

Vietnam Generation

Volume 1

Number 2 *A White Man's War: Race Issues and Vietnam*

Article 12

4-1989

The Silent Majority in Baby Boomers: Class of 1966 in a South Jersey Town

Paul Lyons

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/vietnamgeneration>



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lyons, Paul (1989) "The Silent Majority in Baby Boomers: Class of 1966 in a South Jersey Town," *Vietnam Generation*: Vol. 1 : No. 2 , Article 12.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/vietnamgeneration/vol1/iss2/12>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by La Salle University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Vietnam Generation by an authorized editor of La Salle University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact careyc@lasalle.edu.

THE SILENT MAJORITY BABY BOOMERS: CLASS OF 1966 IN A SOUTH JERSEY TOWN

PAUL LYONS

In James Fallows' influential "What Did You Do in the Class War, Daddy?" Harvard antiwar activists are juxtaposed with the sons of Cambridge blue-collar workers.¹ The collegians, mostly exempt from the war through anything from student deferments to psychiatric rationalizations submitted by friendly shrinks, look on as the less privileged march off to boot camp. The imagery is powerful, and, I will suggest, incomplete. In our images of the generation who lived through the Vietnam era, we tend toward a dualism of doves and vets, the soon-to-be-YUPPIE twenty-somethings and the victimized "salt of the earth" GIs of Oliver Stone's *Platoon*.² In brief, you either served your country, or you opposed its policies.

The responses of baby-boomers to the Vietnam war are not captured by a dove-vet polarity. There is a sizable group among the Sixties generation whose experience fits neither that of activist doves or blue-collar vets. Myra MacPherson describes, in her book *Long Time Passing: Vietnam and the Haunted Generation*, the demographic characteristics of the men of the Vietnam generation. 27 million men became eligible for the draft in the years spanning the whole of the 1960s and the early 1970s. Of those men, 9 million served in the military, and approximately 3 million actually served in Vietnam. This leaves 18 million draft age men who did not serve either in Vietnam, or in the military at all, and 26 million women.³ Given even the largest of the estimated sizes of the antiwar movement,⁴ the number of active protesters could have formed no more than 20 percent (10.6 million) of the total population of the generation. A 1973 study by John Mueller shows that "those under thirty consistently supported the war in larger percentages than those over thirty."⁵ Though MacPherson herself succumbs to the dove-vet polarity, we may reasonably conclude from these figures that of the 53 million members of the Vietnam generation who did not serve in the military, a majority of them were neither activists nor in possession of any very strong sentiments against the war. In fact, this generational segment is best characterized by its silence, and I find some value in labeling them the Silent Majority Baby-Boomers.

This article reviews an ongoing case study of such a group, the 1966 graduating class of Mainland Regional High School, which includes the southern Jersey towns of Northfield, Linwood and Somers Point. Over the past year I have been able to complete extensive, taped oral histories of 41 graduates in a class of 248. In addition, I have talked with administrators and teachers who worked at the school during the mid-1960s.

Atlantic County has been shaped by the roller-coaster history of Atlantic City since the first roads, soon followed by rail lines, connected Philadelphia with the salt marshes of Absecon Island. Atlantic City peaked in the period between Prohibition, during which it flourished as a "wet" oasis, and World War 2, when it served as an armed forces medical and recreational facility. The seaside resort flourished until the successes of commercial flights to Florida and the Caribbean in the post-World War 2 period precipitated a decline, capped by the disastrous Democratic Convention of 1964 when the national press had a field day trashing its filth, inefficiency and tawdriness.⁶

The mainland communities had a sleepy, small town, even rural flavor during much of this history. Early Quaker settlements had been replaced by shipbuilding and port facilities by the nineteenth century, but the lack of deep water harbors limited such industry; at the turn of the century the three towns combined had about 3,000 residents, mostly in Northfield. By the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, combined population had almost doubled, with most of the growth in then rural Linwood, only incorporated as a city in 1931, and the more resort-oriented Somers Point.⁷

These communities grew during the post-World War 2 boom, often providing homes for middle-class and working-class people fleeing the declining and increasingly ghettoized Atlantic City. During the period within which these 1966 graduates were growing up, population exploded; for example, Northfield, which had 2,848 residents in 1940 nearly tripled in population by 1970 to 8,046. In little more than ten years Somers Point jumped from 2,480 to 8,500 residents; Linwood, with 1,479 population in 1940 rose to 4,274 by 1965. Suburbanization was well in process, as state roads like the Garden State Parkway and sophisticated industries like the Federal Aviation Administration's National Aviation Facilities Experimental Center (NAFEC) with its 1,800 employees, emerged.⁸

