road in the same corridor as the Turnpike. A new route for I-95 approximately 10-15 miles to the west of the Turnpike was developed and met little resistance from the Turnpike Authority or Turnpike bondholders.[195]

A SUCCESSFUL FIGHT

Initial plans for I-95 saw the road enter New Jersey on the Scudder Falls Bridge, where it would allow traffic from Pennsylvania to cross the Delaware River near Trenton. It would then proceed in a relatively straight line through Princeton, Franklin, Piscataway, and Newark before crossing into New York City at the George Washington Bridge. The Scudder Falls Bridge was complete in 1959, and New Jersey successfully built I-95 ten miles into the state, to the point it intersected U.S.1. The rapid process came to screeching halt, however, as the towns between U.S. 1 and New York City resisted construction of the road for decades, ultimately resulting in the unprecedented cancellation of the route in 1983.

The struggle to prevent construction of I-95 from U.S. 1 to Newark, a stretch of road commonly called the Sommerset Freeway, stands as arguably the most absolute victory for highway challengers in any of the many conflicts that arose regarding the construction of I-95. Opponents of the road in Boston and select other cities across the

[195] Even after traffic levels mandated the construction of a parallel route, the Turnpike Authority would not allow competition north of New Brunswick (in the immediate area around New York City). The Turnpike Authority argued competition in that zone would hinder its ability to make its financial obligations. New Jersey agreed to the terms thereby allowing the state to capitalize on the generous federal funding program for most of I-95's course through the state.

east coast won small victories by managing to save their homes, churches, businesses, and so forth from the unrelenting progress of the superhighway. When these individuals won, however, the state highway planners usually responded by simply rerouting and destroying somebody else's home or business. For example, residents of Boston so strongly fought a plan to route I-95 through the heart of the city that the governor cancelled the project in 1972. Rather than accept there would be a break in I-95 at Boston, however, engineers devised a new route that runs the perimeter of Boston until it reaches Canton, where I-95 had already been built. The Sommerset Freeway, however, was not replaced by an alternate route when the residents succeeded in killing the project. New Jersey State Highway Department officials did not simply move to the next town over for an easier fight. The state of New Jersey ultimately built small segments of highway that tied the extant New Jersey Turnpike into I-95 at the Delaware and New York state lines and labeled the Turnpike as I-95. The result is the only discontinuous segment of I-95 in the entirety of its nearly 1,900 miles. One can successfully drive across New Jersey without exiting I-95 if entering from Delaware. If driving into New Jersey from Pennsylvania, however, I-95 ends at U.S. 1, and the driver must use alternate routes to get back onto I-95 about twenty miles to the south.

Princeton residents and those of neighboring towns had known I-95 would pass through for nearly a decade when serious debate began. It was common knowledge that I-95 would connect Trenton and New York City from the George Washington Bridge "to near the Turnpike; then the Turnpike is the alignment from Ridgefield Park to the vicinity of New Brunswick; and from Scotch Road, mercer County to Scudder Falls Bridge across

the Delaware River near Trenton."[196] This required that the road pass somewhere near Princeton. Little serious opposition mounted in the earliest years because residents understood the importance New Jersey and federal officials placed on the road; residents accepted its inevitable presence since there was ample farmland in the immediate vicinity of the community. The road could be constructed, they assumed, without upsetting a significant number of people.

In 1964, the people of Princeton began to hear rumors of a specific route gaining favor among highway engineers. The Princeton Planning board opened an inquiry with the State Highway Department. In reply, State Highway Engineer J.R. Schuyler explained the routing process to quell concern. According to Schuyler, the state of New Jersey began by drawing a straight line from the Scudder Falls Bridge to Route 287 in Somerset and Middlesex Counties. Engineers would then evaluate routes that were topographically feasible but followed the course of the straight line as closely as possible. Schuyler underscored that these feasibility routes were used for cost estimation only, and "there will be many studies and much deliberation before an alignment is established for design purposes." [197] Schuyler forwarded hand-drawn sketches detailing a few of the routes used for estimating cost.

The straight line route between the Scudder Falls Bridge and Route 287 clipped the northwest corner of Princeton's borders, a minor concern for most in Princeton, as a minor deviation from this path would allow the state to achieve its straight line objective

[196] New Jersey State Highway Department, "Opening and Dedication of I-95 and I-80: George Washington Bridge to Garden State Parkway," brochure (1964), New Jersey State Library: Trenton. Hereafter cited as NJSL.

[197] J.R. Schuyler to Princeton Planning Board, 16 October 1964 (Princeton: Princeton Historical Society). Hereafter cited as PHS.

and keep I-95 out of Princeton proper. The feasibility route that remained truest to the straight line but also was topographically possible—the route New Jersey had been using for cost estimation—followed a course a few miles to the south of the straight line and cut through a much more significant section of Princeton. Rather than graze a corner of the community, this route would enter the community and run nearly half of its length before exiting the town limits and continuing its course.

While not particularly panicked by this information, the Planning Board of Princeton Township demonstrated enough concern to publish a January 1965 report on alternate routes in the vicinity of Princeton that would be preferable to the feasibility route. The report detailed the Board's concerns with the route under consideration. First, the route would necessitate the construction of an interchange within Princeton's borders. Interchanges were often subjects of debate because they required significant land and necessitated heavier traffic. Interestingly, the report does not take great issue with the presence of the interchange for these reasons but rather the pressures to commercially develop the area around the interchange. The Planning Board had already established guidelines which were to govern the development of the community. The guidelines dictated that "The focus of the Princeton Community shall be on development that contributes to its Educational-Research character, rather than on any effort to become the business center for a large tributary area." More specifically, the guidelines expressly prohibited the type of development inherent with Interstate interchanges: "Business development shall be so controlled in location as to preclude ribbon development…the

amount of business use shall be geared to the needs of the Princeton Community rather than to those of a large hinterland area."[198]

The Planning Board's concerns were not limited to the type of development I-95 would bring. The report also drew attention to the fact the route would pass through the highest value residential real estate in the community, with three subdevelopments and scores of additional homes in the vicinity of the route. Other issues were raised, such as poor drainage in the northern section of the town and desired traffic patterns. The overarching concern, however, was that I-95 would be injurious to the aesthetic Princeton wanted to cultivate. I-95, the report claimed, would "not be consistent with a sound pattern of land use and the natural attractiveness of the area."[199]

Despite the concerns of the people of Princeton, state officials and regional planners looked at population growth projections along with the trend of automobile ownership and feared what would happen to New Jersey if road building did not keep pace with the development of the state. In 1966, the Tri-State Transportation Commission, comprised of civic engineers and other public administrators from Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York, submitted to the governors of the three states an assessment of the region's current infrastructure and its ability to serve the growing population. Facing a twenty-five percent population increase by 1986, the Commission believed it best to propose a future state for the region's highways and rail system.[200] It published its suggestions in a report entitled "1986: Interim Plan," and circulated the

[198] Planning Board of Princeton Township, "I-95: A Study of Alternate Routes in the Vicinity of Princeton Township", 15 January 1965, PHS, 7-8.

[199] Ibid., 9.

[200] William J. Ronan to to Governors Dempsey, Hughes, and Rockefeller (May 1966), NJSL.

document to elected officials in all three states. According to this report, I-95 in New Jersey was critically important because it "fills large gap in regional highway grid [and] Relieves congested U.S. 1…[and] Serves fast-growing suburban area."[201] Other 1960s observers noted the importance of building Interstate Highways immediately, for fear that the pending explosion of residential, commercial, and industrial development would make all routes too expensive in the near future. A Deputy Commissioner for the New Jersey State Highway Department, for example, noted, "Ten years from now it will be as difficult—almost impossible—to locate and build an additional interstate Route in New Jersey as it is today in lower Manhattan."[202] Further incentivizing immediate construction was the ever-looming threat of insufficient funding of the Highway Trust Fund or reallocation of the funds to other initiatives.

According to the Tri-State Transportation Commission, the proposed route of I-95 through Mercer, Somerset, and Middlesex Counties traced a corridor that was among the worst in the region when assessing the ratio of miles of controlled access routes to number of registered vehicles. While most of Connecticut had 3.9 or fewer registered automobiles per mile of controlled access highway, the I-95 counties in New Jersey had a ration of greater than ten.[203] While many in the Garden State claimed that asphalt was already smothering the state, the fact was the number of automobiles was more likely to choke the state first.

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[201] Tri-State Transportation Commission, "I986: Interim Plan" (1966), NJSL, 29.

[202] Mullen, 4.

[203] Ibid., 23.

The state of New Jersey also saw great benefit in I-95 beyond traffic congestion. In 1968, Wibur Smith and Associates of Columbia, South Carolina released a report the state had commissioned. Entitled "A Socioeconomic Study of Highway Development," the report examined the anticipated effects of constructing I-287 and I-95 in the Garden State. Beginning with the idea that "the Interstate System is today pointing the direction for growth of population, commerce, industry, and government," the report had few criticisms of the routes. Not only would I-95 benefit industry and commerce in Middlesex and Somerset Counties, Wilbur Smith and Associates argued, it would "expand the social, cultural, recreational, and employment horizons of those it serves."[204]

Echoing many of the tried and true arguments in favor of Interstate highways championed by the AAA and the rest of the Road Gange (see Chapter 1), the commissioned report argued I-95 would be good for the country, good for New Jersey, good for business, and good for the people of the state and region. In short, it argued the highway would "expand the social, cultural, recreational, and employment horizons of those it serves."[205] Wilbur and Associates situated I-95 as an indispensable road given the anticipated state New Jersey would find itself in in the future. According the report, 1986 would see New Jersey's population grow by ten million people—a dramatic 44.6 percent increase. Extrapolating the observed settlement patterns of 1966, this translated to an entirely urbanized state. No Garden State county, the report argued, would have fewer than two hundred people per square mile. This burgeoning population would require

[204] Wilbur Smith and Associates, "A Socioeconomic Study of Highway Development: I-287, I-95 Corridor, Middlesex and Somerset Counties, New Jersey (1967), NJSL, i.

[205] Ibid.

more and better highways, as 1986 would see a nearly 70 percent increase in the number of registered vehicles, and New Jersey's nearly six million vehicles would drive 65 billion miles within the state—an increase of an incredible 88 percent from 1966.[206]

Several New Jersey towns found themselves trying to balance the need for additional roads with a desire to maintain communities and preserve natural beauty. To this end, the Princeton Committee on I-95 solicited the support of renowned landscape architect Ian McHarg, then a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a founding partner of Wallace, McHarg, Roberts and Todd. This agency put into practice what McHarg would later put to the page in the seminal 1969 *Design With Nature.* This book, a forerunner—and in some ways, a catalyst—of the late-twentieth century green movement, argued the "dominate and destroy" approach to modern American urban design was not sustainable. Instead, McHarg argued for urban design that emulated nature's examples and accounted for the myriad ways the built environment and natural environment would interact. Without a doubt, *Design with Nature* was, in part, a result of McHarg's work in central New Jersey.[207]

On behalf of the Princeton Committee on I-95, McHarg's consulting firm authored "A Comprehensive Highway Route Selection Method Applied to I-95 Between the Delaware and Raritan Rivers." The report employed an incipient Geographic Information System (GIS) by overlaying transparent maps of the region, each focusing on a different element. Twelve total parameters, including topography, residential quality, water value, physiographic obstruction, and recreational value were plotted on top of one

[206] Ibid., 1.8 – 1.9.

[207] Ian L. McHarg, *Design with Nature*, 25th anniversary edition (New York: John Wiley & Sons), 1991.

another. The consultants assessed each overlay with a score of one to three, with one being significant obstruction or damage caused by the highway, and three representing the least conflict between the road and the environment. When each layer of central New Jersey's world were compiled, McHarg was able to clearly identify a route that connected the Delaware and Raritan Rivers by doing the least amount of harm to the environment and providing maximum social benefit. Notably, this route bypassed Princeton.[208]

The people of Princeton who opposed I-95 entering the town limits latched on to McHarg's proposal. The McCullough's, of Cedearbrook Terrace, cited McHarg when appealing to Senator Harrison A. Williams, Jr. for support. Calling the rest of New Jersey an "industrial and suburban wasteland," they noted that McHarg's ecological approach to civic engineering "must be adopted." McHarg also found supporters outside of Princeton. In a 1967 letter to Governor Richard Hughes, two of New Jersey's representatives and both senators claimed "Many responsible persons and associations and a growing number of municipal governing bodies and school boards have contacted us…Most of these expressions advance support for a proposal put forth by Mr. Ian McHarg."[209] However, the McCullough's and other opponents of New Jersey's proposed route were not entirely satisfied with the route proposed by McHarg. Noting that his suggestion "does the least possible damage," they would have preferred another alternative since "even his proposed route will damage the area irrevocably." The

[208] Wallace, McHarg, Roberts & Todd, "A Comprehensive Highway Route Selection Method Applied to I-95 Between the Delaware and Raritan Rivers" (Princeton), 1965. McHarg also published a brief overview of the method used in Princeton: Ian L. McHarg, "Where Should Highways Go?: Comprehensive Route Selection Method Gets Most Social Benefit at Least Social Cost," *Landscape Architecture* (April 1967), 179-181.

[209] Clifford P. Case, Harrison A. Williams, Frank Thompson, and Peter H.B. Frelinghuysen to Richard J. Huges (28 February 1966), Peter H.B. Frelinghuysen Papers, MC058, Box 55, PRBSC.

McCullough's failed to explain what damage would be caused, but it seems as though any impact to Princeton was undesirable. Instead, the McCullough's recommended a route well to the south and east of Princeton—far from their hometown and toward other parts of New Jersey the McCullough's found more suitable for a highway.[210] This notion that Princeton and its neighbors were exceptional among the communities of New Jersey was a frequent theme in the discourse surrounding the route of I-95. The mayor of Franklin Township told Rex Whitton, "I-95 will destroy the aesthetics of our zoning and planning and will destroy the monetary value of this fine residential area."[211] A resident of Princeton wrote, "The purpose of suburban living is to provide a measure of quiet and beauty" and argued that the construction of I-95 through the suburban towns of central New Jersey would cause New Jersey to be "irrevocably lost to true suburban living."[212] In this discourse, the people of central New Jersey's affluent communities revealed that they valued the "least valuable" areas of their hometowns more than any community further afield. This is, to be sure, human nature at work, but it is important to note that many of the arguments employed when arguing for or against particular routes belied true motivations. While individuals spoke in terms of "least possible damage" and other ideals, and while they would cite environmental and other concerns, the true goal was often for I-95 to affect someone else's community.

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[210] Ann and John McCullough to Harrison A. Williams, Jr. (6 Mary 1966), Harrison A. Williams Papers, Box 521, RULSC.

[211] Joseph Pucillo to Rex Whitton (18 October 1966), Peter H.B. Frelinghuyen Papers, MC058, Box 27, Princeton Rare Books and Special Collections, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton, New Jersey. Hereafter cited as PRBSC.

[212] Philip D. Caesar to Richard J. Hughes (7 March 1966), Peter H.B. Frelinghuyen Papers, MC058, Box 27PRBSC.

The earliest attempts at persuading New Jersey's highway engineers to route I-95 away from the communities of Princeton, Hillsborough, and Franklin seem to have fallen on deaf ears. In late 1966, the state released the exact route under consideration, called the "cost-estimate line." The State was careful to note that the cost-estimate line was preliminary and was chosen only for the purposes of estimating general costs; nevertheless, the people of Princeton, Hillsborough, and other towns decided it was wise to preempt the finalization of the route since previous efforts had not convinced the state to consider alternate routings up to this point; the cost-estimate line projected I-95 to run through the heart of Piscataway, Princeton, Franklin, Somerset and Hopewell. From late 1966 until the early 1980s, these communities mounted considerable opposition to the construction of I-95. While the earlier discourse over the route was heated, the release of the cost-estimate line drew many more people to the fight.

Opposition to the road is abundantly clear in the correspondence citizens sent their representatives in Washington. Some opposition was routed in specific arguments against the route—environmental concerns and the desire to protect a specific building or geographic feature, for example. Most of the opposition, however, was the product of a desire to protect the suburban nature of the central New Jersey communities by routing I-95 through a different part of the state. Jarvis Morris, Pastor of the Somerset Presbyterian Church, appealed to New Jersey's elected officials as well as God in his attempt to have I-95 routed around the townships of Somerset and Franklin. In a letter to his earthly leader, Morris opposed the Highway Department's route through Franklin because it would displace a few members of his congregation. He then claimed that he and other religious leaders in the community "are not asking God to have the road located in any

one place, but rather that it will be aligned so that it will do the least harm to the fewest people and the most good to the greatest number." Despite the appeal to choose the best possible route, Morris was convinced the Highway Department's route was not it, since he closed his letter by asking that "God, who is infallible, can impart his wisdom on [Highway] Commissioner Palmer and his Department." [213] Others in the communities of central New Jersey showed little compassion for those in other parts of the state, frequently suggesting that I-95 would be of much better use to the state if it were routed through some other town. Or, if they were not being so deceptive, they would simply volunteer the other communities because fewer people would be inconvenienced in their estimation. For example, Rocco Cappeto of Somerset proposed the "vastly unpopulated areas of Manville" as a better option than his hometown.[214]

The most commonly voiced argument against the state's route of I-95 was the continuation of the pre-1966 argument, namely, that routing along the cost-estimate line would despoil one of the few naturally beautiful areas left in New Jersey. Dr. George Gallup, founder of the American Institute of Public Opinion (more commonly known as the Gallup Poll), wrote to Senator Harrison Williams, Jr. in March of 1967 to beseech his support in dissuading the state from moving forward with its plans for I-95. Gallup lived in Princeton at the time. Noting that "New Jersey, as a state, has left a limited amount of land not taken over by housing, industry, commercial developments and the like," Gallup posited, "I think it is our duty to try to preserve these areas which are still as they were in

[213] Morris to Williams (28 February 1966), Harrison A. Williams Papers, Box 521, RULSC.

[214] Rocco V. Cappeto to Harrison A. Williams (25 February 1966), Harrison A. Williams Papers, Box 521, RULSC.

earlier years."[215] A Piscataway resident made a similar appeal when she wrote to Senator Williams: "This proposed route would cut through the middle of one of the few areas still retaining its original natural beauty and wildlife in this part of the state."[216] The State Highway Department acknowledged the populations' growing concern over the effect "yet another" highway would have on the aesthetics of the state. A 1967 document prepared to facilitate discussion at a public hearing on a stretch of I-95 in Hillsborough includes several lengthy passages explaining that the route under consideration produces as little noise pollution as possible and would be attractive due to wide shoulders and a sixty-foot-wide median. Additionally, the document assured residents "every effort has been made to blend the proposed alignment both vertically and horizontally with the surround topography."[217]

The appeal to natural beauty is, perhaps, the most unique aspect of New Jersey's I-95 debate. As the most road-choked state in the union, those residents who managed to maintain quiet residential communities removed from the din of highway traffic and unsightliness of highways in general had a reason to resist I-95 that did not arise frequently elsewhere on the east coast. These residents could not argue New Jersey did not need I-95—every growth forecast indicated New Jersey needed a far more expansive highway infrastructure—but they could argue the route should be reconsidered to preserve what was unique about the towns along the considered path. Since the previous

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[215] Gallup to Williams (1 March 1967), Harrison A. Williams Papers, Box 521, RULSC.

[216] Albert L. Williams to Harrison A. Williams (8 October 1967), Harrison A. Williams Papers, Box 524, RULSC.

[217] New Jersey Department of Transportation, "Facts about Route I-95" (1967) , NJSL. Quote on page 2.

highways, including the New Jersey Turnpike, had not touched these communities, they maintained characteristics long lost to other parts of the state. By this logic, it made more sense to build I-95 immediately adjacent to the Turnpike since these communities had already suffered the destructive nature of highway construction, and many made this argument. A resident of Hopewell, for example, wrote, "Cannot any of New Jersey be left in a rural state. [sic] Must it all be developed and industrialized? Is there no end to it?" He continued, "The proposed I-95 portion through the Hopewell, New Jersey area is a disgrace. This is one of the few beautiful areas left in Central New Jersey…To build it through the remaining scenic rural areas and have them industrialized is a thought that is sickening."[218]

Highway advocates and those with business interests tied to the construction of Interstate Highways were, by the late 1960s, used to resistance and trials of the roadbuilding project in the court of public opinion. In October of 1968, the opposition approached critical mass, and the Department of Transportation attempted to revise the Federal Register to address some of the growing discontent. The Register governed the activities of federal agencies, and the Department of Transportation proposed a change that would require a federal hearing in addition to state hearings prior to the commencement of Interstate construction.[219] The Department of Transportation's move to amend the Register seems counterintuitive, as it would only serve to slow down the construction of the Interstate System during a period when future funding was ever in doubt and timely completion was the primary objective. It stands to reason, however, that

[218] Philip G. Tunison to William Cahill, 20 January 1971, William T. Cahill Papers, Subject Files, 1970-1973, Box 60, NJSA.

[219] Federal Register, Vol. 33, No. 207

the federal agency saw brief delays early in the process as preferable to delays once surveying was advanced or construction had begun. This was especially true in New Jersey, where limited space and high construction costs made it imperative that opposition was reconciled before investing significant money into construction. As ninety percent financiers of the program, it stands to reason the federal government wanted to protect its investment. It is also possible the Department of Transportation was responding to the nagging complaint that the route selection and approval methodology was undemocratic.

Despite good intentions, the Department of Transportation's move elicited backlash by organizations who would either profit from the construction of I-95 or benefit once the road was complete. The New Jersey Retail Merchants Association, New Jersey Petroleum Council, New Jersey Automobile Dealers Association and myriad additional stakeholders appealed to New Jersey lawmakers in opposition to the amendment of the Federal Register. In a letter to Representative William Cahill, a Trustee of United Milk Producers of New Jersey argued, "It is our opinion that the traditional role of state highway departments in establishing hearing procedures should not be upset, since these departments are in a better position to decide highway needs of their jurisdictions than is the federal government."[220] It seems as though Washington, through the amendment of the Federal Register, was responding to highway opponents because of their highly visible resistance to the Interstates in some communities. While

[220] Benjamin Hart to William T. Cahill (20 November 1968), William T. Cahill Congressional Papers, MC 1225, Box 41, RULSC.

this may have been a move to placate the vocal opposition to highway construction, it did not pass.

The towns of central New Jersey found other ways to delay highway construction. In 1967 and 1968, Hopewell, Franklin, and Piscataway filed lawsuits against the federal Department of Transportation and New Jersey's Department of Transportation which successfully delayed construction. In the early 1970s, New Jersey's highway engineers remained hopeful that the state and federal government would approve a route and construction could begin.[221] However, the people of central New Jersey continued to oppose the road's construction. When the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, recognizing the population growth projections that had initially led the group to drop its opposition to the construction of I-95 were overestimated, rejoined the fight, it proved too much for the state and federal forces who wanted to see I-95 built.

By the mid-1970s, major players were forfeiting. The Regional Planning Association recommended cancelation in 1976:

> The plans for a new 30-mile expressway from Hopewell to Piscataway, opening a new traffic corridor through essentially rural parts of Somerset and Mercer Counties, should be cancelled. Instead, the New Jersey Turnpike should be designated as Interstate 95 from Edison to Bordentown, with the existing Pennsylvania Turnpike connection serving as the link to the Delaware Expressway, the present Interstate 95 in Pennsylvania.[222]

In 1980, Governor Brendan Byrne announced the state of New Jersey would no longer pursue the construction of I-95 through Princeton and its neighboring communities. The federal government would not officially cancel the project until 1983. The result was the

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[221] William R. Roach, Jr. to New Jersey Transportation Committee (5 April 1972), Peter H.B. Frelinghuysen Papers, MC058, Box 55, PRBSC.

[222] Regional Plan Association, News Release (1976), Brendan T. Byrne General Filings and Non-Counsel Staff, S5300002, Box 1, NJSA, 2.

only break in the entirety of I-95, a break created by a confluence of unique circumstances.

Figure 3.1: The Break in New Jersey's I-95, route in red[223]

[223] Wikipedia, "I-95 in New Jersey"

CHAPTER 4

WAITING IN SOUTHEAST FLORIDA

In the midst of the highway revolts, Florida Department of Transportation Director of Planning and Programming Ray G. L'Amoreaux attempted to understand why most organized resistance to highways seemed to occur in urban centers. L'Amoreaux sincerely believed modern highways were the United States' best option to dramatically upgrade transportation speed and safety in a relatively short timeframe. Noting "transportation problems will not be solved by existing hardware," L'Amoreaux ardently resisted attempts to repurpose highway funds for the support of mass transit systems and believed strongly in the aims of the Interstate Highway System. Yet, L'Amoreaux displayed a remarkable empathy for those who opposed highway construction.[224] "There is a strong feeling that it [the highway] does not service the [urban] neighborhood it traverses but only provides a pathway for thousands of faceless drivers," he wrote. Additionally, he acknowledged the noise and pollution urban residents often decried, and admitted some businesses and homeowners suffered economic hardship as the result of urban highways.[225] Compassion for those negatively impacted by highways and a

[224] Ray G. L'Amoreaux, "The Highway and Its Neighborhood Abstract" (Undated), Dept. of Transportation Div. of Traffic & Planning Program Subject Files, 1970-1972 Series 806, Box 2, State Archive of Florida (Tallahassee, Florida), 1. Hereafter cited as SAF.

[225] Ibid., 2.

willingness to acknowledge the negative aspects of Intersate construction distinguished L'Amareaux from his predecessors and many of his peers across the United States. A break from planning based solely on cost and utility also indicates that the highway revolts had begun to sway the way engineers approached highway construction. But as urban planning became more empathetic, L'Amoreaux considered why rural and suburban routing had taken such a different form. L'Amoreaux theorized non-urban America had not revolted because these communities had a different relationship with Interstates. Unlike urban residents, who understood Interstates as benefiting those outside the city at the expense of those in the city, most rural and suburban residents believed their communities and livelihoods improved due to the roads. Interstate Highways, L'Amoreaux argued, brought economic growth and a means of accessing the outside world. "It is no barrier to mobility," he wrote," but is rather the only reasonable means of moving about. Rural citizens, in general, resisted the roads less vehemently because they had land to spare while suburban residents' lifestyles relied upon the Interstate.[226] Rural Americans occasionally took issue with the state's seizure of land for Interstate construction, but these grievances rarely manifested as anything greater than quiet confrontations between individuals and the state.

As the man responsible for negotiating highway routes, L'Amoreaux was inclined to paint a positive picture of Interstates outside of urban areas. He could not deny the resistance within the nation's metropolises given the extensive media coverage highway protests had received, but a general lack of attention paid to the progress of Interstates

[226] Ray G. L'Amoreaux, "The Highway and Its Neighborhood" (Undated), Dept. of Transportation Div. of Traffic & Planning Program Subject Files, 1970-1972 Series 806, Box 2, SAF, 1.

outside of cities meant few knew what kind of reception most of the miles were receiving. The number of miles of Interstate Highways under contest was relatively minuscule compared to the System in total. Of the more than 40,000 miles of constructed and planned Interstates in the early 1970s, fewer than 100 faced any real threat during the freeway revolts. Since the media fixated on the events unfolding in Boston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and elsewhere, L'Amoreaux seized the opportunity to say that Americans greeted 99 percent of the system with open arms.

L'Amoreaux's experience within the state of Florida fueled his inquiry into the apparent division between urban and non-urban responses to Interstates. In total, Florida was to construct nearly 1,400 miles of Interstates, and a majority of the mileage was under contract by the early 1970s. Yet, when L'Amoreaux surveyed the state, he saw little opposition to the Interstates outside of small portions of urban Tampa (I-75) and Miami (I-95).[227] Quite to the contrary, the most significant debate surrounding Interstate construction in Florida—one that dominated local and state elections in the late 1960s and early 1970s—concerned citizens who argued the state was delaying construction of I-95 in a region that desperately wanted the highway.

PROMISES OF PROGRESS

The six coastal counties immediately north of Miami-Dade County (Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River, and Brevard) experienced explosive growth in the years immediately following World War II. The population of Fort Lauderdale, for

[227] Raymond Mohl has documented the history of I-95 in Miami well across several publications. In sum, these accounts comprehensively cover the topic, and this dissertation focuses on other Florida communities instead. For Mohl's account of I-95 in Miami, see: Raymond A. Mohl, "Race and Space in Miami," in Arnold A. Hirsch and Raymond A. Mohl, eds., *Urban Policy in Twentieth Century America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993); Raymond A. Mohl, "Stop the Road: Freeway Revolts in American Cities," 674-706.

example, grew from 36,328 in 1950 to 83,648 in 1960. Then, it jumped again, to 139,590 by 1970.[228] Fort Lauderdale's 284 percent population growth in two decades was not uncommon in South Florida, as Vero Beach, Fort Pierce, Stuart, and West Palm Beach—all of which were along I-95's planned route—experienced similar population gains. Much of the population growth resulted from the same forces that drove sunbelt growth across the south and southwest in the post-WWII years: a proliferation of air conditioning and other technological advancements that made the climate more inviting, increased geographic mobility, and other forces. However, as Raymond Arsenault, Michael Gannon, Godfrey Desrosiers-Laurzon and others have argued, beginning in the late 1980s, Florida's postwar development should not be treated as emblematic of other sunbelt development.[229] Florida's boom found fuel in a revitalization of the region's citrus economy, which had receded significantly after a freeze destroyed the crop in the early 1940s. As the oranges and grapefruits returned to the trees, workers moved to the area for work. Federal installations, such as NASA, further drove the economic growth. Far and away, however, the most significant driver in southeastern Florida's population surge was tourism.

In comparing tourism in the United States before and after World War II, economic historian Thomas Weiss has noted, "For those who were critical of the sort of mass tourism that seemed to have materialized in the early twentieth century, the boom in

[228] *U.S. Census of Population, 1960: Number of Inhabitants, Florida*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961 and *U.S. Census of Population, 1970: Characteristics of the Population, Florida*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1973.

[229] See: Raymond Arsenault, *St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream* (Norfolk, Virginia: Donning, 1988); Michael Gannon, *The New History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012); Godfrey Desrosiers-Laurzon, *Florida's Snowbirds: Spectacle, Mobility, and Community Since 1945* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011).

tourism after World war II would have been unfathomable."[230] The postwar years saw an economically empowered American middle class travel in unprecedented numbers, catalyzing the development of coastal communities from Texas to Virginia. Florida, which had attracted individuals since the early nineteenth century with its favorable climate and exotic scenery, transformed into the heart of beach tourism in the wake of World War II.[231] Families purchased second homes, made annual pilgrimages to the coast, and took road trips down the Florida shoreline. Families were not the only source of tourism funds for Florida business. The spring break phenomenon among college students began in the years immediately following the War's end and exploded with the 1958 publication of Glendon Swarthout's novel *Where the Boys Are* and its movie adaptation in 1960. By the mid-1950s, Fort Lauderdale hosted upwards of 20,000 college students each year. By the early 1980s, Fort Lauderdale was a town of just over 80,000 and hosted over a quarter million college students *per annum.*[232] Coastal Florida's annual visitors gave rise to hospitality and other businesses that required thousands of workers, and, by extension, more housing and other development. According to the Miami-Dade Tourist and Convention Council, southeast Florida's total number of rooms for rent had

[230] Thomas Weiss, "Tourism in America before World War II," *The Journal of Economic History* 64, no. 2 (June 2004), 318.

[231] For a history of nineteenth century tourism in the I-95 corridor for Florida, see Dianne Perrier's *Interstate 95: The Road to Sun and Sand*.

[232] John Laurie, "Spring Break: The Economic, Socio-Cultural and Public Governance Impacts of College Students on Spring Break Host Locations" (dissertation, University of New Orleans, 2008), 10-13.

tripled and restaurant seating capacity doubled between 1946 and 1960.[233] By 1955, one out of every five dollars earned in the state of Florida derived from tourism.[234]

A 1955 survey conducted by a University of Miami researcher highlights how important the region's highway access was to this industry. From 1954 to 1955, seventy-two percent of visitors to Dade County arrived via personal automobile. When bus and other transportation-for-hire services were taken into account, a full three-fourths of Dade County's visitors arrived via the road.[235] Southeastern Florida, however, lacked the infrastructure to support the growing population and tourism. While the region built schools, hospitals, homes, sewer systems, power lines, and other accommodations at a remarkable clip, roads were arguably the region's most glaring deficiency. U.S. 1 was the region's main thoroughfare. It struggled to accommodate the traffic volume generated by the booming tourist and residential population, and its safety was increasingly suspect. Like most of the highways built as part of the original United States Numbered Highway System, U.S. 1was challenged to handle the vehicles of the 1950s. In response, Florida began planning for the Sunshine State Parkway, which later became alternatively known as the Florida Turnpike, in 1953, and construction began in 1955. Many in southeast Florida resisted the Turnpike, believing a toll road would discourage tourism. When the Interstate Highway System came to reality in 1956, the region saw the future I-95 as preferable to the Turnpike, since it would not charge tolls and could accommodate more

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[233] Ed Bishop, "Jet 60's Plan," Fuller Warren Papers MSS 0-257, Box 74 (Claude Pepper Library, Florida State University, Tallahassee Florida), 2. Hereafter cited as CPL.

[234] Fuller Warren to Hugh C. Waters, Jr., 7 October 1955, Fuller Warren Papers MSS 0-257, Box 74, CPL.

[235] Reinhold P. Wolfe, *Characteristics of Tourists: Dade County Florida, 1954-1955* , Fuller Warren Papers MSS 0-257, Box 74, CPL, 3.

traffic, and most of the funding would come from the federal government. Civic leaders and planners almost immediately came to see I-95 as a vehicle to alleviate the midcentury infrastructure strains in the region and hoped it would catalyze further development.

Some communities went so far as to secure land for the right-of-way and planned their construction around the future location of the route. This was a risky venture since the Florida State Road Department decided the route of all Interstate highways in the state. The action, however, reflects the way these coastal Florida communities viewed I-95. With the luxury of being able to plan for the road, the communities believed they could reap the benefits of the Interstate highways while mitigating the negative aspects of the superhighway. Whereas many urban residents feared I-95 would claim right-of-way through the heart of the city (and in many cases, it did), South Floridians had the undeveloped land to accommodate I-95 far enough outside of residential areas to be tolerable but close enough to be useful. Few, if any, businesses would have to relocate to make way for I-95. In short, South Floridians believed they were in the perfect position with regards to I-95. From the early 1960s through the 1970s, however, the people of South Florida came to realize their plans were only as good as the level of cooperation they received from state highway officials and elected representatives.

When the Federal Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) released the first approximate renderings of the Interstate System, individuals noticed that I-95 in Florida would follow the same route as the Turnpike, which was originally planned to trace the entire Atlantic coast of Florida, from Jacksonville to Miami. From the moment Eisenhower signed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, those with an eye on south Florida's transportation plans noticed the potential redundancy between the Florida Turnpike and I-95. The BPR

requested that the Turnpike adopt the I-95 label and become part of the Interstate System, but the Florida State Road Department compromised with the federal government. The Florida State Turnpike Authority and State Road Department agreed to terminate plans for construction of the Turnpike north of Fort Pierce in October of 1956, and in return, the BPR allowed the construction of a road parallel to I-95 in south Florida. This move resulted in I-95 serving as the only modern highway along Florida's east coast from Jacksonville to Fort Pierce, and dual highways from Fort Pierce to Miami.

Florida's determination to build the Turnpike in south Florida stemmed from several factors. For one, the state began construction of the Turnpike in Miami Gardens in 1955, and the Turnpike was well underway by 1956. Second, Florida officials believed multiple multilane modern highways were necessary to handle the traffic volume expected in south Florida in the coming decades. Third, the state had a vested interest in the construction of both roads. State officials viewed the 90/10 cost sharing program for the Interstate Highways as essentially "free money" for the state. A Florida Department of Transportation internal memo from the early 1970s called the "earning power" of the state's 10 percent investment "the most significant benefit" of the Interstate program. "This favorable matching ratio," the report explained, "produces equivalent improvement mileage yet frees four dollars of State funds for other critically needed projects."[236] From Florida's perspective, it made perfect sense to construct the Turnpike and I-95. I-95 was essentially ninety percent "free" and the Turnpike would pay for itself through tolls.

[236] State of Florida Department of Transportation, "An Assessment of Florida's Interstate Program, Past…Future???" (1970?), Department of Transportation Division of Traffic and Planning Program Subject Files (Series 806), Box 1, SAF, 11.

Federal highway professionals did not fully understand Florida's desire to have two major highways through south Florida, as evidenced by a July 12, 1957 memo from B.D. Tallamy, the Federal Highway Administrator, and R.A. Anderson, the Interstate System's Regional Engineer in Atlanta. Tallamy requested written confirmation from Florida highway officials that they fully understood the implications of hosting two major thoroughfares. In addition to written confirmation that the Florida Turnpike Authority had no objection to a parallel routing of I-95, Tallamy wanted "an agreement by the Turnpike Authority to include in future bond fund prospectus [sic] a notice that such a designation has been made."[237] The Turnpike had been initially financed through an issuance of bonds, and Tallamy demonstrated prescience in expecting bond holders to be angered that a competing route would be sanctioned by the state of Florida. Tallamy also wanted a written agreement between the Turnpike Authority and the Florida State Road Department stating they would cooperate on all matters related to I-95.[238]

Tallamy's letter also demonstrated skepticism about the need for both highways, and he feared various factions within the state would derail the program once construction on I-95 had begun, thus wasting federal dollars and energy. Since the Turnpike Authority and the State Road Department sponsored the Turnpike and I-95, respectively, Tallamy wanted the Road Department to agree it "will not advance plans to construction stage unless the Turnpike is unable to conveniently carry the traffic and that the Turnpike Authority agrees that its I-95 construction will not jeopardize the financial

[237] Florida Department of Transportation, "I-95 Summary of Development Florida Southeast Coast," 27 September 1972, Florida State Turnpike Authority Correspondence, Series 809, Box 1, SAF, 1.

[238] Ibid.

security of the Authority." Finally, Bellamy wanted evidence "I-95 will be needed within a 16-year period."[239] Clearly, Tallamy's letter demonstrates federal uneasiness with the plans as they progressed in south Florida.

In retrospect, the concerns expressed by Tallamy were well-founded, as the latter 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s demonstrated a lack of clarity about what agreements had been made and what the actual plans were for southeast Florida's transportation future. Years passed before construction began on I-95 in the area, despite clamoring from the people and businesses of the effected communities. The state initially did a poor job of communicating with the people of Florida, which led to a high level of tension. Then, politicians began to seize upon the turmoil to advance their agendas. By time state officials realized the need to clarify the situation to the public, they had lost all credibility. Many people of coastal Florida concluded the state had delayed the construction of I-95 in order to maximize toll revenue while the Turnpike operated without competition. Others assumed the state never planned to build the road. Nearly ten years after the initial plans for I-95 came to light, one West Palm Beach resident lamented:

> I am so confused and exasperated about the way the State Road Department, the Governor of the State of Florida, and possibly the Federal Bureau of Roads, have delayed and shadowboxed with the more than 500,000 people of Palm Beach County and Broward County in letting a contract for the construction of a section of I-95 in Palm Beach County since the inception of the Interstate Road Program some ten years ago that I hardly know what to say.[240]

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[239] Ibid., 2.

[240] C.Y. Byrd to Spessard L. Holland, George Smathers, and Paul Rogers, 30 January 1964, George A. Smathers Papers, Series 91, Box 198, P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History (Gainseville, Florida). Hereafter cited as PKYL.

The County Commissioner of Palm Beach County came to call I-95 "the most ridiculously managed project in the state of Florida."[241]

Even in the earliest days of the situation, the disconnect between the people of southeast Florida and the various state road departments was apparent. After *the Palm Beach Post-Times* published articles on May 9th and 10th, 1957 claiming the Miami to West Palm Beach section of I-95 would be open within a few years, William H. Jones, Chairman of the State Road Department, wrote to Editor Ed Sumpf to correct what he perceived as a misstating of the facts. Jones provided Stumpf with his summary of the situation, including the events that led to the impasse in question. According to Jones, the state moved forward with completing the Turnpike even after the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 because "South Florida needed Turnpike relief immediately," and the state could not be assured the funding for I-95 would be available in the immediate future. Additionally, bonds had been sold to the people of Florida "in good faith," and both the Road Department and the governor's office refused to do anything "that would jeopardize the interest of the bond holders." Upon completion of the Turnpike, the state realized the region required an additional four lanes of limited access highway. The Turnpike Authority's stance was clear: I-95 could not open until 1971 in order to ensure "no adverse effect on Turnpike bonds."[242]

The desire to avoid upsetting bondholders put the state of Florida in a precarious position. The Turnpike did not solve all of south Florida's transportation problems, as

[241] Lake Lytal to George Smathers, 22 January 1964, George A. Smathers Papers, Series 91, Box 198, PKYL.

[242] William H. Jones to Ed Stumpf, 13 May 1957, Spessard L. Holland Papers, Series 55, Box 360, PKYL.

evidenced by the fact Department of Transportation traffic counters did not see a significant decrease in congestion on U.S. 1 after the Turnpike opened; however, the governor and some highway officials were unwilling to expedite construction of I-95.[243] The answer to Florida's transportation problems could be purchased for only ten percent of the cost; yet the state could not or would not seize upon the opportunity. In light of the study showing the Turnpike did not relieve U.S.1 congestion, Jones intended to "step up our planning in the Palm Beach area considerably ahead of the 1971 completion date," since he believed "that the Palm Beach section, rather than competing with the Turnpike, would actually help the Turnpike by facilitating movement of traffic to and from the Turnpike facility to the Palm Beach area."[244]

Despite this assurance that Jones would look into expediting construction of I-95 in south Florida, little happened in the ensuing years. Headlines appeared every few months declaring construction would begin imminently, and then the start date would be pushed out, often for very unclear reasons. When Paul Hrabko of West Palm Beach inquired about the most recent delay in 1961, Federal Highway Administrator Rex Whitton replied that Florida State Road Department had just concluded studies aimed at determining the proper location for I-95 in the Palm Beach vicinity, and that the State had just "been given authorization to proceed with its further development."[245] Relieved, Hrabko replied that "after three and one-half years of headlines stating that Interstate Number 95 would start in a couple of months, it is really good to hear that this route has

[243] Ibid.

[244] Ibid.

[245] Rex M. Whitton to Paul F. Hrabko, 13 April 1961, Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF.

been approved."[246] To Hrabko's chagrin, I-95 "moving forward" did not mean construction would begin. In fact, I-95 would not appear in Palm Beach until the 1970s.

To make matters worse, the Turnpike Authority, governor's office, and State Road Department did little to temper the frustration and anger building in the beach communities along Florida's Atlantic coast. In the absence of clear communication from these offices, the people of Florida reached their own conclusions. The most popular of these was that the state refused to build I-95 so that it could maximize profits from the Turnpike. As the people in southeast Florida simmered in frustration, the state made another decision that leant credence to the suspicion I-95 had been placed on semi-permanent hold in order to maximize revenues from the Turnpike. In 1961, Governor Farris Bryant proposed extending the Sunshine State Parkway from Fort Pierce to Orlando. Unlike the 1956 proposal, which would have run I-95 and the Turnpike parallel for the length of Florida's Atlantic Coast, Bryant's proposed Turnpike extension did not put the road in direct competition with I-95; however, the proposal did seem to jeopardize the agreement made five years earlier. An extension of the Turnpike from Fort Pierce northwesterly to Orlando was, in fact, constructing the Turnpike north of Fort Pierce. Many coastal Floridians likely would have acquiesced to the Bryan plan under different circumstances. But since they viewed the existence of the Turnpike south of Fort Pierce as the reason I-95 had not come to be, they feared the Turnpike extension would all but ensure I-95 would not be constructed north of Fort Pierce, either.

[246] Paul F. Hrabko to Rex M. Whitton, 26 April 1961, Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF.

CRAMER V. BRYANT

United States Representative William Cramer quickly emerged as the most visible opponent to the Bryant plan. Cramer's office as a representative of Florida's First District (the area surrounding Tampa) did not make him a representative of the communities affected by the delay of I-95. His reach into the politics of affairs outside of his jurisdiction drew suspicion among his detractors. Most, including Bryant, believed Cramer selected the issue because it was a political lightning rod that would put him in direct opposition to the Democratic Bryant Administration and would serve as the launching point for a more prominent career in national politics. In one exchange, Farris Bryant blatantly accused Cramer of "playing politics."[247] Cramer's detractors were likely correct regarding his motivations; as a representative of a district on the opposite side of the Floridian peninsula, there was no ostensible reason for Cramer to take up this issue unless it was for personal advancement. Claims that Cramer aspired to be the party's 1966 nominee for governor and a failed 1970 senate bid corroborate this theory.[248] Regardless of his motivations, the people of eastern Florida rallied around Cramer as he advocated for what so many others in elected office seemed determined to deny—the construction of I-95.

Cramer observed the denial of I-95 south of Fort Pierce and concluded Tallahassee would obstruct the construction of the Interstate anywhere it rivaled the

[247] Congressional Bulletin Volume VII, No.5, "U.S. Roads Administrator Agrees, Cramer Says Turnpike Plan Will Lose State $60 Million" (July 1961), Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF, 1.

[248] Cramer denied wanting to be the governor in 1966, but his fellow Republican (and eventual winner of the 1966 election, Claude Kirk, claims otherwise. Billy Hathorn, "Cramer v. Kirk: The Florida Republican Schism of 1970," The Florida Historical Quarterly, LXVII, No. 4 (April 1990), 404.

Turnpike. Based on this assumption, he argued that if Bryant's proposed extension of I-95 from Fort Pierce to Orlando came to be, I-95 from Daytona to Fort Pierce would end up in the same state of perpetual limbo as I-95 south of Fort Pierce. This decision, Bryant would tell anyone who would listen, would cost Florida $60 million in "free" federal money, as the 135 miles of I-95 stretching from Fort Pierce to Daytona was estimated at $66 million.[249] Cramer was not alone in rousing public outrage over the I-95 delays. The papers of southeastern Florida, namely the *Miami Herald*, *Palm Beach Post Times,* and the *Fort Lauderdale News* published articles and editorials further prodding the population. Most of these articles cited Cramer's activities and arguments in favor of constructing I-95.

In 1961, Cramer was in this third term as a United States Representative. Over the course of his tenure in national politics, he had developed a reputation for demagoguery, with one rival Florida representative once stating Cramer was "little in stature and big in mouth."[250] The showdown with the Bryant administration over I-95 proved he was equally skilled in evidence-based rhetoric. Cramer knew how to solicit arguments that proved his case and was adept at making sure voters heard his message. The most ingenious tactic Cramer employed, however, was putting the Bryant administration in a position whereby it would have to reveal their real motivations for stymying I-95. Cramer knew the number of individuals desiring I-95's construction was far greater than the number of bondholders. Since the Bryant administration would only cite a desire to be fair to bondholders as reason to wait on constructing I-95, Cramer made a series of

[249] Congressional Bulletin, 1.