The small town character of the three off-shore towns merged uncomfortably with the newer suburban tempo. First of all, during this period, the region was stagnant to declining economically, mostly due to Atlantic City's collapse. The paradox of the area is its burgeoning population and its lack of economic promise. In my

142 VIETNAM GENERATION

interviews, many graduates noted that those with more ambition knew that they would have to leave the area. In the ten years following their graduation, Atlantic City lost 5,200 hotel rooms; the kinds of jobs available, many of which rested on seasonal resort work, were evaporating. There were stable employment opportunities available in a few large firms, like Prudential, or utilities like Atlantic Electric, but in this strongly conservative, Republican county, run by the likes of Nucky Johnson and then Hap Farley, connections were usually essential.⁹

1966 graduates recall, with considerable nostalgia, the stability of their childhood communities, with lots of farm and vacant lands, little traffic, and innumerable opportunities for hunting, fishing, hiking, or exuberant play in the woods. Of the three communities, Northfield was the most settled and small-town in atmosphere; Linwood, which still had large tracts of farmland interspersed with estates, new suburban tracts, and smaller bungalows, had the reputation of being the poshest, with its Gold Coast, bayside section. The new Mainland Regional High School, built in Linwood in 1961, occupied what had been a farm operated by one of the area's socially prominent families. Somers Point, also with burgeoning suburban settlements, was more defined by its strip of resort-oriented taverns and restaurants; graduates agree that if there were kids who got in trouble—and they always add that trouble was minor delinquency, rowdiness, drunkenness, truancy—it would be Somers Point kids.¹⁰

All three communities were lily-white, and almost completely Christian. There were a few Jewish families, but most mainland kids associated Jews with the fancy Linwood Country Club where many young locals caddied. In fact, few paid much attention to the fact that Linwood Country Club existed because the most prestigious clubs—Seaview and Atlantic City—were restricted. Anti-Catholic prejudice seems to have been a minor factor; some 1966 grads note that their parents made anti-Catholic or anti-Italian slurs, but this doesn't seem to have been a significant pattern, especially among the baby boomers. Social patterns of friendship and dating weren't effected by Protestant-Catholic tensions, except within truly fundamentalist households.

I chose the 1966 class at Mainland Regional High School (MRHS) because it seemed to be closest in Atlantic County to a mainstream, middle-class environment, allowing me to test my assumption that a goodly portion of the 1960s generation were neither protesters nor Vietnam-bound GIs. MRHS was one of the elite schools within the county, but was more middle- than upper-class in its essential attributes:

Table 1

Atlantic Country Median Family Income, 1969¹¹

Town	Income (in 1979 dollars)	County Rank
Linwood	24,318	2d
Northfield	22,555	4th
Somers Point	17,688	13th
Atlantic City	12,342	24th (last)

The parents at the more affluent end of the spectrum were professionals, owned small businesses; the largest segment had parents who either were small tradespersons, owning the local bakeries and luncheonettes, or were blue-collar workers in the light industries and service trades of the area. They were typically churchgoers—Methodism seems to have been the most popular denomination—politically conservative, Republican and old-fashioned.

Most describe their households as stable (little divorce) and subdued. Most grads could not recall any discussions of political issues at the dinner table; public issues of the day—Kennedy, Cuba, Berlin, civil rights, Goldwater, Vietnam—were rarely mentioned. Bob Boileau described the “Methodist” nature of household discourse within which one had to infer one’s parents’ political views.¹² Of course, there were tirades against godless communists, Negro agitators, big government, taxes; but they were clearly outbursts breaking the hum of conversations focused on family, TV, neighbors, or, often, long silences before children could run off to play.