[250] Hathorn, 413.

proposals that sounded reasonable to the voting public. First, Cramer proposed that the governor receive a commitment "unequivocally stating that Interstate 95 between Daytona Beach and Fort Pierce will be approved, despite the existence of the toll Turnpike." This vow was meant to prevent the state from doing business as they had five years earlier, when they agreed to build both I-95 and the Turnpike south of Fort Pierce and then backing out of constructing the Interstate after the Turnpike opened. Second, Cramer appealed to Floridians' sense of majority rule, asking if bondholders should "determine the highway future" of the state. Finally, Cramer proposed that all future bonds include language clearly stating that Florida would pursue Interstate highways in conjunction with toll roads.[251]

In order to preempt counterarguments by the governor's office, Cramer also sought and found a federal highway official who would support his claim: Frank Turner, a thirty-year professional of the Bureau of Public Roads then serving in the capacities of Deputy Commissioner and Chief Engineer. Cramer claimed Turner viewed I-95 between Fort Pierce and Daytona and the proposed Turnpike extension as parallel routes even though the latter directed traffic to Orlando instead of towns further up the coast. According to Cramer, Turner believed "there would not be enough traffic to warrant both routes."[252] Turner never denied these statements. Cramer also appealed to the most visible highway professional in Washington, Bureau of Public Roads Administrator Rex Whitton. Whitton, according to Cramer, believed I-95 would not be approved until the

[251] Congressional Bulletin, 1.

[252] Ibid.

state "obtain[ed] permission from the holders of the bonds…thereby conceding that the two routes are competing."[253]

Cramer successfully mobilized the people of Florida, and their various expressions of support reveal that they accepted Cramer's accusation that the state had been underhanded in its management of I-95. In August 1961, the President of the Daytona Beach Chamber of Commerce wrote to Bryant to urge the construction of I-95. The letter refers to "published accounts of efforts to adjust highway locations to show greater economic feasibility for the Tollpike extension," even though Cramer was the only public figure making these accusations.[254] As evidence that Cramer's efforts in east Florida had a state-wide audience, one man from Cramer's district wrote Bryant requesting that "I-95 should be cleared up, and I-95 saved, before the bonds on the Turnpike are validated and it's too late." The man clearly accepted Cramer's charge that the state had engaged in a conspiracy at the expense of the people of Florida; he requested assurances that "no secret agreements precluding such construction be entered into with the bond buyers."[255]

Publicly and in exchanges with the voting community, the Bryant administration and its Democratic allies denounced Cramer as a rabble rouser using the Turnpike extension as an opportunity to increase his profile outside of his home district. After Cramer circulated a "Congressional Bulletin" to the people of Florida in early July, 1961,

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[253] Ibid., 2.

[254] John R. Stanier to Farris Bryant, 10 August 1961, Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF.

[255] Joseph V. Klingel to Farris Bryant, 18 September 1961, Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF.

advising them of his activities and vilifying the governor, the Bryant administration wasted little time defending itself. In a memo to the press corps date July 15, the governor's office refuted Cramer's claims, stating, "Cramer's latest effort to place a political road block in the path of our highway progress has clearly shown him to be willing to twist facts and embarrass dedicated public servants to service his own purpose." The memo also argued Cramer's activities had earned him "the ire of the citizens there [Florida's east coast] who resent his attempts to use them as pawns in his latest gambit."[256] One Bryant staffer wrote, "I have no doubt that Bill will find another vehicle to ride in his search for state-wide headlines."[257] There is, however, little evidence the people of east Florida opposed Cramer's efforts.

The Bryant Administration's claim that Cramer faced resentment among the people of east Florida seems to be a purely rhetorical maneuver. When the Bryant Administration found it difficult to convince the people of Florida that Cramer's views were unpopular, it attempted to make his campaign look petty. On August 24, Bryant held a press conference where reporters pressed him on the charges levied by Cramer. Bryant weathered the first few questions diplomatically, but when a reporter asked if the state would provide the Bureau of Public Roads firm conditions under which it would begin constructing I-95 (one of Cramer's many challenges to the governor), Bryant lost

[256] Memo to the Press Corps, 15 July 1961, Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF.

[257] John E. Evans to Helen Sullivan, 8 September 1961, Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF.

his patience, likely because he sensed the reporters sided with Cramer. Bryant snapped back, "This situation would be funny if so many people didn't take it seriously."[258]

At the heart of the Bryant and Cramer feud was politics. Bryant was undeniably correct when he accused Cramer of using the issue to advance his political profile.In the early 1960s, Florida was in the midst of transitioning from a solidly Democratic state to a divided electorate as large numbers of northerners moved into the state. In particular, the non-panhandle districts began to sway to the Republican side of the spectrum. Cramer brilliantly found an issue that put the people of these districts at odds with the Democratic governor, further separating the communities from the rest of the state and positioning Cramer as a leader in the burgeoning Florida Republican Party. Cramer's strategy was clear to the Bryant Administration. In a confidential letter to other leading Democrats in Florida, Bryant said of Cramer, "He has projected himself into a statewide publicity campaign…for the sole purpose of putting the construction of roads on the basis of a Republic-Democratic issue."[259] In a letter between Bryant staffers, John Evans told Executive Assistance James W. Kynes, "The upshot is…Cramer has made it appear that we are bumbling, and building, roads. He has projected himself into a state-wide spotlight which could have effect on the 1962 Senatorial campaign."[260]

Most residents of Florida recognized the debate for what it was, even if they did overwhelmingly side with Cramer. One I-95 proponent wrote to Bryant to echo his

[258] Press conference excerpted in letter Farris Bryant to Spessard Holland, 29 August 1961, Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF.

[259] Bryant to Sikes, Peek and Kynes, 21 August 1961, Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF.

[260] John E. Evans to James W. Kynes, 19 August 1961, Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF.

support for Cramer. He opened, "The taxpayers of Florida are stirred and nauseated by the politics involved" in the issue, and then echoed most of Cramer's arguments against the Bryant Administration. This constituent believed it would be foolish for Florida to pass on sixty million dollars by not building the Interstate and therefore wanted bond buyers' interests overlooked in favor of the people of coastal Florida.[261]

The Bryant Administration, recognizing Cramer's antics as a political threat, responded in a political fashion. While Cramer's charges that the Administration was favoring Democratic districts over Republic districts by taking a course of action that would deprive the latter of a desperately needed highway stirred voter sentiment, there is no proof this was the motivation. The record demonstrates the Bryant Administration truly believed both roads would be built because the Turnpike extension would serve a completely different purpose than I-95 from Daytona to Fort Pierce. One Bryant ally, taking aim at Cramer's premise that the diverging Turnpike extension and I-95 were parallel, asked, "Have you studied the new Cramer Geometry? I'm much impressed with his understanding of 'parallel.'"[262]

Instead, the record reveals great frustration among Bryant staffers with the BPR. They believed Frank Turner's comments on the conflict between I-95 and the Turnpike served Cramer's basis of legitimacy and, without it, his campaign would have fizzled in its earliest stages. "Our problems with Cramer," Jimmy Kynes wrote to John Evans, "have been directly related to the apparent willingness of the Bureau of Public Roads to

[261] Earl V. Sprogue to Farris Bryant, 17 September 1961, Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF.

[262] Sullivan to Evans.

say to anyone in an official capacity the things they want to hear."[263] Publicly, Bryant accused Cramer of using "conversation with a subordinate in the Bureau of Public Roads as the basis for an attack on the entire Turnpike Extension Program."[264]

Bryant responded to the threat presented by Cramer by using the power of the of the Governor's Office. In an August 26, 1961 letter to Governor Bryant, Democratic Senator Spessard Holland hypothesized Cramer could be silenced if the Bryant Administration pushed through a small segment of I-95 north of Fort Pierce. Noting that any construction north of Fort Pierce approved by the Public Roads Administration would "cut the ground from under Congressman Cramer," Holland had all Florida Democrats in Washington ready to support construction.[265] A memo circulated between Jimmy Kynes, Bob Sikes, and other Florida Democratic Representatives outlined the strategy that would be employed to silence Cramer. The memo did not hide that the Florida Democrats believed the BPR and Rex Whitton, in particular, would be willing to help them. As Kynes had noted previously, the BPR was more than happy to make others happy, even if this required sending conflicting messages. The memo states that "in order for the public to be convinced of firm, aggressive, and positive action on behalf of the state and national Democratic administrations," they would need Rex Whitton to publicly enter the Florida Turnpike/I-95 conversation. The Democrats wanted Whitton to publicly state the construction of the Turnpike would not deter the BPR from building I-95, that

[263] James Kynes to John E. Evans, 19 August 1961, Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF.

[264] Memo to the Press Corps.

[265] Spessard Holland to Farris Bryant, 26 August 1861, Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF.

there was "no reason to assume that I-95 and the Turnpike will be serving the same traffic corridors," that there would be enough traffic to warrant both roads, that Cramer had falsely represented previous comments from the Bureau of Public Roads, and that Florida had always planned on building I-95 from Jacksonville to Miami.[266] Bryant wanted immediate action, noting, "Any indecision on these…matters results in loss of confidence of the Democrats and feeds fuel to Cramer's furnace."[267]Whitton's comments in conjunction with construction of a small segment of I095 would undercut Cramer.

Interestingly, Cramer also saw Whitton as the key to ensuring his transportation plan for east Florida came to fruition. In an August 3, 1961 letter to Governor Bryant, Cramer offered something of a truce. If Bryant's office could secure, from Whitton, written confirmation that construction of the Turnpike extension would "not be a basis for Public Roads withholding approval of construction projects on IS-95," Cramer would back down.[268] The Bryant Administration refused, almost certainly because it knew Cramer would use this letter to push for immediate construction of the route, thus depriving the state of toll revenue and putting Farris in a compromising position with the Turnpike bondholders. There is no evidence Whitton acquiesced to either Cramer's or the Florida Democrats' wishes. Instead, Whitton remained silent on the matter, allowing Florida to settle the matter internally.

As 1961 drew to a close, Florida had completed I-95 through Jacksonville, and a very short stretch of the road was open to traffic in north Miami. In the ensuing years, the

[266] Bryant to Sikes, Peek and Kynes, 21 August 1961, 1.

[267] Bryant to Sikes, Peek, and Kynes, 21 August 1961, 2.

[268] William Cramer to Farris Bryant, 3 August 1961, Governor C. Farris Bryant Papers, Series 756 Administrative Correspondence, Box 129, SAF.

state connected Jacksonville to Daytona Beach, thus providing the state with a contiguous stretch of I-95 in north and central Florida. The remainder of the highway—nearly 260 of Florida's planned 382 miles of I-95—remained in limbo. The state was no closer to beginning construction on I-95 than it was in 1956, and many began to wonder if south Florida would ever see the complete Interstate built. Communities along the Atlantic coast south of Daytona desperately wanted the new highway—there is very little evidence of opposition to the road—but this was not enough to overcome the political impasse that had stymied the project since the day funds were made available from the federal government.

By 1970, the project remained threatened by inaction. The second half of the previous decade had only seen the state build the twenty-seven mile segment of I-95 that connected Fort Lauderdale to Miami. The entire stretch from Fort Lauderdale to Daytona found itself relying on the Turnpike and U.S. 1 south of Fort Pierce and on U.S. 1 exclusively north of the town. As the population continued to grow, the problems recognized by residents twenty years earlier had come to fruition. Traffic was simply halted on a regular basis, and local businessmen believed tourism was held back because of insufficient infrastructure. The towns of Vero Beach, Port St. Lucie, Stuart, Jupiter, and Delray Beach, which had attracted tens of thousands of new residents since the close of World War II with their paradise appeal were becoming miserable places to live due simply to traffic.

A writer for the *Fort Lauderdale News* summarized the frustrations of coastal residents well in 1974:

> Over the years, Interstate 95 has not exactly endeared itself to the hearts of many Broward residents. After all, it's been 16 years—16 years!—that they've been

> hearing about it. It's 16 years since Congress first appropriated money for the interstate system. Sixteen years of hearing about yet another snafu, another relocation problem, another hassle over rights of way, another hang-up with funding and, sigh, just one more blankety-blank reason why the blankety-blank highway is held up.[269]

The reasons for the continued inaction on I-95 were myriad. For one, the Turnpike Authority and Florida's Democratic leadership continued to resist any road that threatened to reduce toll revenues. In 1969, Spessard Holland had informed the County Administrator of St. Lucie County that "there is much yet to be done at the state level before the Bureau of Public Roads can act with any degree of finality on approval of the entire plan for I-95." Holland specifically cited the need for an "agreement from the Turnpike Authority that construction of I-95 would not jeopardize the Authority's bonds." He emphasized "this is of primary importance."[270] State highway officials also cited difficulty securing rights to land, the need for multiple environmental studies, and other obstacles, but highway departments across the country had proven time and again their ability to overcome these requirements when determined to build a stretch of Interstate Highway. In Southeast Florida, however, construction did not begin because state leaders were incentivized to delay commencement of the project. Toll revenues and the demands of bondholders proved more compelling than the residents of Southeast Florida's coastal communities.

The Turnpike Authority's ability to block I-95 construction ended abruptly in July 1969. Republican Governor Claude R. Kirk, a resident of West Palm Beach, created the

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[269] Barbara Greenberg, "End of I-95 Problems Now Seen," *Fort Lauderdale News* 14 January 1974.

[270] Spessard L. Holland to Waldon B. Lewis, 20 February 1969, Spessard L. Holland Papers, Series 55, Box 595, Yonge Library.

Florida Department of Transportation and dismantled the Turnpike Authority, whose responsibilities were assumed by the former. The Florida Department of Transportation viewed Florida's road network holistically and was not biased toward ensuring maximum profits for the Turnpike, nor was it beholden to the Turnpike bondholders. Freed of these influences, the Florida Department of Transportation pursued a course of action it believed best met the transportation needs of the state. Finally, after thirteen years of political wrangling, south Florida was prepared to build the road it had so desperately needed.

As the Florida Department of Transportation began in earnest to plot the course of I-95, the people of Florida remained suspicious of the state's actions. After years of politics preventing the construction of the highway, many viewed any delay, even if for valid purposes, to be evidence the political problem did not truly cease with the disbandment of the Turnpike Authority. In 1972, the *Miami Herald* published a front page exposé which reinforced the public's suspicions. The author, Bruce Giles, claimed he had located an "official statement" from the Turnpike Authority to bondholders clearly stating that I-95 would hurt Turnpike revenues. The document, he claimed, served as proof the Turnpike Authority, with backing from Tallahssee politicians, had purposefully deprived south Florida of I-95 since the 1950s.[271] The people of south Florida were not surprised by the findings, as the state's inability to provide any consistent reason for the delay that held up to scrutiny led them to this conclusion long before Giles found the

[271] "Opening of Interstate 95 Link Is Tied to Turnpike Revenues," *Miami Herald*, 23 January 1972. It is not clear which document Giles uncovered, but the papers of both Farris Bryant and Reubin Askew include many internal memos that could have been used to reached the conclusions found in the *Herald* feature.

smoking gun. Yet, as one *Herald* reader put it, "The people who have long believed there must be some reason for this [delay] now at least have the satisfaction of knowing they were right."[272] With their distrust validated, south Floridians stepped up their vigilance of the progress of I-95.

As such, the *Miami Herald* exposé haunted the administration of Reubin Askew, who succeeded Kirk in the governor's office. One Boca Raton resident, Ralph Brooks, wrote to Governor Reubin Askew, Noting the "desperate need" the people of Broward and Palm Beach Counties had for the highway. Brooks eyed the Florida Department of Transportation as an "entrenched bureaucracy" causing additional delays.[273] Askew's response suggests his office received countless letters in the wake of the *Herald* exposé, and his reply included a two-page argument that the Turnpike and its associated bonds did not cause the delay of I-95. Whether Askew believed the claim or not, he could not admit the state had withheld I-95 from south Florida, as many of the Turnpike Authority employees were now employed by the State Highway Department, and many of the politicians involved still served as leaders of Askew's Democratic Party. While all were quick to profess the innocence of the Turnpike Authority, state officials never got on the same page in regards to the reason for the delay. Florida Department of Transportation official Edward Mueller claimed it was "the federal procedural mechanism."[274] Askew at

[272] "No Roads, and Lies Besides," *Miami Herald*, 25 January 1972.

[273] Ralph R. Brooks to Reubin Askew, 31 January 1972, Series 134 Governor's Office: Department of Transportation Files, Box 4, SAF.

[274] Edward A. Mueller to Reubin Askew, 26 January 1972, Series 134 Governor's Office: Department of Transportation Files, Box 4, SAF.

one point argued it was a shortage of available homes for those displaced by I-95.[275] At another time, Askew argued Florida did not have enough appraisers on staff to facilitate the land acquisition, and this had caused delays.[276]

Regardless of the causes of prior delays, highway supporters on the Florida coast were excited by the prospect of finally moving forward with construction. They would soon discover, however, that the Turnpike Authority had been just one hurdle in their quest to build the superhighway. With the Authority out of the way, the struggle to build I-95 now ran into a bevy of new problems which had to be dealt with in turn. For well over a decade, those who advocated for the road had focused so much of their energy on the Turnpike Authority that they began to believe it was the only impediment to the highway's construction. In reality, the removal of the Authority from the equation only meant south Florida was now ready to deal with the many obstacles that I-95 encountered just about everywhere it went. Namely, south Florida now had to work out the specifics of I-95's route between Daytona Beach and Fort Lauderdale. Ironically, the many obstacles cited by those refusing to acknowledge the real reason the state had delayed building I-95 became actual delaying forces in the 1970s. To be sure, this further frustrated the residents of Southeast Florida and deepened their mistrust in the government.

In total, it took five years after the dismantling of the Turnpike Authority to clear the required milestones and begin construction of I-95. Most of the time was not spent

[275] Reubin Askew, "I-95 Broward & Palm Beach County" internal memo, Series 134 Governor's Office: Department of Transportation Files, Box 4, SAF.

[276] Reubin Askew to Cook Consultants, 7 January 1971, Series 134 Governor's Office: Department of Transportation Files, Box 4, SAF.

resolving disputes with individual landowners, but rather additional requirements that had not existing—or were generally ignored—in the 1950s and 1960s now consumed considerable time. Environmental impact studies, which were usually conducted by interest groups under particular circumstances in the earliest years of Interstate construction, were mandated by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970, and the responsibility to ensure protection of the environment now fell to state officials. In the wake of the freeway revolts, state highway departments were much more diligent about holding the public hearings required by law than they had been in the early years of Interstate construction. Martin, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie Counties required twenty-one public hearings before the route could be finalized. On December 15, 1975, nearly twenty years after south Floridians began their pursuit of "immediate" construction of I-95, the Federal Highway Administration granted the last approval required to begin construction.[277]

As a means of concluding his exploration of the reasons communities responded differently to Interstate construction, Ray G. L'Amoreaux saw engineers as well-positioned to ensure the state and its residents grounded their discussions in facts rather than emotion. "I see the role of the professional as a fact gatherer, a conclusion reacher, a recommendation maker—but above all, a communicator and a explainer of facts," L'Amoreaux wrote. He continued, "If the engineers and planners do these things well, they should then have little difficulty in assuring that the decisions that result are

[277] Chronological Events, Interstate 95 Studies, Palm Beach, Martin, & St. Lucie Counties," Series 134, Governor's Office, Government Liason Department of Transportation Subject Files, Box 8, SAF.

compatible with the goals and objectives of the citizens they are dedicated to serve."[278] In the early 1970s, when L'Amoreaux put these thoughts to paper, the communities of southeast Florida had, under his supervision, already experienced nearly two decades of delays at the hands of Florida leaders. Whether L'Amoreaux intended to mask the activities of Florida's political leaders or gently prod them for their actions is unclear. One thing is certain. Florida's highway engineers did not allow facts, but rather political motives, to drive their activities in regard to I-95. L'Amoreaux's characterization of highway engineers as apathetic, black-and-white arbiters of objective correctness is, in hindsight, almost laughable. At best, Florida's highway engineers were powerless to stand up to machinations of the Sunshine State's politicians and creditors; at worst, they were complicit in neglecting the wants and needs of millions along the state's Atlantic coast.

[278] Ray G. L'Amoreaux, "The Highway and Its Neighborhood" (Undated), Dept. of Transportation Div. of Traffic & Planning Program Subject Files, 1970-1972 Series 806, Box 2, SAF, 8.

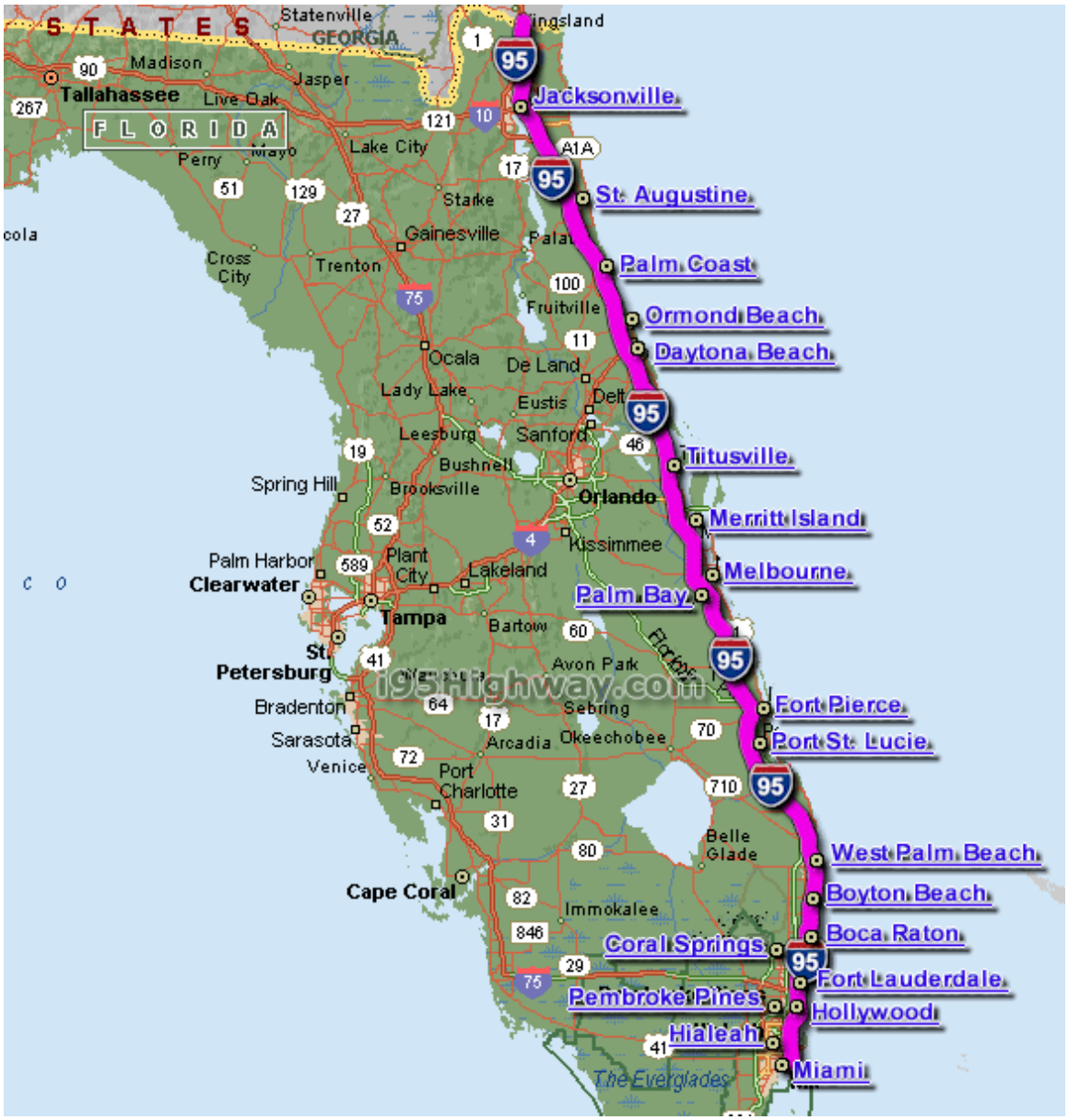

Figure 4.1: I-95 in Florida[279]

[279] I95highway.com

CHAPTER 5

INTRASTATE SPARRING IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Driving north on I-95 from Georgia, one enters South Carolina halfway across the Savannah River. The drive through the state is, in general, boring. I-95 skirts the small towns of Hardeeville and Ridgeland, passes just outside the somewhat larger town of Walterboro, and bounces around Florence before crossing into North Carolina just north of Dillon. Along the way, there is not much to see. The route mostly traverses pine forests and farmland; the topography was not much different prior to the arrival of I-95. In the absence of much else to see, the driver finds himself or herself paying more attention than usual to the countless billboards—most of them advertising a rest stop and roadside attraction called South of the Border—as they attempt to build a sense of excitement belied by the desolate landscape. One such billboard beckons the motorist with "I-95's best kept secret?" while another exclaims "You Never Sausage a Place!" The large bratwurst stretching from one side of the billboard to the other suggests the campiness that awaits.