Most 1966 grads grew up in a highly localized environment, seemingly oblivious to larger national or global concerns. That local blacks were restricted to Missouri Avenue, Atlantic City’s “Chicken Bone Beach,” wasn’t an item of controversy to students in an all-white environment. Those whose parents had migrated from Atlantic City and nearby Pleasantville carried stories of stereotypical black behavior which matched up with the Southern-tinged racism of more Protestant families, some of whom actually had Deep South roots. Martin Luther King, Jr. was viewed as a troublemaker, and there was some attraction to the emotional message of resistance and resentment evoked by George Wallace. Kennedy, at least in retrospect, was an attractive figure, especially to Catholics, but the mainstream among Mainland families leaned toward moderately conservative, Eastern-wing Republicans like Henry Cabot Lodge. This was not, for the most part, Goldwater country, although he won the area against LBJ in 1964. 1966 grads weren’t stirred, or even aware of who Fanny Lou Hamer was when she spoke of being beaten by segregationists at Union Baptist Church during the 1964 Democratic Convention in Atlantic

144 VIETNAM GENERATION

City.¹³

15,000 county residents had served in World War 2; many of the 1966 grads' fathers were among them. Many respondents suggest that pro-military feeling was reenforced by the families working at NAFEC, particularly those associated with 177th Tactical Fighter Group stationed there. For the most part, 1966 grads grew up with all of the standard Cold War shibboleths about Communism. As such, they were predisposed to accept the words of Linwood Mayor George K. Francis, spoken at the 1966 Memorial Day services: "We are demonstrating reverence for those who shed their life's blood defending our Nation's freedom." Francis posited that Vietnam was "a critical test of the so-called wars of liberation as instigated by Communism." His declaration that retreat from Vietnam would "be catastrophic to peoples throughout the world who are working to achieve their independence,"¹⁴ was well within the ideological framework of Mainland's graduates.

1966 was the first year in which the Vietnam war was likely to impose itself on graduates of MRHS. It is striking how few answered the call to arms. At least upon reflection, 1966 graduates speak of resistance to marching off to war. Something seemed awry—this wasn't a declared war; it was off somewhere outside the students' focus of attention or knowledge. In the spring of 1966, the "Sixties" had not yet reached this part of South Jersey, though the British invasion had already hit, as the school magazine *Hoofprints* indicates in its special April 1964 issue devoted to the Beatles. The girls rallied by a margin of 80-32 in favor of the mop-tops; the boys, less enamored, approved in a closer 63-53 vote. But for the most part, pop music still meant the Beach Boys, Motown, and danceable rock and roll. No one was listening to Bob Dylan yet, and the yearbook gives little indication of anything beyond a clean-cut, conventional, 1950s image.¹⁵

Events and behaviors which were already passé in the Philadelphia area had not reached the mainland communities, a mere hour's drive, but light years away. No one was experimenting with drugs; risk-taking centered on adolescent drinking parties, including after school, weekend sprees out in the woods, mischievous pranks, e.g., mock gun battles at the shopping center. The yearbooks over the next several years do suggest changes—longer hair, more rebellious postures, hipper commentaries. But as late as 1970, the yearbook text reads that the US has pledged "her honor...to stop the spread of Communism" in Vietnam. The 1969 prom theme was "Tara," called "a symbol of life long forgotten," and the yearbook lamented that "a life once so grand, so stately, so tall—Has quietly Gone With the Wind." This prom featured "attendants dressed as Negro slaves."¹⁶ As far as can be determined, the Civil Rights Movement had made no impact on community consciousness.

SILENT MAJORITY BOOMERS 145

1966 graduates approached the issue of Vietnam pragmatically; they were not protesters, nor were they interested in volunteering to serve. Of twenty-two males within my sample, nine were deferred from service because of injury, school, or drawing a lucky number during the first years of the draft lottery. (There seems to be a consensus that during the time of the lottery, no one wanted to go.) Nine men served in the reserve or national guard units: six in the Naval Reserve, two in the Air National Guard, and one in the coast Guard. Only four men went into the Army: two ended up serving one year in Vietnam, but not in combat situations; one was involved in transporting supplies to Vietnam from the States on a regular basis; the fourth was stationed in Germany. One of the Naval Reservists, while on active duty, served a tour aboard the USS Ticonderoga, a carrier whose bombers struck enemy targets from the Gulf of Tonkin.

The graduating class of 1966 numbered 248, and included 129 men. I have been able to track 102 male graduates. No one from the Class of 1966 died in Vietnam, and I have found only five who served there (in addition to the two mentioned above, there was one in the Air Force stationed in Thailand, one Marine helicopter pilot, and one Army infantryman). No graduates from any class at Mainland Regional died in Vietnam. One Linwood resident, Joseph Goldberg, died in Vietnam in 1962 but he was born in 1930 and, consequently went to high school before Mainland Regional existed. Compare the price the mainland towns paid with that of more working class and minority areas:

Table 2¹⁷

Town	Population	Per Capita	Black%	Vietnam War Deaths
Linwood	6,159	7098	0.1	0
Northfield	8,875	6523	3.5	0
Somers Point	7,919	6442	0.5	0
Mainland Towns	22,953			0
Atlantic City	47,859	5950	43.7	16
Pleasantville	13,778	5148	33.6	7

Most Mainland grads knew next to nothing about either the country of Vietnam or the politics of the war. The high school social studies and civics program was taught, for the most part, by politically conservative men, several of whom were Korean War veterans, who articulated the basic Cold War anti-communist positions. Most graduates assumed the accuracy of such interpretations, believed themselves to be patriotic, but had little enthusiasm for serving their

146 VIETNAM GENERATION

country, especially in Vietnam. Graduates did know that draft calls were rising, and those not continuing on to college were aware of new risks. Within my sample, almost half (20 of 41) did not go beyond high school; an additional seven finished two year programs.

A few graduates joined the armed forces immediately, but more of the non-collegians took advantage of their free summer before facing the inevitable. Most of these young men sought out Reserve or Guard options. In a few instances, including later ones involving college graduates in 1970-71, men used whatever influence was available to avoid the draft, e.g., relatives who had connections with Guard or Reserve personnel. But equally often grads tested into their Reserve or Guard units. Several of the men in my sample had been inattentive students, mostly interested in sports and partying while in school. Yet they were quite bright, as their future careers would indicate. For example, one C student, Nick Bessor, who qualified for the Naval Reserve went on to a prestigious executive position for Atlantic Bell despite having no formal college training; John Jones, who became a chemical warfare expert in the Army, despite needing an extra year to just barely graduate from Mainland, went on to take charge of all construction for a national shopping mall combine.¹⁸

These white, middle-class, sometimes even working-class, kids could utilize connections to beat the draft, but essentially their middle-class environment created the possibilities, in a sense, behind their backs. Life in mainstream, middle America comes with built in privileges: such benefits acquired through the use of family and community networks are part of the informal system which gives an edge to their children. And yet those within such networks rarely notice the differentials. After all, how else could we explain the outrage over affirmative action, a formal procedure rarely able to counterbalance the informal old boys' networks integral to our culture?

In one case, admittedly rare, a grad, John Edwards, who went on to college and a profession said, "I felt that Vietnam was for the dummies, the losers."¹⁹ But such overt elitism isn't the norm; most graduates spoke of an uneasiness about this particular war. Their fathers were often World War 2 vets; in some cases their parents had met during the war when Atlantic City had been partially converted into a hospital facility. But Vietnam was far away and undeclared. Everyday life seemed unaffected; high school seniors went to mainstream movies like *Flower Drum Song*, *The Sound of Music*, and saw Sandra Dee and Bobby Darin in *That Funny Feeling*. On TV they watched *The Lucy Show*, *Andy Williams*, *Hazel*, and *Ben Casey*. Even though syndicated columnist Mary McGrory was warning readers that there were "voyagers of the mind" taking a hallucinogenic called acid, the Sixties had not arrived on the mainland.²⁰

No one had heard of the recreational drugs popular in New York or San Francisco. There were no long-hairs, no hippies, no beatniks, no radical student activists. Rebels were typically rowdy, highly individualistic, but essentially straight and apolitical. The boys argued over whether the Phillies' Johnny Callison was as good as Willie Mays. Iconoclastic girls either were sexually liberated or arty. Vietnam existed on the edge of their consciousness, it was confusing, even annoying. With few exceptions, no one wanted to go.

And yet, almost all male grads told me that if called they would have gone, emphasizing that they believed in national service, assuming obligations and duty toward their country. Few felt any contradiction between their generally conservative, hawkish values and their actual choices regarding Vietnam. In a few cases, reservists specifically turned down Vietnam options. But in most instances, Mainland graduates carried the invisible benefits of being mainstream Middle Americans. In fact, this invisibility of social class, racial and gender advantages, particularly in a non-elite environment, is critical to any effort to understand Middle American life and culture.

I have been struck by the marginal way in which my subjects were affected by the movements and social earthquakes of the 1960s. Within my sample, there were eight marriages of high school couples, six of which occurred almost immediately after high school. Those who didn't go off to college, particularly if they married early and began a family (sometimes the reason for the marriage) went immediately into an adulthood virtually untouched by the Sixties. But even those who went off to college had only marginal experiences for the most part. Most went to either small sectarian or in-state teachers colleges, fairly conservative campuses at best late in being affected by either student radical or countercultural influences.