South of the Border attempts to capture travelers who otherwise use I-95 in South Carolina for one purpose: to get through the state as quickly as possible. Without major towns or tourist destinations along the way (the beach is at least fifty miles to the east throughout the state), I-95 is a conduit for drivers heading to historic Savannah, Georgia or the beaches and other amusements of Florida. Despite its efforts at marketing—and the sombrero atop a 165-foot tall water tower—the tourist trap cannot change the fact that

South Carolina's segment of I-95 is a 200 mile tour through some of the most undeveloped land in the state.[280]

Most of South Carolina's 198 miles of I-95 appeared without controversy or fanfare. The route does not utilize federal lands, threaten state parks or wildlife reserves, does not mar scenic landscapes, and does not bring unwanted traffic to otherwise congested areas. In fact, very few people were inconvenienced by the arrival of I-95 in the state. Neither newspapers nor the correspondence of elected officials reveal significant disputes about land acquisitions; presumably the rural landowners found the right-of-way remuneration sufficient.[281] There has been speculation since the 1960s that Alan Schafer, the owner of South of the Border, used political influence to ensure I-95 would be routed in such a way that his business would benefit, but this debate was held largely after the road had been constructed.[282]

I-95's otherwise uneventful introduction to South Carolina saw one flurry of debate and controversy in 1962 and 1963, when two of the larger towns in the vicinity of the highway's proposed route engaged in a heated contest to sway the final path toward their respective zone of influence. Two camps, one based in Florence and the other in Charleston, lobbied the South Carolina Highway Department to have the Interstate

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[280] As her Master's Thesis at the University of South Carolina, Laura Koser wrote an authoritative study on South of the Border and its relationship to I-95. Laura Koser, "Planned by Pedro: South of the Border, 1950-2001" (master's thesis, University of South Carolina, Columbia, 2004). Complimenting Koser's work is Nicole King, "Behind the Sombrero: Identity and Power at South of the Border, 1949-2001," in Anthony J. Stanonis,ed. *Dixie Emporium: Tourism, Foodways, and Consumer Culture in the American South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 148-174.

[281] The writer investigated all major archives in the state and resources held in smaller towns. He also studied multiple newspapers and interviewed individuals who were involved, one way or another, with Interstate development in South Carolina. He found no evidence of individuals resisting the government's attempt to acquire land for I-95.

[282] Koser, 65.

System's primary north-south path routed to pass through their respective economic zones. In the absence of a historical voice by any who opposed the road, and no other episodes resulting in a historical record, the Charleston/Florence routing controversy stands as the only story of I-95's history in South Carolina that speaks to the relationship between the people of the state and the superhighway. As such, the routing debate is the only window of insight modern researchers have to understand how South Carolinians viewed the road and what informed those views. Ultimately, the South Carolina routing controversy reveals that, at a point when Interstate highways met considerable resistance elsewhere in the country, many South Carolinians viewed the road as a force of good and fought to have the highway built closer to their communities. The intensity of the battle, the resources applied to the efforts, and the activism of citizens speak to exactly how desirable I-95 was among South Carolinians. Of course, what caused South Carolina to view the road positively as opposed to communities elsewhere in the country is a product of local circumstance.

South Carolina began planning a new highway through the state's eastern corridor over a decade before the Interstate Highway System received legislative approval. The South Carolina Highway Commissioners approved the route that would later become South Carolina's portion of I-95 on October 18, 1945.[283] This plan called for a route "beginning at the North Carolina line south of Laurinburg and extending via Bennettsville, Hartsville, Bishopville, and Sumter, Summerton, St. George, Walterboro,

[283] During the earliest stages, the Bureau of Public Roads referred to I-95 as F.A.I. Route 303.

and Ridgeland in the direction of Savannah."[284] The route stayed in the development phase until 1956, when the Federal-Aid Highway Act provided the funding necessary to move the highway network forward from the planning stages, where it had remained for over a decade. At that time, the federal Bureau of Public Roads, whose consent was required for all Interstate routes, had approved a less specific description for the north-south thoroughfare that read, "From the South Carolina-Georgia State line north of Savannah via Summerton and a junction with F.A.I. Route 302 [now I-20] near Florence to the South Carolina-North Carolina State line northeast of Dillon."[285] This route was the first one widely released to the press, and some interested groups in Charleston expressed dissatisfaction with the projection, but as the Highway Department stood by its claim that all routes were subject to change and that nothing was official, these parties found contestation difficult. For the next five years, debate faded as South Carolina first undertook the projects of constructing I-20, I-85, and I-26.[286]

In early 1962, with construction of the three other highways well under way and groundbreaking on I-95 imminent, the Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce still wanted the road pulled closer to the coast. While the Highway Department continued to

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[284] South Carolina State Highway Department, *A Re-Evaluation of the Location for Interstate Route 95 in South Carolina* (Columbia, SC, 1963), 15. Copy held at South Carolina State Library, Columbia, South Carolina.

[285] Ibid., 18. Generally speaking, the state highway departments proposed routes and the federal government approved them based on various criteria it considered desirable for this network. The legislation also stipulated that the federal government would fund ninety percent of the project, and states contributed the balance. State highway departments were charged with awarding all contracts.

[286] The South Carolina State Highway Department opted to construct the highways in order based on percentage of the state population on each road's route. This was meant to address traffic issues in the Greenville/Spartanburg area. As I-95 is largely a rural route, it was last. For discussion of the early stages of South Carolina's interstates, see John Hammond Moore, *The South Carolina Highway Department, 1917-1987* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1987).

be evasive when asked about specifics of the route, Charleston had no doubt that I-95 would follow an inland path connecting Fayetteville, North Carolina and Savannah, Georgia by way of Florence. Sensing that the time was fast approaching when it would be too late to affect the road's course, the Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce decided to launch a formal campaign to have the highway rerouted.

Charleston had every reason to believe I-95 would bring prosperity to a city and region struggling to gain a solid economic footing. The area immediately north of Charleston, which had once been home to a host of defense-related industries and military installations, was suffering as the peace following World War II forced these entities to scale back or leave. The city had watched enviously as the construction of I-85 and I-26 had recently brought a host of industries to Spartanburg.[287] Charleston's civic and business leaders believed bringing the junction of I-95 and I-26—which was already scheduled to terminate in the city—within the city's economic zone would bring them similar benefits.[288] Additionally, scores of reports had been published since the inception of the Interstate System, and they overwhelmingly predicted positive economic effects

[287] The April 30, 1963 edition of the *News and Courier* encouraged Charleston residents to read an article entitled, "The Saga of Spartanburg" in the April edition of *Highway Users Magazine*. The article reported that land value in Spartanburg had jumped ten-fold since I-85 and I-26 opened to the public, and Spartanburg mayor was on the record as saying, "The rapid industrial progress in Spartanburg could not have been possible without our new Interstate highways. As a matter of fact, these two roads, I-26 and I-85, have been the greatest single catalyst to Spartanburg's recent economic growth."

[288] To be sure, junctions of Interstate highways were extra lucrative, as companies preferred to build in locations with the best access to transportation. A company that built at an Interstate junction had immediate access to north-south and east-west roads. This does not mean the individual roads were not coveted; even on an individual basis, Interstate highways represented great economic progress. This is best evidenced by the small towns in South Carolina, such as Manning, that were distant from either of the proposed junctions but still weighed in on the debate.

for those regions lucky enough to receive the ribbons of asphalt.[289] And finally, I-95, due to its course through the major industrial centers along the east coast, would have connected Charleston to a majority of the American population and brought the city into the most significant economic zone in the United States. Better access to I-95 would have allowed Charleston to market itself as a port city with market accessibility that rivaled Savannah, Norfolk, and other east coast ports.

Charleston had spent the first months of 1962 attempting to influence its luck by assembling an alliance of interested groups in the greater Charleston region. Ultimately, the Charleston Chamber of Commerce, the Charleston Planning Board, the area mayors, the City of Charleston, Charleston County, the Charleston Merchants Retail Association, the Charleston Real Estate Board, and a handful of other organizations pledged support—financial or otherwise—to the rerouting effort. On May 9, 1962, members of the Charleston Planning Board met in Columbia with South Carolina Highway Commissioner Silas Pearman to present an alternative route for I-95 that had been developed by the organization at the request of the Charleston Development Board. The alternate route placed the road farther east, passing east of Florence, by Kingstree, Moncks Corner and across Interstate 26, south of Walterboro to Pocotaligo (Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the routes under consideration). This route brought the junction of I-26 and I-95 twenty-seven miles closer to Charleston. After hearing the proposal, Pearman "stated frankly that any consideration of an alternative route would have to be based upon

[289] See: National Research Council (U.S.). 1957. *Economic Impact of Highway Improvement: Conference Proceedings, March 18-19, 1957*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council, Highway Research Board and Guilbert R. Graham *South Carolina Economic Impact of an Interstate Highway Land Values and Uses.* South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, SC.

sound economics and sound engineering." Upon hearing of Pearman's comment at a May meeting, the Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors agreed the logical next step was to hire an engineering firm to study the virtue of the alternative route, and the Board voted to form a committee to this end. William W. Humphreys and W. Harold Butt volunteered to research and recommend engineering firms, Thomas C. Stevenson took the task of finding the funding to pay for the study, and Dr. George G. Durst, who had connections at the Department of Defense, agreed to meet with them and gain the Department's support for the alternative route. The Board found this last step critical because the Interstate System was supposed to allow for rapid evacuation of cities in the case of an atomic attack, and support from the Defense Department would preempt one of the State Highway Department's criticisms of Charleston's proposal. Before adjourning, the newly formed steering committee agreed to "proceed as quickly as possible."[290]

At the next month's Board of Directors meeting, Durst announced he had successfully acquired support from the Defense Department. Stevenson unveiled financial contributions of $5,000 each from the City of Charleston and Charleston County; $2,000 from the Charleston Development Board; and $1,000 each from the Charleston Real Estate Board, the Charleston Retail Merchants Association, and the Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce. Butt and Humphreys recommended Arthur D. Little & Company of Cambridge, Massachusetts to perform the engineering study.[291] A well-reputed company, the firm only agreed to take on the job after performing a

[290] Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce, Minutes of the Board of Directors, 22 May 1962, Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce, North Charleston, South Carolina.

[291] Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce, Minutes of the Board of Directors, 26 June 1962.

preliminary study in order to determine the route proposed by Charleston showed promise of meeting Pearman's requirements.[292] The company's preliminary study, performed in early June, "indicated that there is sufficient economic justification to warrant a more detailed study," and the firm commenced a more comprehensive evaluation.[293]

The finished report—called the "Little Report" by all involved—arrived in Charleston in late October. It concluded maximum benefit for South Carolina as a whole would be achieved by building I-95 on the more easterly route proposed by Charleston. In evaluating the possible routes, the Little Report "evaluated…on a comparative basis from the viewpoint of the two general objectives for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, as well as from the viewpoint of the specific aim defined by Congress." The "general objectives" mentioned were to service projected traffic for the year 1975 and to serve the defense needs of the United States, while the Congressional viewpoint was that local needs be considered and accommodated, when reasonable, by

[292] While obviously biased, the *News and Courier* called the Little Company "the best research firm in the world" on 5/22/1963. In a 4/4/1963 letter to Governor Donald Russell, Charleston attorney E.K. Pritchard said, "The instructions that were given Arthur D. Little were to make an impartial survey and come up with his findings and let the chips fall right where they belong to fall." In the letter Stevenson sent to potential contributors, he stated explicitly the engineering firms under consideration "will not undertake the assignment for us unless they…have complete freedom to report their findings and conclusions according to their best professional judgment." See Thomas C. Stevenson to J. Palmer Gaillard, 18 May 1962, Gaillard Papers, City of Charleston Records Management Division, Charleston, South Carolina.

[293] Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce, Minutes of the Board of Directors, 26 June 1962. The minutes reveal that the State Highway Department was very cooperative throughout this process and fully complied with the Little Company's requests.

the Interstate Highways.[294] The Little Report also stated that the needs of "tourism, goods movement, and local transportation" were taken into account.[295]

The Little Report's primary argument regarding tourism became a chorus of the Charleston lobby; the report argued United States Route 301 followed roughly the same path as the Highway Department's plan, and tourists used it heavily. Rather than override the existing route with a new road, the report argued, the more easterly I-95 path would allow for a tourism industry to develop in an otherwise underdeveloped region and would provide travelers with an option when traversing the Palmetto State. Failure to offer this boon to the eastern region "would tend to retard realization of the full tourist income possibilities of the numerous attractions of the coastal and near coastal areas," the report claimed. Further, the Little Report contended that the Highway Department's corridor did not offer sufficient attractions for tourists to visit, while the alternative route would encourage north-south travelers to venture into Charleston.[296]

The report went on to argue that the more easterly route better served both the commercial and residential traffic needs of South Carolina. In terms of commercial traffic, the report claimed the Highway Department's route served the needs of a handful of freight companies based in the Sumter and Orangeburg areas, while the Charleston-backed route served the ports in Charleston, which had a larger impact on the entire state. In order to raise the stakes of the decision, the report framed the decision in terms of an

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[294] Arthur D. Little & Company, *Evaluation of Two Proposed Routes for Interstate Highway I-95 Through South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), 2. Copy held at City of Charleston Records Management Division, Charleston, South Carolina.

[295] Ibid., 4.

[296] Ibid., 4-5.

inter-state rivalry, pitting the Port of Savannah, Georgia against the ports in Charleston. "Failure to provide truck traffic with an Interstate highway that links the State's ports with the hinterland markets will…give the Port of Savannah—a strong competitor of South Carolina ports—a decided advantage," the report claimed.[297]

Noting that seventy-percent of the Palmetto State's non-farm employees used private automobiles for commuting to and from work, the Little Report went on to argue for the high degree of importance that should be placed on the route's effect on residential traffic. With the aid of I-95, the report said, commuter trip times could be more drastically reduced for Charleston-area residents, and this would consequently allow for a growth in the area's labor market of 1,600 people, or 2.4 percent. The Orangeburg labor market, on the other hand, would only grow by 130 people, or 0.7 percent.[298] The Report went on to conjecture that the area where I-95 and I-26 intersect could develop into an important industrial center if the junction happened in an area with an available labor force and "physical requirements for industrial growth" and claimed the Charleston-backed route rendered this industrial development more likely.[299] The report also claimed, given the Charleston area's higher population density, gross

[297] Ibid., 5. History shows that competition between the ports of Charleston and Savannah has always been significant. In the 1830s, for example, South Carolina constructed the Hamburg-Charleston Railroad, then the longest line in the world, to intercept goods bound for Savannah and divert them to Charleston's ports instead. See William Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Crisis in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York: Oxford University Press), 42-47.

[298] One should note that the Report chose to talk about Orangeburg in this section only. Orangeburg was arguably not even the most impacted employment area in the I-95 zone of influence, as Florence stood to benefit greatly from the road. Focusing on a city other than the most impacted seems to be a rather transparent rhetorical tool.

[299] The junction of I-95 and I-26 (which ultimately occurred based on the Highway Department's plans) never gave birth to an industrial center. Today, the area where these roads meet is agricultural. The Little Report was not wrong to speculate about the potential for development where the highways intersected, as junctions did give birth to development elsewhere in the country.

population, and investment in new industry, the more easterly route would allow for more overall economic development. And finally, noting the United States Department of Defense's approval of both routes, but lack of committal to either, the Report took the position that Charleston-backed route was the more logical because of the city's important military installations. In 1963, Charleston was home to a Military Airport Transport Service (MATS) base, a significant Army Depot and the Charleston Naval Base was becoming the "primary fleet ballistic support complex on the East Coast including the only Polaris base in the United States."[300]

Many of the Little Report's claims are supported by data. The more easterly route traversed counties with a total population of 519,155, while the Highway Department's route entered counties with a total population of 422,801 people. The Charleston-backed route also would be accessible to 24,712 members of the armed forces, 25,924 government workers, and 210,460 city dwellers, while the westerly route affected only 5,916 military personnel, 12,685 public servants, and 107,0001 urbanites.[301] Moreover, a survey of American manufacturers performed in 1958 revealed that the Charleston route would add additional manufacturing value to the state's economy of $147,862,000 per year while the Highway Department route would add $143,972,000 annually.[302]

In the end, the Little Report argued that, even in the absence of I-95, the population of the Charleston area stood to grow more in the coming decades and had the greater potential for industrial development than the Pee Dee and Midlands regions of

[300] Little Report, 7.

[301] U.S. Census, 1960.

[302] Census of Manufacturers, 1958. Details in the private papers of Thomas Thornhill.

South Carolina.[303] Routing I-95 through its backyard, therefore, was the logical choice because it would allow for even greater future economic prosperity. The Report also claimed this benefit could be achieved at a negligible cost. The alternative route would require an additional 14.5 miles of Interstate construction—3.5 miles on I-95 and 11 miles on I-20—and could be completed for under $124,000 in construction costs plus incremental maintenance costs. This number was even less significant, the report concluded, because within eight years of completion, 25 percent of the additional maintenance costs per year would be paid by additional gas tax revenues collected by the state due to the increased number of work trips the easterly route would permit.

Armed with the documentation it believed would sway Pearman and his Board of Commissioners, the Charleston Chamber of Commerce made the rerouting of I-95 its primary objective for 1963.[304] The Chamber of Commerce forwarded a copy of the Little Report to Commissioner Pearman at the end of 1962. Pearman, in addition to handling the efforts of the Charleston lobby, now received pressure from individual citizens. Working parallel to the Chamber of Commerce and its allies was Samuel C. Craven. Craven, a Charleston lawyer with aspirations of election to the South Carolina House of Representatives, began personally lobbying Pearman in a letter dated April 16, 1962. In the letter, Craven took issue with the Highway Department's recommended route on

[303] This seems to be a rhetorical device used to strengthen Charleston's case. At the time, Thomas Thornhill believed the economy of the greater Charleston area needed the boost I-95 would bring to pull the region out of the post-war slump.

[304] 1962 Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce President George G. Durst expressed this sentiment at a Board of Directors meeting on 12/18/1962, and on March 5, 1963, his successor, Thomas E. Thornhill echoed it at a meeting of the Charleston Civitan Club. *News and Courier*, 3/8/1963. Durst also claimed that, along with controlling harbor pollution, the rerouting of I-95 was "the most important long-range projects" of the city. Charleston Chamber of Commerce Minutes, 12/18/1962.

grounds that it violated U.S.C.A., title 23, Section 103 (D). This piece of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 mandated that the Interstate Highways "shall be so located as to connect by routes, as direct as practicable, the principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers, to serve the national defense, and to the greatest extent possible, to connect at suitable border points with routes of continental importance."[305] Craven argued that the "legislative requirement and the existing highway needs negates any other location than that which would approximate Myrtle Beach, Charleston and Beaufort."[306] The route he advocated differed from that supported by the Chamber of Commerce, as he recommended a route that "followed a line somewhat east of state route 41 through the counties of Horry, Georgetown, Berkeley, Charleston, and on to Beaufort and Savannah."[307] Craven forwarded the letter to Pearman to Charleston Mayor J. Palmer Gaillard, Jr. and requested his support in the rerouting effort.

Perhaps frustrated by the lack of immediate response and undoubtedly motivated by learning of the Chamber of Commerce's efforts in area newspapers, Craven wrote to Gaillard, Durst, and John White, Chairman of the Chamber's Highway and Bridges Committee, on May 23, 1962. He copied the letter to the Charleston Development Board, the Charleston County Planning Board, sixteen city aldermen, the *News & Courier*, the *Evening Post*, the *West Ashley News*, and the *North Charleston Banner*. While acknowledging that the "Craven Plan" and the plan recommended by the Chamber of

[305] *Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, United States Statues at Large* 70, sec. 103 (1956).

[306] Samuel Craven to Silas Pearman, 16 April 1962, Craven Papers, City of Charleston Records Management Division, Charleston, South Carolina.

[307] Ibid.

Commerce differed in routing, he pointed out the common objective.[308] He went on to "earnestly request that we present a solid front in this matter, rather than a group of varied thoughts and ideas."[309] And then Craven dropped something of a bombshell—he revealed that he had filed a lawsuit on the behalf of the citizens of Charleston County. The lawsuit petitioned the State Highway Department and the Bureau of Public Roads for all "records, information and data" pertaining to the route of I-95.Craven recommended that the Little Company waited until he had acquired these records before commencing its study, as the information would "enable the Firm to adequately ferret out the weaknesses in the present location [that is, the planned route of I-95] and also avoid unnecessary duplicity in their studies."[310]

Mayor Gaillard wasted no time in responding, and his tone reveals a significant level of frustration with Craven. He wrote, "I agree with you that we must all present a solid front to the Highway Department for any change of this route. This, of course, is impossible now that a law suit has been instituted."[311] He also pointed out Craven's error in implying the Little Company had been hired to validate Charleston's claim for the rerouting, noting instead that it had been employed to supply "competent technical assistance in evaluating, on an unbiased basis, the facts." He went on, "To my knowledge, all are in agreement that we believe the Highway should be located nearer the coast…I personally do not feel qualified, nor do I believe the Chamber of Commerce is

[308] Craven's letter is the only source that mentions a "Craven Plan." Despite his claim that "My plan…has been designated as the Craven Plan," all evidence points to the fact that Craven, himself, did the "designation."

[309] Craven to Gaillard, et. al. May 23, 1962.

[310] Ibid.

[311] Gaillard to Craven, May 24, 1962.

qualified, to state categorically where such a highway should be located."[312] Gaillard concluded that, since he and the Chamber did not ask to be party to Craven's lawsuit, he did not want to supply the Little Company with any information acquired through it.[313] In the end, Craven's case did not go to trial. Pearman must have been happy to have Craven out of the picture, because 1963 brought a new level of intensity from the Charleston lobby.