Karen Carson, attending an elite Ivy League school, dabbled in campus activism but only at the margins; mostly she embraced the freedoms of the anti-authoritarian ambiance. But, like Doris Farmer, who went to a Southern elite college, even though she was a "semi-hippie," she didn't participate in the generational conflicts so characteristic of the late 1960s for many students. Farmer remained active in her sorority while occasionally going to an antiwar rally. But her dominant feeling was that the "real" hippies and radicals were "losers," not practical or purposeful in their lives and too extreme in their politics.²¹

Within my sample, there are two examples (both male) of a fuller identification with the radical currents of the period. Bob Burns described himself as "an old Sixties radical, an unreconstructed hippie who lived by the subversive rock'n roll of the times and found liberation through the other parts of the triad: sex and drugs." Sterling Brown participated in campus demonstrations but was more

148 VIETNAM GENERATION

attracted to the natural and environmental aspects of the counterculture, and after graduation explored a scaled-back lifestyle through much of his twenties and early thirties.²²

The most striking, if not characteristic, experience was that of Jane Winters, a very bright, strong woman, now a teacher, who admired the real activists for taking risks, going public, living a more authentic existence, but couldn't imagine doing such things herself. It was simply outside of her essential character to directly challenge authority, to be iconoclastic, to openly rebel. This very productive woman, a negotiator for her teachers' union local, a competitive athlete, a computer and science instructor, could only express admiration, then and now, for the activists, the radicals.²³ Although she was the most explicit about this often gender-shaped timidity, I found a sense of the alien character of protest in the words of many of the men as well.

After 41 interviews, I find myself focusing on this quality, this sense that to the 1966 MRHS graduates, activism is a totally alien concept, an activity which might as well be engaged in by Martians. There is a range of responses, from hostile to envious, with most in-between and oblivious, but to mid-1960s graduates from the off-shore communities, political activism seemed, and still seems to be foreign, odd. Whether the subject is peace, civil rights, feminism, or environmentalism, 1966 graduates find it virtually unimaginable to openly protest, demonstrate, or engage in more conventionally defined electoral political activity.

These are not, for the most part, members of what Tom Wolfe called the "Me" generation, affluent baby-boomers now searching for self-fulfillment through exotic therapies and expensive lifestyles.²⁴ They are people who focus on sustaining family life and careers, who are very active in local community activities ranging from Little League sports to volunteer charity drives to PTAs to zoning and school board membership. They're not by any conventional definition "selfish," nor do they fit Christopher Lasch's "narcissism" model of ego-weak individuals dependent on seducing the admiration of others, and incapable of experiencing genuine feelings of love.²⁵ In fact, the most selfish individual I've interviewed is the self-defined hippie.

All have been affected by the 1960s: they're less religious, more tolerant, less racist, less sexist than their parents. They're not enamored with the 1960s, having experienced it mostly in terms of friends or younger siblings who suffered from self-destructiveness, drug abuse, aimlessness, or an inability to grow up. Their perception of the Sixties has made many of them particularly sensitive to achieving stability, to maintaining family life and traditional values in the midst of the fast-lane hedonism and crude materialism they associate with the casinos, which they acknowledge as a regional

salvation, yet they fear and deplore. They are trying to be "old-fashioned" in a post-Sixties environment. It is an ongoing struggle. Despite their ideals, these 1966 graduates suffer from high rates of divorce and, in addition, there seems to be a fair amount of alcoholism, often rooted in family histories.²⁶

Most pay minimal attention to Vietnam. Nick Bessor, for example, refuses to watch any of the recent films or TV shows dealing with the war, because he finds it too painful, too shocking. Many of these baby boomers, now reaching forty, have built walls of work, family, hobbies, and community activity to fend off the complexities and anxieties of the interdependent world they inhabit but, in a very real sense, resist. Most have remained Republicans; there is more independent voting than among their parents, but, significantly, less voting. A few grads have never voted. And in most instances they have a skepticism, even a cynicism about politics and politicians. Since they cannot imagine how to affect larger national and global issues, they choose to pay them little attention, focusing instead on their off-shore, face-to-face world.