The Little Report armed the Charleston lobby with a host of expert-backed arguments to use as it lobbied the State Highway Department, and it fueled an intensified campaign initiated in mid-March. On March 16, 1963 Pritchard forwarded a copy of the Little Report's executive summary to South Carolina Governor Donald Russell and asked for his support as the debate intensified.[314] In a March 27 article, the *News and Courier* quoted W. Harold Butt, then serving as Chairman of the Charleston Development Board, as saying his organization had grown concerned that the public was not informed enough to realize how vital the rerouting was. The lobby confederation organized a meeting to drum up popular support. In the article announcing the meeting, Butt summarized the issue and said, "Our objective right now is to start our people thinking about the importance of this highway in the years to come, and to invite outspoken support for our

[312] Emphasis in original.

[313] Craven responded to say that he only sought to help the official lobbying campaign, and the correspondence ends there. Craven to Gaillard, May 25, 1962.

[314] E.K. Pritchard to Donald Russell, 16 March 1963, Donald Russell Papers, South Carolina State Archives, Columbia, South Carolina.

Chamber of Commerce Highways and Bridges Committee," which was officially carrying on the discussion with the Highway Department.[315]

On March 28, the *News and Courier* joined Butt and company in recruiting support. That edition of the paper featured a cover story and an editorial dealing with the I-95 rerouting. The cover story carried the title "Route of I-95 Vital To City" and pointed out that if the Highway Department's route came to fruition, Charleston, the state's largest population center, would not be serviced by a north-south Interstate route.[316] The Federal-Aid Highway Act required that Interstate highways, as much as feasible, connected major population areas. Charleston saw the Highway Department route as neglecting this mandate and was especially bothered by the fact that Savannah, Georgia; Petersburg, Virginia; and Benson, North Carolina, all with smaller populations, anticipated I-95 construction—the latter two were scheduled to be sites of Interstate highway junctions. The article went on to enumerate the potential benefits for the city: increased port traffic, tourism, and industrial development, and myriad others. The *News and Courier*, realizing increased pressure from Charleston would surely awaken support in areas laying claim to the Highway Department route, sought to preempt their arguments. "Either of the routes," the article claimed, "would serve the Florence and Walterboro areas equally well, since neither route passes through these towns."[317] The

[315] *News and Courier*, 27 March 1963.

[316] Interestingly, the 1960 census lists Columbia with a population of 260,828 and Charleston with a population of 216,382. While this may be a case of Charleston exaggerating its case, there is no doubt that I-95 was going to miss a major metropolitan area.

[317] *News and Courier*, 28 March 1963. This is a problematic argument for many reasons, not the least of which is that I-95 would not pass directly through Charleston if the alternative route was selected. In fact, the Highway Department's plan would put I-95 within three miles of Florence, while the Charleston plan would leave Charleston eighteen miles removed.

editorial announced, "The *News and Courier* heartily endorses a movement to swing Interstate Highway 95 closer to the South Carolina's principal seaport." It then continued the feature article's preemptive strike against Florence and Walterboro. Anticipating criticism of Charleston for coveting I-95 when I-26 already entered the city, the editor claimed, "Basic needs of transportation require full service to centers of communication. The juncture of traffic streams from north, south and west over Highways I-26 and U.S. 17 is an argument for making I-95 as accessible as possible to through traffic between New York and Florida." It went on, "We cannot imagine that the State highway Department…would want to discourage travelers from pausing within the state's borders." While being certain to garner popular support, the editorial ended on an optimistic note: "The facts of geography and population ought to prevail. The road should be rerouted now, while ample time is available."[318]

The *News and Courier* was correct in anticipating an alarmed opposition. On March 29, the *Florence Morning News* alerted residents of the Pee Dee region to Charleston's machinations. It reported, "The Charleston Chamber of Commerce is engaged in a full-scale effort to divert Interstate Highway 95 from its present scheduled route immediately west of Florence to one not-so-immediately east of Florence." The editorial went on to say its aim was to "alert Florence City Council, the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce, and all those interested in seeing that no change is made in the route as presently planned."[319] Florence had long thought of itself as a "transportation city," as the crossing of major north-south and east-west rail lines had given birth to the

[318] Ibid.

[319] *Florence Morning News*, 29 March 1963.

city in the nineteenth century. Florence's positioning at the junction of these railways had directed its economic development for over a century. Industries moved to Florence to capitalize on the transportation benefits, and the city developed a sizeable service sector to accommodate the railroad workers.[320] Civic and business leaders had anxiously awaited the prosperity crossing Interstates would bring since 1956, hoping to see an economic rebirth and bring Florence into a prosperous position as the automobile replaced the train. They counted on not only increased industry but also "tourist dollars," the money that motorists would bring through their purchases at restaurants, gas stations, motels, and other travel-related businesses. The threat now lurking in the Lowcountry stood to deprive the city of this economic boon.

Despite the *Florence Morning News*' alarmist tone, the Florence City Council and Chamber of Commerce seem to have initially followed a wait-and-see approach to the threat posed by Charleston. Their immediate response was not to drum up regional support or organize into an official lobbying front to counteract Charleston's efforts. The reasons for this are not entirely clear. Thomas E. Thornhill, President of the Charleston Chamber of Commerce in 1963, believes the reticence apparent in the newspapers of the day is actually evidence of Florence Mayor David McLeod and his brother, a powerful Walterboro attorney, quietly pulling political strings in Columbia. There seems to have been something happening behind the scenes, because an April 3 *Florence Morning News* editorial cited a "usually well-informed source" who led the newspaper to claim, "Interstate Highway 95, apparently, is going to follow original plans…It's just about

[320] See Wayne G. King, *Rise Up So Early: A History of Florence County, South Carolina* (Spartanburg, SC: Published for Florence County Historical Commission by the Reprint Co, 1981).

certain the original plans will be followed. People in the Florence area need not have any fears long that line."[321] Despite its early optimism, however, the *Florence Morning News* and other area newspapers monitored the situation very closely and kept their readers abreast of the situation.

Small town newspapers also weighed in on the debate. The *Dillon Herald,* for example, took issue with Charleston's claim that the alternative route better met the defense needs of the nation by claiming, "All its arguments about…the greater service it would render to national defense has a hollow ring. [sic] Isn't national defense served better by keeping throughways removed from the point of explosion than by drawing them to it?"[322] The *Manning Times* took a more sardonic tone:

> While we do not wish to belittle our great port city, we do believe that there are other places in South Carolina besides Charleston, and it would be nice if things could be arranged so that something, once in a while, would benefit an area in our State other than Charleston. It is splendid that the coastal area has grown as much as it has; perhaps if the western route is utilized, the central area will show more growth as well.[323]

Accusations of inland neglect in favor of Charleston were common in the small towns backing the State Department plan. They viewed Charleston as being in a privileged position among lawmakers and receiving disproportionate resources from the state. Always defensive, small town newspapers in the Charleston area also joined the fight. The Tri City Times, which served the Mount Pleasant area, took the position that the highway should best meet the needs of the state: "Every taxpayer has an investment in the State Ports Authority facilities here, at Port Royal, and at Georgetown—including

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[321] *Florence Morning News*, 3 April 1963.

[322] *The Dillon Herald*, 5 April 1963.

[323] *Manning Times*, 16 May 1963.

Highway 301 interests. Or did they buy stock in Savannah firms?"[324] These papers argued that a Charleston victory in this fight would actually benefit the towns that felt neglected—that state tax dollars would be used to make the entire state wealthier. Regardless of the talking points the newspapers employed, their involvement indicates a widespread positive view of the Interstate Highways and the economic potential they represented.

The *News and Courier*, more than any other South Carolina paper, used language to incite its readers. Its reporting on the March 29 meeting in Charleston was replete with bellicose language. The gathering at the Francis Marion Hotel was a "council of war." Former mayor and prominent lawyer Thomas P. Stoney was "called back to active duty," as he and another attorney, E.K. Pritchard agreed to argue Charleston's case pro bono in all future meetings with the Highway Department.[325] And finally, the article reported that the meeting's "speakers left little doubt that the battle is fast nearing the 'shooting stage.'" The meeting was important for more than just the sensationalist journalism it attracted. The Charleston Innkeepers Association, representatives of Charleston's shipping companies, the Ports Authority, and city and county officials from neighboring areas added their support to what was—by now—an expansive coalition. Nearly a dozen men spoke at the gathering, including legislators, the mayor, and representatives of shipping, tourism, and mercantile interests.[326]

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[324] *Tri City Times*, 11 April 1963.

[325] Stoney and Pritchard's agreement to work for free speaks to the level of commitment citizen's had to the cause, as the Chamber of Commerce had set funds aside to pay for legal representation. Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce, Minutes of the Board of Directors, 18 December 1962.

[326] *News and Courier*, 30 March 1963.

A dominant theme at the meeting—and one that received corroboration from the Little Report—was the notion that the Highway Department's route benefited the Port of Savannah more than the Charleston ports. This was the major point in Stoney's speech, as he argued, "I can't imagine that our state would spend $19 million on our port facilities in Charleston and then stand idly by and give the preference in mileage to Savannah." Employing hyperbole for effect, he continued: "I take my hat off to Savannah and what those people have done. But if we give that city a 45-to-50 mile advantage on a straight line highway—it's goodbye Charleston." Stoney's comments were seconded and expounded upon by Thaddeus Street of Carolina Shipping.[327] In subsequent weeks, the *News and Courier* echoed this message. A March 31 editorial claimed "South Carolinians have a big investment that they need to protect…Unless the arc between Florence and Pocotaligo is swung nearer to the sea, truckers hauling freight for ocean shipment will whiz past Charleston to the Georgia docks. This outcome would represent a loss to every South Carolinian."[328]

Pearman, who received a copy of the Little Report in January, had set his engineers to the task of completely reevaluating the route of I-95, taking both the original route and Charleston's alternative route into account. Pearman had to acknowledge the attention the controversy had been receiving throughout the state; not only were newspapers devoting pages to the issue, but Stoney and the mayors of Lake City, Moncks Corner, St. Stephen, Kingstree, and Summerville, calling themselves the Highway I-95 Citizens Committee, had begun an advertising campaign in state newspapers. In early

[327] Ibid.

[328] *News and Courier*, 31 March 1963.

May, with his reevaluation report ready, Pearman encouraged the Charleston Chamber of Commerce to release the Little Report to the press "due to the publicity on I-95."[329] Charleston obliged and released the report on May 20.

At this time, the Chamber of Commerce suspected Pearman was going to reject its proposal. Much of this suspicion stemmed from a meeting State Senator T. Allen Legare and State Representative Arthur C. Baker had had with Pearman in mid-May.[330] Corroborating their hunch was a Clarendon County official who told the *Manning Times* he had seen the Highway Department's report and that it favored the original path.[331] John White preemptively asked the Little Company to produce a rebuttal report and organized an effort to delay the announcement of Pearman's decision by 90 days.[332] Not waiting for any official action, the *News and Courier*'s editorial page went on the offensive: "With plans for Interstate Highway 95 leaking out to the public, it now appears that the State Highway Department had just as well build a tunnel from the North Carolina line to Georgia insofar as the economic needs of South Carolina are concerned," it blasted. It then continued, "We don't understand why our Highway Department has to

[329] Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce, Minutes of the Board of Directors, 28 May 1963.

[330] Ibid. State lawmakers were involved intermittently throughout the debate, but seem to have taken their cues from the Charleston Chamber of Commerce. Florence representatives have left no record of being involved. Both the Florence and Charleston camps appear to have not immediately appealed to Congressmen and Senators in Washington. The first mention of involving national lawmakers in the debate is in the June 26, 1963 minutes of the Charleston Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, when Thomas Thornhill suggests contacting Senator Strom Thurmond, Senator Olin Johnson, and Representative L. Mendel Rivers. The records of these men held at the South Carolina State Archives, however, show no sign of their involvement in this debate.

[331] The *Manning Times* had begun reporting as though the decision had been made on May 16, 1963.

[332] Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce, Minutes of the Board of Directors, 28 May 1963.

work for Georgia instead of South Carolina."[333] Amidst the firestorm, the Highway Department released the reevaluation at the end of the month.

The report systematically refuted each of Charleston's claims. It stated categorically that the westerly route best served the traffic needs of South Carolina and revealed that the Highway Department had secured a letter from Rex M. Whitton, Federal Highway Administrator, saying the Department of Defense "preferred inland locations because of the vulnerability of coastal areas."[334] In terms of tourism, the study concluded that choosing the easterly route would "create undue hardships" on the motels, restaurants, and other tourism related industries in the Highway 301 corridor. It went on to claim that—if anything—the westerly route would benefit Charleston tourism because it would not draw people away from U.S. 17, which funneled many tourists directly into Charleston.[335] The report then posited that the original route would attract more industry because it represented the shortest route from the North Central states and Great Lakes region to the coasts of Georgia and Florida and that the Port of Charleston would be adequately served by I-26 and other routes, noting that not all ports on the eastern seaboard would be serviced by Interstate Highways.[336] Perhaps the strongest case made by the Highway Department was a drastic revision to the modest $124,000 additional cost

[333] *News and Courier*, 19 May 1963

[334] *Re-evaluation*, iii.

[335] Ibid, iv-v.

[336] Ibid., vi.

figure presented by the Little Report. The Highway Department reevaluation estimated additional costs amounting to $21,094,300. [337]

The Highway Department's report drew significant response. The Florence City Council finally broke its silence and passed a resolution in support of the Highway Department's decision. In the resolution, the City Council noted that it had "always found the State Highway Department, not only cooperative, but highly competent in its decisions, plans, and constructions."[338] The *News and Courier* published a flurry of editorials and letters to the editor criticizing the Highway Department. The *Florence Morning News* contained editorials encouraging a quick reconciliation and prompt groundbreaking. The Columbia Record supported the Highway Department's decision and other small-circulation newspapers from around the state weighed in.

In early June, the abeyance White sought manifested as a resolution in the South Carolina House of Representatives. It called for a 60-day delay so the Lowcountry interests could formally present their case before the Highway Commissioners. When the House voted 43-16 to deny the resolution, Representative Hall Yarborough of Orangeburg motioned to send the resolution back to committee, effectively killing it. George E. Campsen then took the floor and argued the Charleston lobby was never heard before the full Highway Commission and that insufficient time had been permitted for the Little Report to produce a counter report.[339] Even though Charleston's efforts to stall the

[337] Ibid., 47. The main difference in the estimates, according to the Highway Department Report, was that the Little Report failed to acknowledge that building along the easterly route would require replacing the soil with a more stable material.

[338] Florence, South Carolina City Council, 27 May 1963 Minutes, City Hall, Florence, South Carolina.

[339] *News and Courier*, 7 June 1963.

official decision failed, the Highway Department relented to and allowed for one—final, it emphasized—appeals hearing.

Upon learning of the appeals hearing, the *Florence Morning News* chastised Charleston for failing to accept its defeat: "There is added evidence here that the commission has and continues to listen patiently and with long-suffering to a constant repetition of arguments on which that body has already formed competent judgment."[340] No one supporting the Highway Department was invited to the July 17 hearing, but those whose interest lay with the original route refused to remain silent any longer. At a late June meeting in Manning, at least 100 people convened to strategize. Some wanted to formally "condemn" Charleston, but ultimately, those in attendance passed a more positive resolution to be delivered to the Highway Commissioners. The convention chose a group headed by Mayor McLeod of Florence to appear before the Highway Commissioners. This group planned to arrive at the appeals hearing at two o'clock, the same time Charleston was scheduled to be heard, and it anticipated an audience with the Highway Commissioners after Charleston had pled its case.[341]

The July 17 meeting, held in Dillon, drew over 150 people, including twenty members of the South Carolina General Assembly, a dozen or so reporters, and over 100 concerned citizens.[342] Charleston spokesman E.K. Pritchard first praised Pearman and his

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[340] *Florence Morning News* , 22 June 1963.

[341] *Manning Times*, 4 July 1963.

[342] In the days immediately preceding the hearing, Representative Rembert Dennis of Berkeley County proposed a comprise route that "would make the same northerly connection as [the original route] but would move south between the other two." It effectively would have split the difference between the original route and the alternative route. At the hearing, Charleston requested the route be considered, but it was ultimately thrown out by the Highway Commissioners. See: *News and Courier*, 18 July 1963 and *Florence Morning News*, 18 July 1963.

staff and then criticized them for arriving at a decision that, by his account, delivered suboptimal benefit to the state. In a presentation that lasted an hour, Pritchard accused the Highway Department of using misleading figures, of lying to various businessmen to garner their support for the original route, and of giving the port in Savannah an enormous advantage over the Port of Charleston. In a heated retort, Joe Rogers of Clarendon County said Pritchard had pinned a badge on Pearman "and then ripped it off and put him on trial." David McLeod continued the criticism of Charleston: "In all of this mileage and the expenditure of such a vast sum of money, the ability of the Highway Department has never been questioned…It is our sincere belief that the highway department has more than bent over backwards to insure every consideration to Charleston's request."[343] In what was the Board of Highway Commissioners first closed-door meeting in well over a decade, it took the commissioners one hour and forty minutes to decide on the original route in an untallied—but not unanimous—vote.[344] In what was meant to serve as a stamp of finalization, the Commissioners concurrently appropriated $300,000 to begin land acquisition in Dillon County.

The day after the hearing, criticism arose that Pearman had been responding to "pressure" throughout the process. Given the Highway Department's unquestioned authority in all prior road routing decisions, some believed Pearman's job was in jeopardy over the I-95 controversy.[345] A spokesman for the Highway Department quickly

[343] *Florence Morning News*, 18 July 1963.

[344] Several newspapers reported that the vote was not tallied; the *News and Herald* reported the vote was nine for, five against, and one abstained; and Thornhill, in an interview with the author, revealed that he had been told the vote was very close. Thomas Thornhill. Interview with author. 29 October 2009, North Charleston, South Carolina.

[345] Thornhill interview.

deflected the criticism, and the story faded as the media began focusing on the decision's fallout. Pritchard complained the Commission had "made a terrible mistake" while the *News and Courier* expressed "thanks on behalf of the people of a region that asked for and in our judgment deserved a better deal."[346] Thornhill, the Chamber President, initially looked to the bright side, saying the Charleston effort was "one of the finest united community efforts witnessed in many years"[347] but later acquired a more jaded tone, saying, "We lost in…what turned out to be a strictly political battle."[348] Meanwhile, the President of the Dillon County Motel Association and Allen Schafer, proprietor of the South of the Border roadside attraction and tourist service center, anticipated a prosperous future, as the coming stream of travelers represented millions of future dollars in income.[349]

PROMISE AND PROXIMITY

Much of the existing literature on Interstates overlooks episodes like the South Carolina I-95 routing controversy, choosing instead to focus on the resistance Interstates faced in cities across the country. Consequently, the myriad reasons some communities desired the roads are overlooked and what emerges instead is a picture of a nation standing in opposition to Interstate Highways. Rather than resist I-95, however, those in South Carolina who expressed their opinion about the road overwhelmingly supported the project and wanted it built as close to their communities as possible. Or is this just

[346] *News and Courier*, 19 July 1963 and 20 July 1963.

[347] *News and Courier*, 20 July 1963.

[348] Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce, *1963 Chamber of Commerce Annual Report*. Greater Charleston Chamber of Commerce, North Charleston, South Carolina.

[349] *Florence Morning News*, 19 July 1963.

what the historical record suggests? One must question whether Charleston would have supported the road if it had been rerouted all the way to the coast, bisecting the historic city. Or whether Florence would have defended its claim to the road if state highway officials planned to route I-95 through the downtown. Florence and Charleston were ultimately fighting to have I-95 constructed within their zone of economic influence, not within their city limits. The communities risked little by having I-95 pass near—but not in—the city. They profited the economic development, increased labor mobility, and other benefits without experiencing many of the downsides to the presence of Interstate Highways. The noise, pollution, and unsightliness was contained outside of the city. The experience of the rest of the country strongly suggests South Carolina benefited from an abundance of undeveloped and low-value land.

The economic status of Charleston and Florence led the communities to support I-95 routing in their favor, and both communities had abundant underdeveloped land outside of the city limits on which to build the highway. One might question whether these positives would be enough to overcome the fact I-95 represented a significant intrusion of the federal government and outsiders into Southern communities during a period when interregional tensions were high. No government program of the twentieth century was bigger and arguably none did more to change the fabric of Southern society more than the United States Interstate Highway Program of the 1950s and beyond. Perhaps more than any other icon of the late 1950s and 1960s, the Interstates represented progress, a link between the regions of the United States, and big government.[350] Modern

[350] For a discussion of the role interstate highways played in the American imagination, see Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier.*

roads built to handle the vehicles of the day and the future; to make the United States more navigable, and thus, to pull disparate regions into a closer economic and social sphere; and mandated and largely financed by Washington, the Interstate Highways were progressive in myriad ways. And, despite this, South Carolina wanted I-95 enough to fight over who would be more impacted by the project.[351] This suggests that Charlestonians and Florentines either perceived the benefit of I-95 to outweigh the threat the highway presented to the communities' ways of life or the communities believed they could welcome I-95 without feeling the full impact of increased federal involvement in their lives. In *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt*, Bruce Schulman traces the relationship between federal economic intervention in the South and the region's economic development over the course of the twentieth century. Schulman finds that Southerners were able to engage Washington in matters of economic development in a way that allowed them to take what they wanted (money for economic growth and development) while denying the government its objectives (social change). By taking federal money for defense institutions, airports, highways, and myriad other programs, Southern politicians—Neo-Whigs, as Schulman calls them—achieved their objective of economic development, but were able to successfully evade the federal stipulations that accompanied them. In so doing, they successfully navigated the fine line between

[351] Howard Lawrence Preston has made a similar argument about Southern support for the Good Roads Movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He argues the Good Roads Movement was among the least controversial Progressive Era reforms in the South, primarily because Southerners defined Progressivism in terms of economic development rather than societal reform. The Good Roads Movement may not have changed the fabric of the South, Preston says, "But this brand of southern progressivism—highway progressivism—did begin a process of change that ultimately challenged the region's provinciality and eventually led to a more modern South whose residents conformed to national as well as regional cultural standards." Howard Lawrence Preston, *Dirt Roads to Dixie:* 8.

accepting outside interference and maintaining Southern distinctiveness.[352] It was only for the reward of economic prosperity that Southern elites would sacrifice their regional independence.[353] With I-95, however, South Carolinians did not risk forced social change because I-95 existed in rural areas. Charleston and Florence could reap the economic reward without any risk upsetting their way of life.

In 1958's "The Search for Southern Identity," C. Vann Woodward spoke of "traditionalists," those who despised the symbols of progress that threatened their way of life. "The traditionalist," he said, "who has watched the Bulldozer Revolution plow under cherished old values of individualism, localism, family, clan, and rural folk culture has felt helpless and frustrated against the mighty and imponderable agents of change."[354] To look at the saga of I-95 planning in South Carolina, however, these traditionalists are nowhere to be found. Instead, one sees economically-minded individuals battling for proximity to I-95.

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[352] Other works on Southern interaction with the federal government include Dewey W. Grantham *The South in Modern America.*

[353] A host of literature on postwar America argues the desire for economic development dominated the politics of the time, making the Southern compromises more understandable. For example, Robert Collins' *More* illustrates the pervasiveness of economic growth as a primary political objective beginning in the 1940s. Politicians' fixation on economic growth was such that it influenced everything from political discourse to Cold War ideology. Further, George Garvey and Gerald Garvey's *Economic Law and Economic Growth* argues that that antitrust law and utility regulation were used to ensure economic development.

[354] C. Vann. Woodward, "The Search for Southern Identity," in *The Burden of Southern History*. 3rd ed. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993, 10.

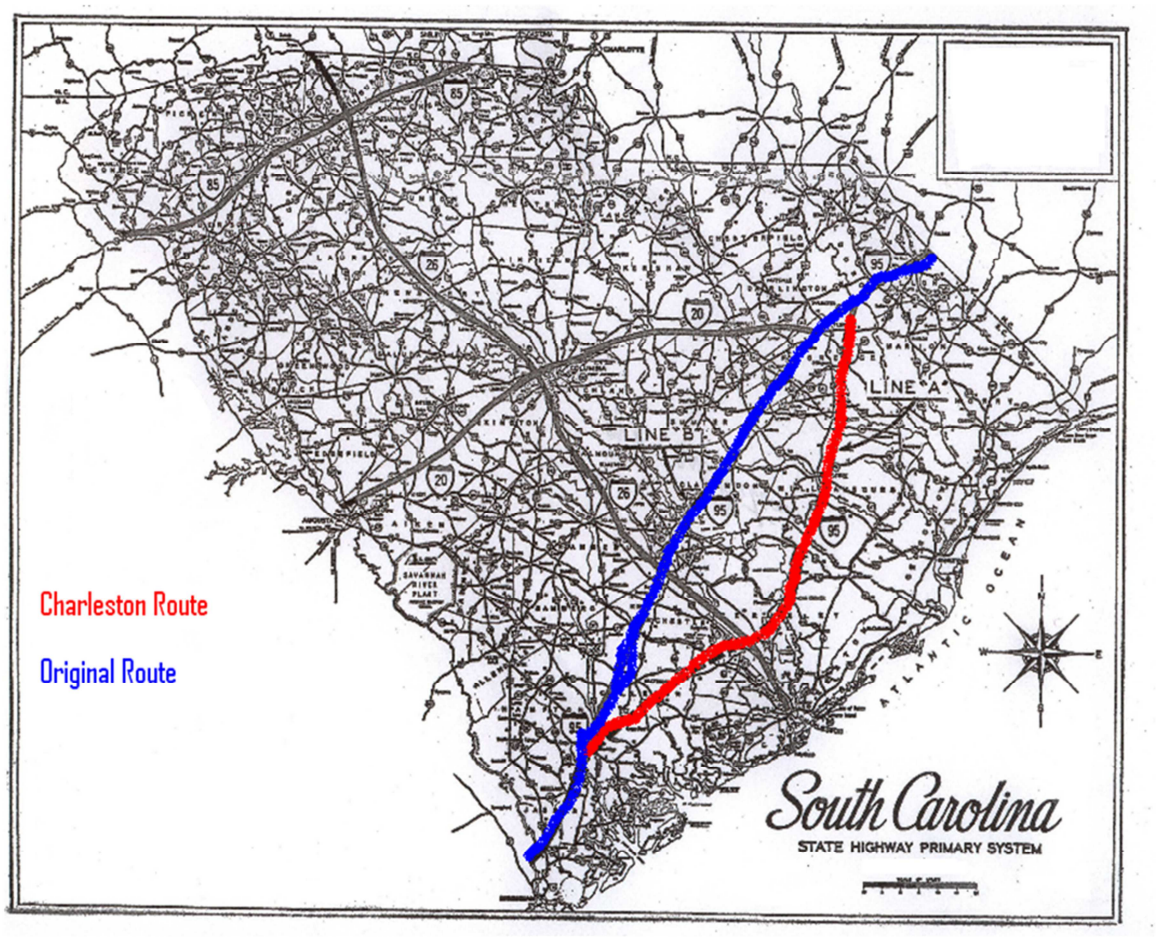

Figure 5.1: Route Options in South Carolina[355]

[355] South Carolina State Highway Department, "Re-Evaluation of the Location for Interstate Route 95 in South Carolina"

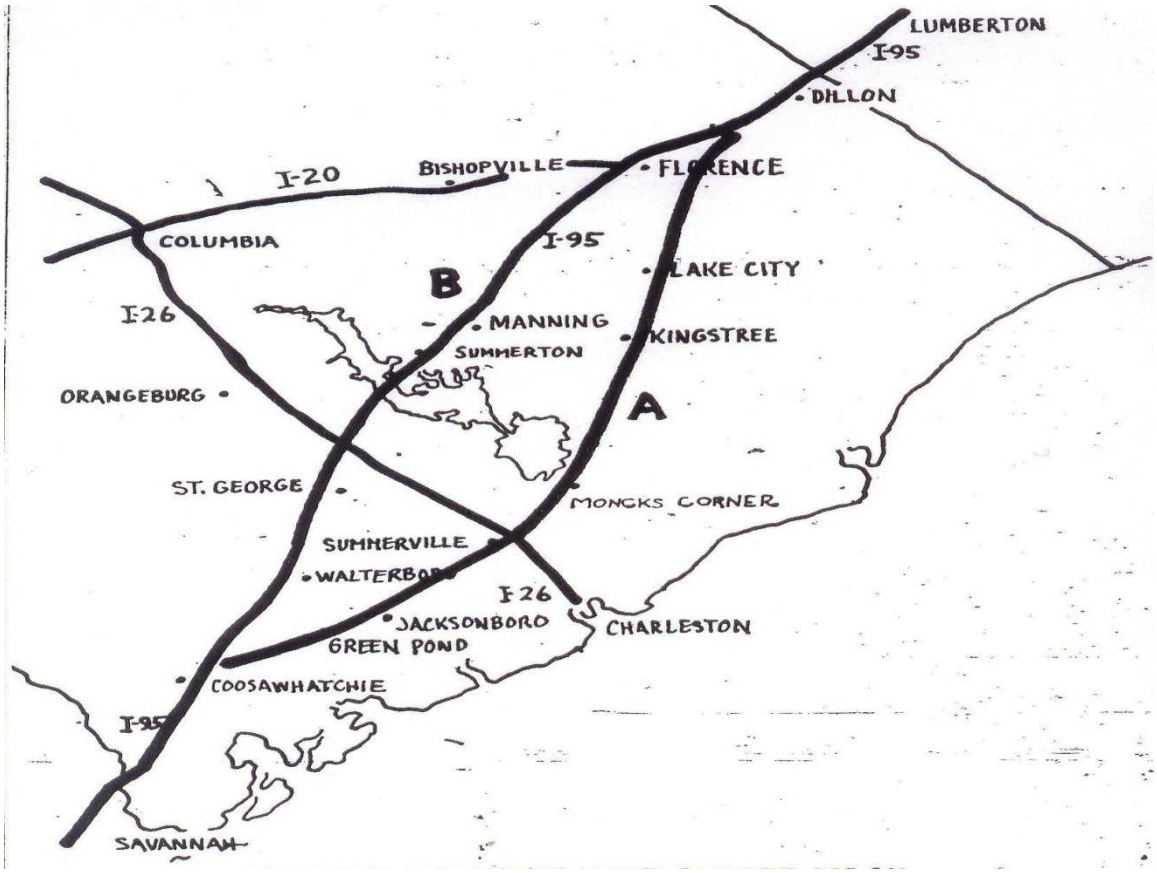

Figure 5.2: Detailed South Carolina Routes[356]

[356] *News and Courier*, 20 May 1963.

CHAPTER 6

THE INTERSECTION OF I-95 AND BLACK WALL STREET

As dusk settles in on a hot July evening, the street comes alive. Music emanates from a large dancehall, a simple melody played against the rhythm of a symbol. The latest model cars—Nash 400's and Ford Model T's—rumble by as women in flashy dresses walk arm-in-arm with their suitors. The music suddenly syncopates, the trumpet sailing above the rest of the band. The dancehall doors swing open, and the music more fully fills the street. At first the automobile sounds clash with the music and then—somehow—the music adopts the noises, making idling engines just one more member of the band. The open door reveals a smoke filled room. Scores of well-dressed African-American men and women watch the band play.

Surprisingly, this is a not a scene set in Harlem amidst its storied Renaissance of the 1920s. Rather, it is a contemporary snapshot of a distant and unexpected place—Richmond, Virginia's Jackson Ward. Indeed, a walk through the 500 block of Richmond's 2nd Street—called the "Deuce"—and the surrounding neighborhood in the 1920s and 1930s might have left the wanderer wondering if he or she had somehow ventured into New York's most famous neighborhood. During the day, the streets of Jackson Ward were abuzz with shoppers popping in and out of quaint stores, men catching up with the newspaper at coffee shops, and neighbors chatting on the sidewalk. The community sounded alive. Cash tills opened and closed with regularity, providing a rhythm to the relatively prosperous life of the citizens. New automobiles

occasionally clamored by as church bells marked the passing of hours. At night, different music filled the streets. Jazz, blues, and gospel spilled from the Hippodrome Theodore and neighboring clubs. Some of the giants of the age—Lena Horne, Billy Holliday, Cab Calloway, Richmond's own Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, and later, Nat King Cole could be spotted signing autographs between sets. For those seeking a quieter evening, the Deuce offered a movie theater and restaurants as well.

Jackson Ward was a neighborhood as rich in civic organizations and educational establishments as entertainment venues. It was home to Armstrong High School, the only black high school in Richmond for many years, as well as Virginia Union University. The community also provided a number of churches to meet the religious needs of the denizens. The True Reformers, a beneficial society organized in the late nineteenth century, left many marks on the neighborhood. The group organized the True Reformers Bank in 1889, making it the first black-organized bank chartered in the United States. The True Reformers also established a mercantile and industrial association, a weekly newspaper, a hotel, a home for the elderly, a building and loan association, and real estate agency. When the True Reformers collapsed at the turn of the twentieth century, another benevolent organization, the Southern Aid Society, stepped in to keep the True Reformers' efforts alive well into the twentieth century. The Order of St. Luke added a second bank, a weekly magazine, and additional retail and commercial enterprises to the community.[357] By 1930, five black-owned banks operated in in

[357] Jackson Ward resident Maggie Walker became the first woman president of a United States Bank in 1899, when she became president of the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank.

Richmond.[358] The community was home to several barbershops, haberdasheries, beauty parlors, and grocery stores. The relatively affluent citizens of Jackson Ward gave rise to a thriving black middle class in the early twentieth century, with dozens of dentists, lawyers, doctors, and other professionals taking up residence in the community.

The section of Richmond that became Jackson Ward had long been the city's "black" neighborhood. In the late eighteenth century, the community gained a reputation as the settling place for freed slaves and blacks living as the property of other blacks, often to skirt Virginia's laws requiring freed blacks to leave the state. The end of the civil war saw many of Richmond's newly freed blacks move to the community. After Reconstruction, Jackson Ward developed into a successful and prosperous community precisely because African-Americans were limited or outright excluded from many aspects of white Richmond. Jim Crow loomed over black Richmonders, restricting where they could live, what could they do for work, how they conducted themselves, and by extension, how they spent their time.[359] One history of Jackson Ward posits two reasons Richmond's black citizens made Jackson Ward successful: either "the separatist philosophy of the day" demanded that "black entrepreneurs and profession people

[358] "Historic Jackson Ward: The Birthplace of Black Capitalism," brochure, found in folder "Vertical File-Neighborhoods, Jackson Ward" at the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA. Hereafter cited as VHS.

[359] For more information on the history of Afircan-Americans in Jackson Ward, see: Marie Tyler-McGraw, *At the Falls: Richmond, Virginia and its People* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 170-201 and Steven J. Hoffman, *Race, Class, and Power in the Building of Richmond, 1870-1920* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland &Company, 2004), 118-124 & 160-175.

remained active" or Richmond's African-Americans built a prosperous community out of spite.[360]

As the rest of Richmond's society became increasingly hostile to African-Americans in the early twentieth century, Jackson Ward stood as the one community where black men and women could feel relatively safe and build lives for themselves. By 1920, 93 percent of the city's black residents lived in Jackson Ward.[361] The concentration of individuals facing similar oppression gave birth to the aforementioned cultural and economic vitality of the community. In this way, Richmond's black community built a society that led many observers to compare to New York's Harlem, which was in the midst of its Renaissance at the same time Jackson Ward emerged as a symbol of black success in the land of Jim Crow. To many, Jackson Ward was "the Harlem of the South." Alternatively, the neighborhood was called "the birthplace of black capitalism." Despite Jackson Ward's long standing as Richmond's black neighborhood and its reputation as a key cultural and economic hub of America's black community by the 1930s, Jackson Ward was never a fully secluded community, much like Harlem experienced its cultural explosion in front of black and white audiences. When it was founded in the late eighteenth century, freed blacks and newly arrived immigrants shared the community.

[360] Richmond Department of Planning and Community Development, "The Jackson Ward Historic District" (Richmond, Virginia, 1973?), found in folder "Jackson Ward Historic District" VHS, 14.

[361] "Historic Jackson Ward: The Birthplace of Black Capitalism."

Even as time passed and the black residents became increasingly homogenized, whites frequented the community's jazz clubs and other establishments.[362]

To drive through Jackson Ward today, however, one would not find the obvious vestiges of a once great economic and culture center. Today's Jackson Ward is half of its pre-World War II size, and, despite considerable effort and resources on the part of the people and government of Richmond to revitalize the community since the 1980s, Jackson Ward still shows signs of economic distress and little evidence of cultural output. Instead of housing a vibrant and prosperous community, Jackson Ward now feels like a community that is *supposed* to be up-and-coming. A proliferation of government offices and public housing stands next to restored Victorian homes, but the symbols of success feel alien, as though they were implanted in the neighborhood by outside forces (because they were). While Jackson Ward does not feel organically successful today, it is doing significantly better than thirty years ago, when the neighborhood was home to some of the poorest of Richmond's residents. The jazz clubs were boarded up, the beneficial societies disbanded, along with their many philanthropic and civic pursuits. The Jackson Ward of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s had little in common with the same community mere decades earlier. The renewal efforts have made the community better, but walking down the Deuce today, one would find it very difficult to believe the neighborhood once enticed the likes of Lena Horne. If one walks to far north, he or she encounters an

[362] Scholars have uncovered many incidents of the oppressing class partaking in the culture produced by communities they otherwise avoided or subjugated. For example, George Chauncey has detailed straight white men frequently gay clubs in New York during the early twentieth century and many scholars have accounted for whites attending Harlem's jazz clubs during the Harlem Renaissance. See: George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York, Basic Books, 1994); George Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* (New York: Belknap Press, 1996).

artificial barrier in the community, one that was not present prior to World War II and brazenly carves a path through what had been homes and businesses. To many, I-95 stands as a living—and heavily used—symbol of the fact Jackson Ward is not the same community it once was. Everything to the north of I-95 was once Jackson Ward; now it is poor, full of public housing projects and little else. It has even taken a new name, Gilpin, which only serves to accentuate how the highway divided the community into completely separate entities. In 1977, one man described the "face" Richmond presented to visitors who entered the city by exiting I-95 in Jackson Ward as "pimpled and the smile disfigured by the absence of a few teeth."[363]

There is no doubt I-95 profoundly and irreparably transformed Jackson Ward. Physically, the highway cut the community in two and consumed entire city blocks in the process. Residents of Jackson Ward, like residents of other urban communities in which I-95 appeared, were displaced, and some institutions, such as churches, did not survive the construction. By time construction of I-95 was complete, the neighborhood looked and felt far different than it had in the 1920s and 1930s. The cultural scene turned stagnant, the people noticeably less affluent.

The appearance of I-95 at approximately the same time Jackson Ward began showed significant signs of deterioration has led many to conclude the superhighway caused the fall of Jackson Ward.[364] In its official account of the history of the neighborhood, the city of Richmond first attributes its post-World War II problems to I-

[363] Raymond P. Rhinehart, "Dream on, Richmond," *Richmond* 2 no. 9 (January 1976), 49.

[364] None of the significant historical accounts of the Interstate System assess the impact I-95 had on Jackson Ward. In fact, no major historical account of the System even mentions that I-95 bisected this neighborhood.

95, saying "The northern part of the neighborhood was cut off, with much physical destruction, by the Turnpike developed in the 1950s."[365] Many of the brochures aimed at bringing tourists to Jackson Ward explain the neighborhood's hard times by pointing directly to I-95.[366] The residents of Jackson Ward remember I-95 as the harbinger of decay for their community. Outside consultants working with the city of Richmond in 1987 noted, "We understand there is a history of change that has created a climate of skepticism and distrust within the community."[367] In reality, however, the construction of I-95 was only one of the post-war changes in Jackson Ward that coincided with the community's decline, and Jackson Ward was rapidly decaying prior to the arrival of I-95. In other words, the popular account of the role of I-95 in Jackson Ward is incorrect. A few accounts of the neighborhood's history mention other forces that contributed to Jackson Ward's fall, but I-95 receives first mention and most of the blame more often than not. Here, there are two stories to tell. First is the account of how I-95 was forced upon the residents of Jackson Ward, without consent and without input from the community. Second is the way in which the stories of I-95's arrival and Jackson Ward's decline have become intertwined into an inaccurate historical rendering.

The myth that I-95 destroyed a thriving Jackson Ward is rooted in the fact that state highway departments *did* use Interstates—including I-95—to pursue racist policies

[365] Richmond Department of Planning and Community Development, 22. I-95 in Richmond is alternatively called the Richmond- Petersburg Turnpike.

[366] See "Bank, Boutiques and 'The Deuce'" and "Experience Historic Jackson Ward" in "Jackson Ward" folder of Vertical File-Neighborhoods, VHS.

[367] Thomas & Means Associates, "Richmond Renaissance Jackson Ward Development Strategy: A Proposal from Thomas & Means Associates" (1987), Clarence L. Townes, Jr. Papers Box 19, James Branch Cabell Library, Virginia Commonwealth University (Richmond, VA).

throughout the second half of the twentieth century. In some urban areas, new highways destroyed enough black homes to swing congressional districts; in other areas, the roads purposefully served as barriers physically separating communities. Most often, highway planners constructed through black neighborhoods because they presented little, if any, opposition.[368] Building through black communities allowed planners to actualize the holy grail of road construction; they achieved the most cost-effective route and enjoyed minimal resistance. The fact that they also allowed some public officials to realize a vision of urban space that was racially segregated made them too good an opportunity to pass.[369] As Tom Lewis noted, engineers "took their cues from Robert Moses, who each year leveled the homes of tens of thousands of blacks to make way for ever more miles of expressways around and through New York." According to Lewis, African-American property was the easiest to destroy because "black citizens did not share in a city's power structure, and as a consequence lacked a sense of civic cohesiveness."[370] While Lewis may understate the political influence of black Americans—even if it was *de facto* influence in many parts of the country—there is no denying black Americans experienced much more difficulty than whites when trying to protect their homes from the bulldozers

[368] See: Arnold R. Hirsch and Raymond A. Mohl, *Urban Policy in Twentieth Century America;* Joe T. Darden and Richard W. Thomas, *Detroit: Race Riots, Racial Conflicts, and Efforts to Bridge the Racial Divide* (Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013); Charles E. Connerly, *The Most Segregated City in America: City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005),

[369] Eric Avila's excellent *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight,* for example, makes a convincing case that city planners, acting on the behalf of private interests, pursued initiatives in the mid-twentieth century that purposefully destroyed multicultural communities in order to create a more racially segregated Los Angeles. Among the institutions studied is the Los Angeles Freeway. Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 206-223.

[370] Lewis, 189.

and wrecking balls. Many of Robert Moses' critics claimed he cared more about roads than people; history has overlooked the fact that many others were guilty of this as well. The Urban Land Institute, a national organization of professional real estate developers, may have been even more divorced from the human toll of highway building than Moses. One member, James W. Rouse, claimed, "Major expressways *must* be ripped through the central core" as a means of clearing "our nation's worst slums."[371]

The fact that black communities proved easy targets for engineers seeking the most economical route through urban area—and the fact that some engineers pursued the objective with almost gleeful malice—has led many scholars to take for granted the complexity of the urban black experience when confronted with Interstates. African Americans—and in some instances, other minorities—were so victimized by the highway building process that scholars have slipped into concluding, without scrutiny, that the white arguments in favor of a route that traversed black segments of the community were completely without merit. The foremost expert on the Interstate's relationship to the American city, Raymond Mohl, enumerates instances of black homes falling before the Interstates' momentum in urban areas. He notes that African-Americans homes were razed in Baltimore, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, St. Paul, Miami, New York City, Kansas City, Nashville, and other locales over the course of the 1950s and 1960s. The implicit message is that in every one of these cases, black property was targeted over white property.[372] In many, if not all, of these cases, this was true. State and community officials frequently misled, deceived, or outright lied to see black homes fall instead of

[371] Quoted in Mohl, "Race and Space in the Modern City," 109. Emphasis mine.

[372] Raymond A. Mohl, "Interstates and the Cities", 196-197.

those of whites at an alarming rate. Of the impact Interstate Highway construction had on America's cities, one transportation scholar noted the roads "subjected cities…to major surgery on a scale without precedent in American history."[373]

The metaphor of surgery is apt; the roads sliced open cities and removed entire portions, leaving behind permanent scars. The plight of displaced people was significant; entire lives were thrown into chaos. In many cases, individuals who had spent their whole lives in one home had to start over after the highway came through. This meant finding a new place to live and establishing ties with new neighbors. For children, it meant forging an identity at a new school. In some communities, churches and other community establishments also fell to the highway. In these areas, the sense of loss was even greater. One could make the case that eminent domain, the policy under which the government seized land for highway construction, was unconstitutional as well as unethical.[374] Nonetheless, if one accepts that the Interstate System needed to traverse urban areas in order to accomplish its objective of tying together American's metropolitan areas, one also must accept that some people living in cities and businesses operating beside them would need to be displaced. In some cases, African-Americans occupied the land that made the most sense for claim via eminent domain.

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[373] Alan Altshuler and David Luberoff, *Mega-Projects: The Changing Politics of Urban Public Investment* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute Press, 2003), 83.

[374] Over the course of the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s, many lawsuits were filed as highway officials planned to seize property or the program. Those protecting their property employed many arguments against the constitutionality of the practice, but rarely succeeded. In *Berman v. Parker* (1954), the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of the District of Columbia when owners of non-blighted property argued they should not have to sell their land because they had the misfortunate of being adjacent to property the District had targeted for blight removal.

Regardless, there is no denying African-Americans were displaced in disproportionate numbers. While one could make the case that this made logical sense since the land they occupied could be acquired most economically, it overlooks the human toll of highway construction. Those who were most economically disadvantaged and least capable of adjusting to major life changes had to do so in the highest numbers. While the government's balance sheet may indicate officials made the right decision, an ethical evaluation would certainly be less favorable.

Jackson Ward makes for a particularly interesting case study because both the popular memory of I-95's introduction to the city and the historical accounts of the interaction are misaligned with reality. The aforementioned history of Jackson Ward published by the city of Richmond noted the Turnpike "cut off" and physically destroyed the northern section of Jackson Ward.[375] In his comparative study of black urban communities at mid-century, Christopher Silver noted that, as a result of I-95, "the physical integrity of Jackson Ward was destroyed, and with it went the social and economic core of Richmond's black community."[376] One study of Richmond's architectural heritage noted that many "buildings have been lost in the erosion of the Jackson Ward neighborhood by…the construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike [I-95]."[377]An oral history project conducted by students at Virginia Commonwealth University saw many long-time residents of Jackson Ward remember the community of

[375] Richmond Department of Planning and Community Development, 20.

[376] Christopher Silver, *The Separate City: Black Communities in the Urban South, 1940-1968* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 30.