We have been ignoring an essential component of the Sixties generation, those I call the Silent Majority Baby Boomers. These people don't show up as characters in Woody Allen movies; they haven't been big chilled, or, in most cases, YUPPIEified. For the most part, they didn't protest the war and they didn't fight in it. We must keep in mind that the antiwar movement radiated out from the more elite campuses to a much broader expanse by 1969 and 1970 (to Kent State, for example), but it never became a significant part of the lives of the vast majority of students, including those at places like Columbia and Harvard. For those at southern and western colleges, at conservative sectarian institutions, the 1960s volcanos of rebellion and defiance rarely erupted. Writers like Jim Fallows and Myra MacPherson have, perhaps unintentionally, created metaphors of Harvard elitists opposing the war and Joe Lunch-Buckets fighting it. In fact, we need to examine the thoughts and behaviors of those who remained, for the most part, silent. So long as such essentially decent but parochial people remain a silent majority we will not, with any confidence, be able to speak of "the lessons of Vietnam."

¹ *Harper's*, October 1975..

² *Platoon*, directed by Oliver Stone. With Tom Berenger, William Dafoe, and Charlie Sheen (Orion) 1987.

³ Myra MacPherson, *Long Time Passing: Vietnam and the Haunted Generation* (New York: Signet) 1984: 33.

⁴ *Ibid.*: 32.

150 VIETNAM GENERATION

⁵ John Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion* (New York: John Wiley) 1973.

⁶ Charles E. Funnell, *By the Beautiful Sea: The Rise and High Times of that Great American Resort, Atlantic City* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press) 1983.

⁷ *Short History of Northfield* (nd); *Short History of Somers Point* (nd)., courtesy of the Atlantic County Historical Library, Somers Point; Abrahamson, Elaine Conover, *Atlantic Country: A Pictorial History* (Norfolk: Donning) 1987.

⁸ Atlantic County Division of Economic Development fact sheets, nd.

⁹ Funnell: 145; Abrahamson: 171. Enoch L. "Nucky" Johnson was county boss and Treasurer from 1911 to 1941, when he and forty associates were convicted of income tax evasion and imprisoned. Frank "Hap" Farley succeeded Johnson as county leader for the next thirty years.

¹⁰ Atlantic County Division of Economic Development fact-sheets, nd.

¹¹ *Atlantic Country Census Trends 1970-1980* (Atlantic City: Atlantic Country Department of Regional Planning and Development) May 1985: 28.

¹² Author's interview with Bob Boileau, Linwood, 22 June 1988. In some cases, the author will offer a pseudonym to protect the identity of a respondent.

¹³ *Atlantic City Press*, 24 July 6 1964: 22.

¹⁴ *Mainland Journal*, 2 June 1966: 7b.

¹⁵ *Hoofsprints*, April 1964.

¹⁶ See *Montage* 1969: 112-113 on the "Tara" prom theme, and *Montage* 1970: 11 on Vietnam.

¹⁷ Atlantic City Census Trends: 28. There were 1480 New Jerseyans among the Vietnam War dead, including 111 from its largest, ghettoized city Newark. "US Military Personnel Who Died...In the Vietnam War, 1957-1986," reprint from "Combat Area Casualties, 1957-86" (Machine Readable Record), Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Record Group 330, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

¹⁸ Author's interviews with Nick Bessor, Linwood, 15 June 1988 and John Jones, Northfield, 19 August 1988.

¹⁹ Author's interview with John Edwards, Somers Point, 14 June 1988.

²⁰ *Atlantic City Press*, 13 September 1965 and 1 January 1966.

²¹ Author's interviews with Karen Carson, New York City, 24 August 1988, and Doris Farmer, Somers Point, 14 March 1989.

²² Author's interviews with Bob Burns, Pleasantville, 11 August 1988, and with Sterling Brown, Galloway Township, 18 July 1988.

²³ Author's interview with Jane Winters, Northfield, 8 August 1988.

²⁴ Tom Wolfe, "The Me Decade and the Third Great Awakening," in *The Purple Decades: A Reader* (New York: Berkley) 1987.

²⁵ Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: WW Norton) 1978, II.

²⁶ At this preliminary stage of analyzing my interview materials, I count 26 divorces, including three of high school sweethearts, and five cases of second divorces. Many respondents agreed that their generation's rate of divorce far exceeds that of their parents. Data on alcoholism is impressionistic, but I found at least nine cases of alcoholism, including two of graduates described as drinking themselves to death.