[377] Selden Richardson and Maurice Duke, *Built by Blacks: African American Architecture and Neighborhoods in Richmond* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2008), 80.

the 1950s fondly. Many of these individuals spoke at length about a period of Jackson Ward's history they would have experienced only as children, if at all. They spoke of the interracial mingling that occurred in the neighborhood's jazz clubs; they looked back even further to the roots of the community as a place where free blacks forged prosperous lives during Reconstruction and early Jim Crow; they remembered Jackson Ward as being a thriving community immediately before I-95 arrived. One woman distinctly remembered that I-95 ruined a prosperous community still had the cultural and economic strength often attributed to it during the jazz age, noting "It was the people that were expendable."[378]

The Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike did destroy several blocks through the heart of Jackson Ward. Many people were dislocated. I-95 was, without any doubt, a destructive force. However, it is important to note that the Jackson Ward I-95 bisected in 1958 was not the same Jackson Ward frequented by Billy Holiday in the 1930s. By the 1950s, Jackson Ward was, by almost any measurable characteristic, a poor and struggling community. Those inclined to do so could argue the neighborhood constituted a slum. Nobody should downplay the impact I-95 had on human lives and cultural heritage when scores of buildings were torn down in its path, but the myriad accounts of I-95 demolishing an economically strong, culturally thriving community are, at best, misinformed, and, at worst, outright wrong.

It makes sense that longtime residents would conflate the good times with the era in which they saw their community torn asunder. This trick of historical memory allows

[378] "Jackson Ward," *Attainable Grace and the American Dream: Five Richmond Neighborhoods* (1989), Cassette, Tape 3, Virginia Commonwealth University (Richmond, VA).

the individual to erase from his or her memory a period in which the city was anything less than impressive and allows for the construction of a single, tangible culprit. Blaming Jackson Ward's struggles on I-95 rather than the complicated forces that actually precipitated its physical destruction is simpler, and ultimately, more gratifying. Those with more distant connections to Jackson Ward's golden age, such as individuals who came of age in the 1940s and 1950s but had vague memories of the prewar, flourishing era, may have latched on to the "I-95 as destroyer" tale as a means of coping with life in a community that, by all accounts, had once been great. More troubling than the locals who misunderstand or misinterpret the neighborhood's history are the historians who presume the story that played out in New York and Miami also manifested in Richmond. In these two cities, white officials used Interstate Highways for the express aim of accomplishing racially motivated objectives, and there is a historical record to prove it. Scholars have been too quick to associate temporal correlation with causality when it comes to Jackson Ward. The state of Virginia did build I-95 around the same time Jackson Ward fell to ruin, and the completion of I-95 certainly left a wake of destroyed buildings and a bifurcated community; however, Jackson Ward had ceased being a beacon of black prosperity before I-95 appeared.[379] Whether the promulgation of this

[379] Over the past several years, I have spoken to scores of fellow historians, professional and amateur alike, about the topic of this dissertation. Many of these individuals knew I-95 bisected Jackson Ward. On more than one occasion, they brought up the community before I mentioned I intended on studying it as part of this project. To be fair, I learned there was a story to tell in Jackson Ward while speaking to a historian at the 2012 Southern Historical Association in Charlotte, North Carolina. The individual with whom I spoke encouraged me to consider this episode for further investigation since, as he explained, "I-95 destroyed one of the most affluent and culturally thriving black communities in America." Others had a similar understanding of the events. I entered the Richmond research fully expecting to find a nefarious plot—much like what transpired in New York and Miami—to accomplish political goals with the construction of I-95 in Richmond.

errant history of what transpired in Richmond is the result of lazy scholarship or an innocent, albeit mistaken, relaying of inaccurate information, is unclear.

There is no denying that the decision to route I-95 through Jackson Ward forged an intersection of politics and race. Not only had Jackson Ward historically been Richmond's black neighborhood, as previously discussed, but it had seen a surge in its black population during World War II. "Black" became increasingly synonymous with *urban*" during the conflict, Eric Avila has noted.[380] The arsenal of democracy's insatiable demand for labor drew many African-Americans out of the rural South and toward cities. While most African-Americans migrated to cities in the northeast, midwest, and west coast, southern cities also attracted black men and women seeking better jobs. As one of the most industrialized cities south of the Mason-Dixon Line in the 1940s, Richmond's black population grew significantly during the war years, from a population of approximately 55,000 in 1930 to over 70,000 by 1950.[381]

When the war came to an end, Richmond was caught up in many of the same forces that altered cities across the United States. First, Jackson Ward experienced an incredible population shift out of the city center and toward the suburbs. This movement experienced across the nation, frequently called white flight, was permitted by the growth of the personal automobile, which allowed white urbanites to capitalize on more available space, less expensive housing, newer amenities, and lower taxes in the suburbs. Some whites certainly used the opportunity to move away from the diversity of the city center and toward homogenous enclaves just outside the city's limits. Historians have varied in

[380] Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight,* 5. Emphasis his.

[381] Silver, 28.

their treatment of white flight and the whites who flew, from Kenneth Jackson's and Thomas Sugrue's measured account of the phenomenon to Kevin Kruse's more unsympathetic treatment.[382] Regardless of how one understands the motivations for white flight, there is no denying the deleterious effect it had on those left in the cities.

It is also important to note that white flight did not happen spontaneously; instead, a confluence of policies, historical developments, and social trends resulted in the residential shift. Thomas Sugrue has argued that "the shape of the postwar city…is the result of political and economic decisions, of choices made and not made by various institutions, groups, and individuals." He is careful to point out that while any number of changes—technological shifts, increased or decreased demand for manufactured goods, changing tastes, and so forth—have the potential to alter the landscape of cities, it is the decisions people, businesses, governments, and other organizations make relative to these changes that alter the city's reality. The aggregation of all the decisions made produces the contour of a city's development; as Sugrue succinctly explains, "The relationship between structure and agency is the dialectical and history is the synthesis."[383] In the case of Richmond, a number of decisions led to Jackson Ward's decline. Unlike many other southern cities, Richmond did not pursue public housing projects on a significant scale

[382] Jackson and Sugrue do not deny the pernicious effect of white flight but also understand the phenomenon as driven by natural and good reasons to relocate one's family. Kruse, on the other hand, sees white flight as a political revolution, with suburbanization both giving rising to and receiving fuel from the modern conservative movement. Interestingly, Jackson and Sugrue do not see their studies as histories of white flight; instead, they purport to study the transformation of the American city. Sugrue, on the other hand, clearly identifies white flight as his subject of inquiry. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier:* Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[383] Sugrue, 11.

until the 1960s, which led to overcrowding in Jackson Ward as the black population grew before and during the war years. Then, when the Public Works Administration considered Richmond for federal public housing initiatives in 1935, black homeowners in Jackson Ward resisted until the government decided to invest its resources elsewhere.[384] Consequently, Richmond did not have enough housing for its growing black population, and the realities of Jim Crow made migration to other Richmond neighborhoods impossible. Overcrowded and aging, the historic buildings of Jackson Ward began to deteriorate. When the war ended, much of the employment in Richmond dried up, and there were not enough jobs to sustain the now much larger black population. With little labor and residential mobility, Jackson Ward, which had once been a relatively strong black community on a national scale became "the symbol of manifold social and economic problems confronting impoverished blacks."[385]

Richmond's economic problems were exacerbated by the outmigration of whites, as the changing residential patterns deprived Richmond of the tax dollars needed to fight the growing poverty in its black communities. At a time when racial segregation was making worse, if not causing, Richmond's economic and social problems, a number of federal policies hardened the border between black and white Richmond. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation, Federal Housing Administration, and the Veterans' Administration all adopted "red lining" when evaluating potential loans. Under this practice, neighborhoods that were mostly non-white were deemed to have low property value, and the organization would not back loans for individuals looking to purchase

[384] Silver, 26-29.

[385] Ibid., 46.

there. This accomplished two things: first, gentrification was held at bay. Wealthier individuals could not purchase homes in cities even if they wanted to, thus solidifying the wealthy/suburban, poor/urban dichotomy. Second, the red line mindset led the organizations to encourage practices that kept blacks out of white neighborhoods for fear property values would decrease.[386]

The Interstate System itself was arguably the federal initiative with the most deleterious impact on city centers. Tom Lewis has stated, "Without the new mobility of the automobile and the highway, the suburban housing boom never would have spread so wide."[387] Highways—especially Interstate Highways—allowed for more affluent individuals to live farther outside the city than ever before, as commuting was easier. Without access to personal automobiles, many African-Americans had no choice but to stay closer to their jobs within the city limits. When companies began seizing upon lower taxes and other incentives to move operations into the suburbs, the urban black community found itself stranded in an environment with few jobs. The cities found themselves unable to provide services due to a dwindling tax base.

If anything, Richmond may have been more negatively impacted by white flight than other cities precisely because the black community had been so successful during the height of Jim Crow. Since Jackson Ward has achieved relative prosperity during the height of segregation, the community had further to fall than other black neighborhoods across the country. White flight increased in intensity after the fall of segregation. As blacks slowly found themselves able to shop in once-white stores, entertain themselves in

[386] See Kruse, 60-61.

[387] Lewis, 80.

once-white movie theaters, and eat in once-white cafes, many of the businesses that once catered to the black-only cliental began to fold. Even the Hippodrome and Globe slowly faded.

The irony of Jackson Ward's decline does not stop there. Jackson Ward's success may have also contributed to its decline. Richmond's Department of Planning posited this theory in its account of Jackson Ward's history, stating, "Segregation in a sense made Jackson Ward, and the leadership nurtured in the Ward helped to unmake segregation."[388] Indeed, many of Jackson Ward's residents played critical role in dismantling Jim Crow in the 1940s and early 1950s. As a hub of black intellectualism in the state of Virginia and as home to most of Richmond's African-American attorneys, most of the seminal litigation aimed at ending segregation was directly connected to Jackson Ward. Oliver Hill and Spottswood William Robinson III, who argued the anti-segregation case in *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County (1952),* one of the main cases combined into *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas (1954).* Additionally, Samuel Wilbert Tucker, who used the courts to ensure desegregation in Richmond's schools after the *Brown* ruling, was a principal member of the Hill, Tucker, and Marsh law firm, which established its office in Jackson Ward.

In 1958, the city of Richmond recognized the threat of white flight, and the City Planning Commission authored a study entitled, *Shall We Stop Here* to propose strategies the city might take. The report acknowledged the city would be unable to prevent the movement of the middle class from the city to the suburbs, arguing Richmond's best strategy was to annex the suburbs. Noting "the city limits is [sic] merely a line on a map"

[388] Richmond Department of Planning and Community Development, 22.

and "there is no law that prevents the purchase and use of property beyond the corporate limits," it is clear the Planning Commission believed Richmond's best chance and remaining financially strong was to follow the money as it flooded out of the city.[389] If Richmond opted to remain the same size, the report continued, the city had no choice but to "bolster our revenues and to improve and protect property values." When it came to strategies about how Richmond may go about achieving this goal, the report provided only one option: slum clearance.[390]

It is important to note that the report did not blatantly equate the notion of slum with African-American neighborhood. In fact, there is no mention of race anywhere in the report. Instead, the report charges city leaders with remedying the "decay and rot of spreading slums" in order to save property values, thus mitigating the risk to tax revenues.[391] Other accounts of Richmond's slum problem directly associated "slum" with "African-American neighborhood." One memo that circulated among Richmond civic leaders viewed the entire slum issue in terms of demographics. The memo began by highlighting the incredible outmigration of Richmond's residents to the suburbs. "Even more startling," the memo interjected, "is the increase in the area occupied by Negroes within the corporate limits." In other words, the author of the memo thought it better that

[389] Richmond City Planning Commission, *Shall We Stop Here* (February 1958), John W. Pearsall Papers, 1917-1989, Accession 40281 Box 1, Library of Virginia (Richmond, VA), 8.

[390] Ibid.

[391] Ibid.

whites leave Richmond *en masse* and leave the city largely abandoned than have African-Americans move into the city and occupy these empty buildings.[392]

To the author's dismay, Richmond's black population was increasing and spreading simultaneously. In 1940, 90.8 percent of Richmond's African-American population lived on twenty census tracts. A mere ten years later, the exact same census tracts housed 5,000 more black residents, yet the tracts contained only 83.6 percent of the city's black population. To make matters more startling to the author, twenty-five additional census tracts contained fewer white people in 1950 than in 1940.[393] The memo's author did not see black population growth as the cause of white flight, but rather white flight as facilitating black population growth. The "increased birth rate and in-migration" rendered the black community in need of additional housing. Since "practically all new housing is being built in the fringe areas," the homes they abandoned had been "rapidly absorbed by the demand for Negro housing."[394]

While there may have been additional housing available for Richmond's growing black population, the loss of tax revenues, jobs to the suburbs, and potential customers left black Richmonders in an economically vulnerable situation. The businesses that once thrived due to segregation and white interest in black culture had collapsed, and all jobs were moving to the suburbs along with Richmond's white population. By 1953, these forces had already brought Jackson Ward to ruin.

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[392] "Negro Occupied Land" in John W. Pearsall Papers, 1917-1989, Accession 40281 Box 1, Library of Virginia (Richmond, VA), The memo is not complete, and there is no date; however, all context suggests the memo was written in the mid-to-late 1950s.

[393] Ibid.

[394] Ibid.

Richmond's Redevelopment and Housing Authority, in conjunction with outside consultants and cooperation from the USA Housing and Home Finance Agency, set out in 1953 to assess the best way to deal with Richmond's slums. Their findings illustrate a picture of Jackson Ward that is hard to imagine in comparison with the town that existed just a decade earlier. The "Carver Report," as the findings came to be known, found that 79 percent of Jackson Ward's 2,085 residents lived in "substandard" housing according to Richmond's Sanitary Housing Ordinance. 75 percent of the 556 buildings were dilapidated; 74 percent had no private bath and/or no flush toilet; 24 percent had no running water, and 30 percent were overcrowded. "Typical photographs" included in the report illustrate the squalor. In one image, laundry hangs from a wire connecting two boarded-up buildings. Beneath the clothing, mounds of debris and garbage litter the alley.[395]

The authors of the report saw little reason to invest resources in turning the community around. The community yielded tax revenues of $33,000 each year but the cost of public safety alone was over $39,000, as the community was a "veritable hotbed of crime and delinquency."[396] The Carver Report suggested the community could be used for light industrial zoning, but heavily favored routing the then-theoretical Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike through the community.[397] City and state leaders saw little reason to disagree with the Carver Report. The need for a downtown route had already been agreed

[395] Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority, *The Proposed Carver Redevelopment Project* (November 1953), Library of Virginia, Executive Papers, Governor Thomas B. Stanley, Accession 25184, Box 97, 6-11.

[396] Ibid., 8.

[397] Ibid., 10.

upon by all the major players, and of the possible routes, Jackson Ward was not only cost effective, it would help the city solve two "problems" at once. While there is no evidence of Richmond's officials routing I-95 through Jackson Ward to achieve racist objectives, this story proves that urban routing always hinged heavily on race.

The people of Jackson Ward, disenfranchised, deeply impoverished, and largely outside the political realm, put up little resistance, and I-95 appeared through the heart of the community.[398] Jackson Ward, once a vibrant testament to what African-Americans could build even while oppressed, was now a splintered city.

[398] Interestingly, there is no record of black opposition to I-95 in any of Richmond's archives.

CHAPTER 7

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

While pundits, lobbyists, and politicians waxed poetic about the economic, military, and social benefits of I-95 and the greater Interstate System, many Americans saw the network for what it could do for them personally. Many likely believed that the more efficient transportation of goods would benefit them in the form of lower prices, and if the Cold War should ever turn hot, many likely appreciated that the System would grant the country greater military mobility. However, structural economics and doomsday military scenarios were intangible and not certain to benefit the average American. The most direct and accessible benefit offered by the Interstate Highway System was a safer, less expensive, and faster means of moving about the nation.

The 1950s and 1960s saw personal automobile ownership become one of the defining symbols of the middle class. At the same time, as Anthony J. Stanonis has noted, "Americans began to recognize automobile travel as a national rite. Distant places and cultures, especially those in the warm climates of the South, gained notice."[399] Americans used the increased expendable income of the postwar years to travel the country; the "road trip" in its modern sense was born. National park tourism, engineered scenic

[399] Anthony J. Stanonis, "Just Like Mammy Used to Make: Foodways in the Jim Crow South," in *Dixie Emporium: Tourism, Foodways, and Consumer Culture in the American South*, ed. Anthony J. Stanonis (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2008), 214.

drives, and roadside Americana all peaked during the decades immediately following World War II and were all fueled by the millions of Americans taking to the road in unprecedented numbers.[400] In time, tourism became less about the journey and more about the destination. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Interstates came to be during this time period because of the mounting public need for modern highways, largely due to the growing popularity of driving vacations and other long-distance travel. The Interstates provided travelers with an inexpensive, speedy, and relatively safe means of traveling to the desired destination.

Highway boosters often promoted the Interstates by noting that stopping was infrequent when traveling on the modern routes; if not for the need to refuel, they often noted, drivers could get between any two points in the country without a break. A *New York World-Telegram* article from 1964 informed readers of how the drive from New York City to Florida was changing as a result of the Interstates opening to the public, segment by segment. At that time, the traveler could choose between U.S. 1, the Tobacco Trail, and the Ocean Highway (U.S. 17) as primary routes, and could use I-95 where it had opened. The article noted that the "slower speed" of the older routes, "makes the trip unduly expensive with extra stops." The underlying message of the article was that speed was better when it came to the drive to Florida, and travelers could maximize speed

[400] For a review of postwar tourism, see Richard D. Starnes, ed. *Southern Journeys: Tourism, History, and Culture in the Modern South* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003); for discussion of postwar road culture, see: Christopher W. Wells, *Car Country: An Environmental History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 251-288; John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *Motoring: The Highway Experience in America* . For discussion of scenic road development and tourism, see Anne Mitchell Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway.*

where I-95 had opened to the public. In other words, non-Interstate travel detracted from the time families could be spending in their destination.[401]

The shift from driving as the vacation to driving as a means of getting to the vacation had grave consequences for the many communities that had built their economies, whether in part or in total, around the tourists. Some scholars have acknowledged the Interstates negatively affected communities that serviced the roads that predated Interstates. Tom Lewis, for example, mentions cities such as Hackberry, Arizona and North Platte, Nebraska, but he does not explore the impact of the bypass on the towns in any detail.[402] Lewis' choice to overlook these stories is easily defensible; Lewis—and others who have attempted to write the history of the Interstate System—set out to tell the story of the roads themselves; the communities that do not lie on the immediate path of these roads did not fall into the scope of these studies. However, there is no doubt the Interstates' zone of influence goes far beyond the asphalt itself. This is especially true considering the arrival of the Interstates did more to hurt some towns than any other event in the nation's history.

Other historians have limited their attention to this very important aspect of Interstate History to one route, namely I-40 and the impact it had on U.S. 66. The works on this topic are of relatively minor import, but they are significant in that they approach a phenomenon with implications elsewhere in the country. The attention paid to the impact of I-40 on these towns is almost certainly driven by the nostalgia inspired by Route 66; it is the desire to explore what came of quintessential roadside Americana after

[401] "New York-Washington: No Red Lights…and On to Florida: Better Roads," *New York World-Telegram*, 14 February 1964.

[402] Lewis, *Divided Highways*, xv, 156.

the arrival of the Interstate that motivates these works. To write *Route 66: The Highway and Its People,* Quinta Scott, a historian, and Susan Croce Kelly, a photographer, traveled along Route 66 in the 1980s, after I-40 had drawn most traffic away from the communities between Chicago and Santa Monica. The motivation for the work is made clear in the book's opening pages, when they state, "The book contains photographs of places you cannot visit and reports of conversations with people you cannot meet."[403] *Route 66* serves as a eulogy for communities Scott and Kelly considered fondly. Since most Interstate routes bypassed communities less celebrated than those along Route 66. After all, there are not songs enumerating the towns one passes while driving down U.S. 31 from Mackinaw City to Mobile.

Of course, towns across America were similarly impacted, even if scholars have been delayed bringing their stories to light. While communities along U.S. 1, 17, 301, and myriad other highways may not be as fondly remembered as the storied communities of Route 66, the residents were just as compelling and their hardships just as real. While the old numbered highways remained in use after the Interstates appeared, the traffic on them dropped dramatically. To be sure, this was the goal of engineers and policy makers, but few people outside of the effected towns seemed to consider this as the Interstate System was conceptualized, promoted, and ultimately constructed. In the case of I-95, one of the regions most negatively impacted by the construction of the highway was coastal southeast Georgia, where the economy and the lifestyle was largely formed by U.S. 17.

[403] Quinta Scott and Susan Croce Kelly, *Route 66: The Highway and its People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), xiii. For more works on the impact of I-40 on the communities along Route 66, see: Arthur Krim, *Route 66: Iconography of the American Highway* (Santa Fe: Center for American Places, 2005); Peter B. Dedek, *Hip to the Trip.*

Melissa Fay Green's celebrated *Praying for Sheetrock*, a stylized account of McIntosh County, Georgia's transition from life as a U.S. 17 highway town to a community left behind by I-95, brilliantly captures the effect of I-95 from the perspective of McIntosh County residents:

> Between 1973 and 1975, the last links of I-95, the four-lane interstate, were completed through McIntosh. Ten miles west of U.S. 17, it arched over the county like a suspension bridge. Sterile, bald, and white, I-95 scooped up the southbound high-speed cars in Boston, New York, and Hartford and shot them straight into Florida. If the cars can be imagined as silver balls on a pinball machine, and the new highway a fast chute on the far left, then the ledge labeled 'Darien, 10 points,' illustrated by a shrimp boat, no longer rang its bell, no longer bounced the cars along their way.[404]

In order to fully appreciate the metaphor, one ought to step back and understand how the communities of McIntosh County, especially the town of Darien, developed around U.S. 17.

For most of the twentieth century leading up to 1980, McIntosh County was home to fewer than 8,000 people, and more than half of them were African-American. Almost all of the white citizens lived in the county seat, Darien, and most of the black population lived in hamlets scattered throughout the pine forests around the town. In the early twentieth century, McIntosh County's economy centered on these pine forests, as lumber was the area's primary export. When over harvesting took its toll, the fishing and shrimping industries took over, capitalizing on the county's miles of Atlantic coastline. Those who did not make a living off of the water found ways to extract money from travelers on U.S. 17, which had brought outside money to McIntosh County since the 1920s. By time I-95 came through, tending to the needs of highway travelers was McIntosh County's largest source of income.

[404] Melissa Fay Greene, *Praying for Sheetrock* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2006), 243.

U.S. 17 provided a relatively direct means of getting from the coastal north to Florida through Georgia. The "moveable feast of Yankees on wheels," as Melissa Fay Greene calls it, gave rise to the heart of the McIntosh and Darien economies.[405] Many of the businesses within Darien were legitimate and served the needs—and curiosities—of individuals. Souvenir shops sold everything from locally grown cotton to alligator wallets. Archie's, which served southern style meals to northern visitors, and a profusion of fish camps, fed the weary travelers. Two motels, the Old South Manor and Plantation Estates, provided the tourists a place to rest their heads. The establishments were all locally owned, and the money the employees and proprietors earned through the businesses mostly stayed in the community. If Yankee dollars were the lifeblood on which McIntosh County sustained itself, U.S. 17 was the femoral artery pumping them through.

Not all of the businesses built around U.S. 17 were as reputable; some were not even legal. Just outside of Darien, a slew of businesses arose each night and disappeared come morning. Nestled among and behind the myriad fruit stands north of Darien, in the heart of the land occupied by blacks since before the Civil War, brothels, gambling venues, and other establishments of ill repute tempted travelers. While most northerners *en route* to Florida strategically stopped in Darien for their gasoline, food, and rest, many broke up the monotony of a long drive with roadside poker, shell games, dice, or the fleeting company of a woman.

McIntosh County's legitimate and illegitimate businesses succeeded primarily because of the county's isolation. Driving southward, there was a forty-five mile stretch

[405] Ibid., 55.

of U.S. 17 between Richmond Hill and Darien with no amenities—no place to eat, sleep, refuel. There was hardly a place to stop and stretch one's legs. McIntosh County benefited from drivers who had no choice but to stop if hunger or weariness struck. Brunswick was another twenty miles to the south.

The gambling houses and prostitution shacks operated in the open and without fear of the authorities. McIntosh County attracted less-than-legal businesses because the law—or at least those tasked with enforcing it—was on their side. From 1948 until the 1980s, McIntosh County's version of "the law" took the form of one man, Sheriff Tom Poppell,. Like Archie's, the Old South Manor, and the gambling houses along U.S. 17, Poppell made his living by capitalizing on the isolation of McIntosh County. State officials demonstrated very little ability or will to control Poppell's activities, and he capitalized. Greene characterized him as a despot, as he seemingly made the laws, decided how to punish those who broke them, and used fear of the law to exact favors, land, and significant wealth from the people of McIntosh County. Among Poppell's many acts of extortion, he frequently made legal infractions disappear in exchange for land and allowed the gambling and prostitution houses to operate without legal interference in exchange for kickbacks.[406] Lester Maddox, who served as Governor from 1967 to 1971, fielded countless complaints from the more innocent northerners who found themselves the victims of scams while driving through the rural section of McIntosh County. During Maddox's short term in office, he received thousands of letters from travelers who had

[406] Ibid., 234. Greene also calls Poppell the "High Sheriff," which speaks to the authority he demonstrated in the affairs of McIntosh County.

been victimized while driving through Georgia.[407] The establishments preying on these northerners had been operating since the 1920s. It follows that tens of thousands of northerners fell victim before I-95 drew traffic away from U.S. 17, each victim enriching Tom Poppell.

Despite his authoritarian status in McIntosh County, Poppell was loved by many. In 1961, not long after moving to Darien, her new husband's hometown, Emily Davis desperately wanted to go to a Christmas party in Atlanta. She had commitments until late in the afternoon that day and did not like to drive at night. Davis had befriended Poppell's sister, however, and through the connection, the sheriff heard of Ms. Davis' plight. He called her one evening: "Honey, if you want to get Atlanta, I'll have the Georgia Highway Patrol relay you there. Just let us know the time you want to leave."[408] Always one to abuse his power in service of the people of McIntosh County, Poppell had few enemies within southeast Georgia.

Poppell was especially loved by the African-American community who saw him as a protector in a society that easily could have turned violent. As Greene eloquently noted, "For most of this century the McIntosh County black people lived much as they had since emancipation. They relied on the Lord, the sheriff, and the neighbors."[409] The African-American population of McIntosh County traveled into Darien during the day, where they worked as cooks, housekeepers, and janitors. At quitting time, they returned to their enclaves in the pine forests north of the town. The races lived according to the

[407] Maddox quoted in Greene, 62.

[408] Emily Davis, interviewed by author, Darien, Georgia, 7 March 2012.

[409] Greene, 23.

terrible oppression of Jim Crow; yet, to Poppell's credit, McIntosh County's record on race relations was far better than most of the South, especially for relatively isolated communities. The black residents, while acutely aware of their circumstances and the privileged place McIntosh County's white population enjoyed, did not dissent, did not resist, did not organize for better treatment. So long as Poppell was sheriff, U.S. 17 brought Yankees through the County, and they did not disrupt the order of society, McIntosh's black residents understood they would live in peace and would have more opportunity than elsewhere in the country.

But while Poppell maintained order and ensured a level of security for McIntosh County's black population, he was also a key player in the machinery of oppression.In 1971, nearly one-hundred percent of McIntosh County's black population was registered to vote and actively exercised their right; yet, in the century since Reconstruction ended, they never elected a black sheriff, councilman, or county commissioner. Poppell hired black deputies to help keep his version of the peace, and made sure the black residents had just enough to be complacent. Wayward trailers full of goods would end up conveniently abandoned in northern McIntosh County, and in times of need, the black residents always found Poppell happy to lend a helping hand. In return for his support, the black denizens of McIntosh County kept Poppell in power, lined his pockets, and did not push back against Jim Crow.

McIntosh County was, according to almost every account, resistant to change. By and large, the white residents of the County were successful in keeping the pace of change tortoise-like. This is especially impressive considering the incredible opportunity for change introduced by outsiders McIntosh County faced. U.S. 17 was "bumper-to-

bumper traffic" for much of the 1950s and 1960s, and as a standard (not limited access) highway, travelers had the opportunity to interact with the communities.[410] McIntosh County was a place people stopped out of necessity, and they stopped an interacted in large numbers. Most recognized McIntosh County far removed from other communities, and, in the eyes of many, was beyond changing. Even if visitors were offended by the racial norms of the community, there are no accounts of U.S. 17 bringing in individuals who wanted to change the community; most were on vacation, and they only cared about McIntosh County to the extent that it could provide food and lodging.

The divide between McIntosh County and the rest of the country became especially pronounced during the turmoil of the 1960s, when television and radio broadcasts introduced the white residents of Darien to the events elsewhere in the county, including other southern towns. But, as Greene explains, "When messages from the outside world began to leak into McIntosh County about riots and civil disobedience and racial confrontations…Darien willfully sank deeper into its own ladylike foliage of magnolia and tupelo and wisteria, and maintained a sweet-as-honey, slow-as-molasses pace of life, wishing the outer world would go away."[411] When U.S. 17 was the town's only real connection to the "outer world," Darien's wishes largely came true. Poppell stayed in power and wealthy because of the enterprise built up around the highway, and Poppell maintained the racial order. White Darien did not have to fear black resistance so long as Poppell maintained the law because had the African-Americans living around Darien become inspired by the civil rights movement underway elsewhere, Poppell

[410] "Remembering How Things Used to Be: Coastal Georgia Residents Remember 17's Heydey," *Savannah News-Press* 25 August 1993.

[411] Ibid., 36.

would have had less incentive to maintain the peace. McIntosh County's black population, while relegated to a second-class status, did enjoy a peaceful existence and Poppell saw to their needs. Joining the greater trend of disobedience, which contained the promise of living as equals among white neighbors, also brought the risk of seeing the quality of life degrade. While not ideal (or fair), many blacks saw Poppell's version of racial peace as preferable to the way of life in many other southern towns.

If Poppell's hegemonic control of McIntosh County was ever in doubt, it is important to note that he was the leader of the County's first official black community organization. Poppell founded the McIntosh County Civic League to comply with federal guidelines for revenue sharing; while much of white Darien wanted nothing more than to look inward, Poppell was wise enough to look to the rest of the county. He saw the direction the country was headed, and used his authority to ensure he would weather the civil rights storm. When federal money became available for minority organizations, Poppell ensured McIntosh County met all of the requirements—minority membership, minority preparation of the grant request—by choosing who would join the McIntosh County Civic League. In order to give the illusion of racial progress—and to keep the federal government out of his affairs—Poppell created a county commission seat and ensured a black man won the seat. Poppell also hand-picked the man who occupied the seat, a seventy-eight year old, marginally-literate man who would do as the sheriff bid him.

State officials were aware of of Poppell's activities, but for many years chose to turn a blind eye to the activities in the southesst corner of Georgia. As out-of-state travelers increasingly became victimized by the activities, however, the state could no

longer turn a blind eye to Poppell's operations. Maddox was arguably the first governor who made an effort at cleaning up McIntosh County, but he quickly realized shutting down Poppell would require upsetting much of the area's economy. "I didn't want a police state in McIntosh County," he said, "but the first time I went down there I warned them people I'd rather put Sheriff Poppell in jail than you business people." Unfortunately, Poppell's corruption had spread far in McIntosh County. A real cleanup was going to require far more action than removing the man at the top.

McIntosh County and Tom Poppell found ways of making money that went beyond business of both the forthright and illicit types. U.S. 17 also provided ample opportunity for the County to fill its coffers through fines, especially for speeding. From the 1950s through the early 1970s, McIntosh County was one of the most notorious speed traps on the eastern seaboard, one that drew the ire of many travelers and the attention of the national press. Nobody is certain exactly how much money McIntosh County brought in through traffic fines, largely because Poppell refused to share the information even though Georgia state law required him to do so. Reporters from the *Savannah Morning News* who conducted the most thorough investigation into the U.S. 17 speed trap estimated McIntosh County brought in $34,520 per year in fines for speeding and other traffic violations. They also projected that two-thirds of this amount was paid by non-Georgians. To put this in perspective, McIntosh County collected $70,450 in property

taxes in 1957; through fines, out-of-staters added as much money to McIntosh's coffers as nearly half of McIntosh's residents paid in property taxes each year.[412]

Unfortunately for those driving through McIntosh County, the laws of Georgia incentivized sheriffs to create speed traps due to a profit-sharing fee system, whereby the local sheriffs' office received one-third of the money brought in from traffic fees. In counties like McIntosh, where the sheriff had almost complete control and operated free of any checks on power, this meant one-third of the revenue collected from travelers went straight into the sheriff's pocket. According to the *Savannah Morning News*, speed traps "do not exist where this is no profit motive."[413] An earlier article claimed, "If coastal Georgia wanted to draw up a set of operating procedures favorable to speed traps, they couldn't have done a better job."[414]

The speed trap harmed Georgia's reputation and, according to some, larger tourism industry. The editor of the *Savannah Morning News* noted the fines did provide benefit for the residents of McIntosh County, but the costs outweighed the benefits: "As impressive as the county-by-county figures on fines and forfeitures is, the grand total is but a pittance as compared to the potential addition to the state's economy if more tourists could be induced to stop a few days and see something of the many attractions we have to offer."[415] The 1957 series on the speed trap published by the *Savannah Morning*

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[412] When reporters from the *Savannah Morning News* requested the information, Poppell initially told him the information was not public record. When the reporters corrected him by pointing out the law, Poppell became enraged and cried, " The law is wrong!" Jim Long and Hugh Brown, "Short Visit with McIntosh Sheriff," *Savannah Morning New* 6 June 1957.

[413] "Major Step Against Speed Traps," *Savannah Morning News* 19 February 1964.

[414] "Some Appropriate Advice on Speed Traps," *Savannah Morning News* 10 June 1957.

[415] "The Prosecution Rests," *Savannah Morning News* 9 June 1957.

News included many examples of non-Georgians who harmed the tourist economy of the state by discouraging others from traveling to or through the state as a result of their experience with the speed traps. One North Haledon, New Jersey resident wrote to the Ocean Highway Association, a tourism booster organization, claiming she was falsely accused of speeding by a man wearing a sweater and showing no identification as an officer of the law. Other victims noted fines were paid in a "shanty" next to the road. McIntosh County's sheriffs, who monitored the traffic on U.S. 17, extracted the fines from travelers under questionable circumstances. Travelers were usually confronted with an option of paying a forty dollar fine upfront or spending the night in jail before appearing before the judge, who was never available the same day. Since most of the people pulled over were on vacation or traveling for business, they did not have the time to wait around for the judge and almost universally chose to pay the exorbitant fee for the sake of convenience.[416] The counties of southeast Georgia—especially McIntosh—collectively filled their coffers at the expense of the wider economy. Individuals on their way to or from Florida might have stopped in Savannah or Brunswick had they not been enraged by the rural sheriffs.

Despite the negative effects of thee speed traps in McIntosh and neighboring counties, state officials declined to insert themselves into the situation and shut the operations down. Marvin Griffin, who was governor in the late 1950s, suggested that honest businessmen band together "and launch some program against the practice," although it was never clear what the program would be or how it would work.[417] Griffin's

[416] "Are U.S. 17 Arrests 'Highway Robbery?,'" *Savannah Morning News* 4 June 1957.

[417] Ibid.

half attempt and providing a solution speaks to the political clout of Poppell; even the most powerful politician in Georgia refrained from engaging in open confrontation with the McIntosh sheriff.

In total, U.S. 17 facilitated, either directly or indirectly, every facet of life in McIntosh County. It brought tourists—the single most significant catalyst of the economy—in each day, giving rise to businesses who accommodated these guests. It also lined the pockets of Tom Poppell, who maintained the racial status quo in exchange for the riches he reaped from the illicit businesses and speeding tickets along U.S. 17. When I-95 entered the county in the early 1970s, McIntosh County found itself coming to terms with a world it had not operated in previously. By drawing traffic off of U.S. 17 and cutting off the revenue the old highway brought in, the empire of Tom Poppell—and, in fact, the entire way of life in McIntosh County, ended. I-95 brought a new reality to coastal Georgia. Whereas disgruntled travelers, Georgia governors, and the FBI had been unable to end Poppell's reign, I-95 did so with remarkable efficiency.

A NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN

McIntosh experienced the reign of Poppell and the U.S. 17 economy longer than it otherwise should have. Georgia was among the nation's leaders in Interstate Highway construction for much of the twenty years following the Interstate Highway Act of 1956, but opted to build I-95 last among its many miles of Interstate Highway. Initially, I-95 was deferred in favor of Interstates that connected the state capital, Atlanta, to various corners of the state. Since I-95 hugs the Atlantic Ocean throughout Georgia and effectively connects Savannah, Georgia and Jacksonville, Florida, it was prioritized lower

than I-85, I-75, and I-20.[418] When Georgia was ready to turn its attention to I-95 in the mid-to-late 1960s, it found federal funding more difficult to obtain. A 1968 letter from Federal Highway Commissioner Rex Whitton to Governor Herman Talmadge highlighted the complexity of highway funding once the Highway Trust Fund became a subject of political battles. Whitton expressed his "belief" funding would be approved to allow for commencement of the $46.8 billion project, but he was not certain it would happen.[419] In another letter to Governor Talmadge written at the end of 1968, Whitton cited "the need for reducing Federal expenditures as a contribution to the Vietnam effort and the resultant effort to reduce inflationary pressures" as a reason for the difficulty accessing the requisite funds to begin construction of I-95.[420] Through the years of uncertainty about whether I-95 would ever be built, the people of McIntosh County waited, not knowing what to expect of their future.

Eventually the United States Congress agreed to continue funding the Trust Fund, and I-95 moved from the planning stage to the construction stage. The highway was to be built a few miles to the west of U.S. 17; traffic would no longer funnel through the heart of Darien. Instead, it would enter McIntosh County in a field, bypass Darien as it blazed a straight shot across creeks and undeveloped land, and exit the county in another field. Even if one looked beyond the borders of McIntosh County, I-95 essentially permitted travelers to drive from Savannah to Jacksonville without seeing a single town of more than a few hundred people. I-95 served as a high-speed shortcut from South Carolina to

[418] I-16, which connects Savannah with Atlanta, was not included in the original planned highways for the state of Georgia.

[419] Rex M. Whitton to Herman E. Talmadge, 19 April 1968, Herman E. Talmadge Collection Series VIII, Subseries A, Box 374, RBRL.

[420] Whitton to Talmadge, 13 December 1968, Series VIII, Subseries A, Box 373, RBRL.

Florida, and the people taking this shortcut would could no longer serve as the economic fuel for Poppell's McIntosh County.

Many in McIntosh County were slow to realize the profound impact I-95 would have on their community. Many could not conceive of a world in which people did not utilize U.S. 17 en masse. The road had been the lifeblood of the economy for so long, it seemed impossible that one day the flow of traffic would simply stop. Those who recognized I-95 might pull some traffic away still believed enough drivers would continue to use U.S. 17 that McIntosh County would survive. Others may have anticipated the devastating effect I-95 would have on the County but felt helpless to do anything.

According to one longtime resident of McIntosh County, many residents believed I-95 would benefit them in the longrun. The highway, they figured, would bring more people through the county, and a good number of these people would venture a few miles off the Interstate into Darien. In this way, I-95 would serve as a high speed, slightly-out-of-town conduit for traffic and would allow McIntosh County to prosper even when the economy shifted away from US 17.It is easy to understand why some people thought this way. Prior to the construction of I-95, there was not a single chain restaurant or motel in all of McIntosh County. I-95 would have several junctions within the County, and there was not a single building at any of the future intersections. Travelers would need food, shelter, and fuel, these people thought, and they would have no choice but to venture into Darien.

Much of the land I-95 would consume was owned by Union Camp Corporation, a paper company that owned extensive tracks of forest in the state of Georgia. Union Camp

consequently owned all the land at the I-95 intersections in McIntosh County. Acknowledging the development that had occurred along the Interstates elsewhere in the county, Union Camp officials made an effort to develop McIntosh County's rest areas with a local flavor. They contacted Archie Davis first and asked if he would be interested in either moving Archie's a few miles out of town to I-95 or, if he preferred to keep the original in operation, to open a second location to serve Interstate travelers. Davis declined primarily because of the time commitment required to run a second location. Rather than move the sole operation to the interchange, Davis opted to keep the sole location in town. Like many McIntosh residents, Davis could not imagine that I-95 would drastically change Darien's way of life. Davis had faith the locals would still frequent his restaurant and assumed travelers would venture a few miles off the road. Emily Davis acknowledges it was a difficult decision for her husband to make and retrospectively acknowledged, "It wasn't the wisest financial decision we ever made."[421] The passers-by simply did not enter Archie's the way they had when U.S. 17 was the only route through town. Even the locals dined at Archie's with less regularity, as everyone who made a living off of travelers on U.S. 17 suffered.

Archie's was on the only business to suffer. The locus of McIntosh County's economic activity gravitated away from U.S. 17 and toward I-95 at an alarming rate. The intersection of Highway 251 and I-95, not quite two miles from U.S. 17 in Darien, saw near-immediate development. A McDonald's and Wendy's appeared, and then a chain motel. By the mid-1980s, exit 41 had developed into a small community, complete with a small shopping mall. Downtown Darien, on the other hand, struggled to find itself in a

[421] Emily Davis interview.

post-I-95 world. Without tourists and truckers entering via U.S. 17, the community's restaurants either closed down or adapted to being local eateries. Motel owners shuttered their businesses.

The fall of U.S. 17 also spelled the end for Tom Poppell. As I-95 opened to the public over the course of the 1970's, Poppell's ability to provide favors in return for black compliance waned. The protective barrier that had ensconced Poppell since 1948 was no more. The series of events that led to the outcome is not clear, but Poppell found himself the target of separate lawsuits by the NAACP and the Georgia Legal Services Program at the same time the FBI charged Poppell with federal crimes (thus removing him from the Georgia "good ol' boy" network that had stymied their efforts in the past). To some extent, Poppell's fall was inevitable, as the FBI had been building a case against him for decades. The efforts of the NAACP and Georgia Legal Services Program, however, were almost certainly enabled by the opening of I-95. When U.S. 17 could no longer sustain McIntosh County's way of life, its black citizens began to stir from the longstanding complacency. The civil rights movement arrived years after it began elsewhere. Black men took office, and McIntosh County began to resemble a democracy rather than a kingdom.

In time, Darien learned to prosper despite the existence of I-95. Since tourists no longer unwillingly found themselves serving as the fuel of McIntosh County's economy, the people of Darien rebuilt their community to attract passersby. Capitalizing on the town's beautiful waterfront and antebellum buildings, Darien emerged in the 1990s as a charming coastal town. I-95, in the end, became the means for outsiders to get to the destination of Darien.

Conclusion

A Personal Account of I-95

Researching a dissertation on the history of I-95 necessitates extensive travel along the road. Over the course of several years, I was able to experience first-hand some of what my subjects experienced, not the stresses of losing my home to eminent domain, nor the trauma of seeing my hometown dramatically altered by the opening of a new highway, but rather the spectrum of emotions one could feel toward a highway. I was initially excited about the prospect of traveling up and down the Atlantic Coast, and since time is money, I was thrilled I-95 was there to allow for safe, reliable, timely travel between archives. After sitting in a Sunday night Washington, D.C. traffic jam that seemed to have no cause, I came to resent the road for the *illusion* of fast, reliable passage. At certain points I marveled at the road's engineering achievements and at others, I mourned the communities I-95 had clearly harmed. Somewhere along the way, I came to understand why some individuals thought my project was "really cool" and why my father-in-law could not ask about my progress without reminding me that "I-95 sucks." After the first thousand miles on the road—somewhere between the tobacco fields of North Carolina and the endless suburbs of Washington, I ultimately came to discover the underlying message of this dissertation: what makes I-95 interesting is the intersection of the road with place.

To an extent, the relationship of I-95 with place was visible and immediately apparent. In some communities, I-95 somehow seemed like it belonged, as if the

community had grown up around it or—more likely—had redeveloped around it. In other places, I-95 cut through communities like a scar, leaving nothing but blight in its wake. In some places, I-95 provided a scenic tour through bucolic valleys, and elsewhere the scenery was indistinguishable from any other place I had been during my travels.

I had my first real understanding of the relationship I-95 has with the places it traverses while eating dinner just outside of Darien, Georgia. Following a month of research in Tallahassee, Athens, and Savannah, I was exhausted and eager to get home. More interested in eating quickly than anything else, I stopped at a Ruby Tuesday's an eighth of a mile from the I-95 interchange. Not quite realizing where I was when I made the decision to stop, I soon determined that I actually knew quite a bit about this particular exit. The mall across the parking lot from the restaurant and some of the neighboring hotels developed when I-95 bypassed the town of Darien; I had read quite a bit about the area while researching my Georgia chapter. The Ruby Tuesday's arrived later than the other businesses, to be sure, but there I was, voluntarily but not knowingly being the person that caused Darien's world to turn upside down some decades before. By traveling along I-95 and not the neighboring highway, I was rewarding development outside of the community.

Inside the restaurant, the interplay of road and place became even more apparent. Alone, tired of reading, and waiting for food to arrive, I found myself inadvertently eaves dropping on the conversations surrounding me. To my immediate left, an elderly couple seated in a booth interrogated the waitress about the menu. "Do you prefer the burgers or the seafood?" "What's your favorite dish?" "Can I substitute a salad for the fries?" The waitress' replies eventually prompted the female customer to inquire about the source of

the shrimp. “Where are they from?” she asked. And then, as if willing the response, “Are they local?” “No,” the waitress replied. “They come frozen.”

I chuckled. The ocean was fewer than ten miles away.

McIntosh County Georgia had, since the days of Tom Poppell, rebuilt its economy around tourism, timber, and seafood. Yet, I could not get local seafood at the restaurant positioned as the place most out-of-towners would visit on their way to other places. These individuals would stop in, and their singular experience in McIntosh County would have very little to do with the place. I-95 somehow had accomplished the paradoxical feat of bringing individuals to McIntosh County *and* preventing them from experiencing McIntosh County at all.

Despite I-95’s ability to somehow negate “place” from places, I witnessed other communities that had benefited greatly from I-95. On lonely miles of road twenty miles past one city and forty miles to the next, factories, distribution centers, and other engines of the economy appeared, providing jobs to communities that otherwise would have had little opportunity. Some communities, such as Florence, South Carolina and College Park, Maryland found ways to turn I-95 into a defining characteristic of one section of the city while maintaining vibrant economic and cultural scenes in other portions of town. In the vicinity of I-95, these communities have experienced significant commercial development.

At the end of the day, whether one has a favorable opinion of I-95—or, like my father-in-law—would rather drive an extra ten hours than spend thirty minutes on the highway, there is no denying the transformative role the road has played on the communities it touches. Some of these changes were good, some bad, some were a little

of both. In some places, I-95 has served to enhance a sense of place, in others (like Darien, Georgia), it has dramatically changed the notion of place. Everywhere, however, the arrival of I-95 created a new sense of place.

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