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In search of a home : an historical analysis of the major factors concerning the location of Virginia Commonwealth University

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IN SEARCH OF A HOME: AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MAJOR FACTORS CONCERNING THE LOCATION OF VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

The College of William and Mary in Virginia Ed.D. 1985

IN SEARCH OF A HOME:
AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MAJOR FACTORS CONCERNING THE LOCATION OF VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

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by

Ann Laurens Williams

May 1985

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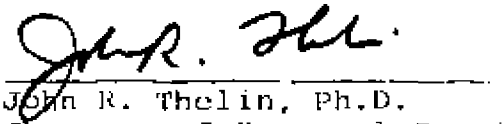

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Chairman of Doctoral Committee

Ancora imparo

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Statement of the Problem

Virginia Commonwealth University was created July 1, 1968, through the merger of the Richmond Professional Institute and the Medical College of Virginia. This merger was a result of recommendations made by two gubernatorial commissions.

The Higher Education Study Commission of 1963 (the Bird Commission), chaired by State Senator Lloyd C. Bird, suggested a "bold new development" in higher education in the Richmond area, possibly through a merger of the Richmond Professional Institute and the Medical College of Virginia. After this commission made its report, it was followed by the Commission to Plan for the Establishment of a Proposed State-Supported University in the Richmond Metropolitan Area of 1967 (the Wayne Commission) which was chaired by Edward A. Wayne. It examined the feasibility of a "major university under State control" proposed by the Bird Commission and recommended the establishment of Virginia Commonwealth University to be developed from the Richmond Professional Institute and the Medical College of Virginia, both of which were located in Richmond, Virginia.

Both the Bird and Wayne Commissions recognized the difficulty of such a merger and addressed the controversial question of site for such a university in Richmond. The Bird Commission acknowledged that:

> . . . the Medical College of Virginia is located on a rather restricted site in downtown Richmond, with barely enough land for its own present activities and expected expansions, and with little or no opportunity to increase the size of its site.[1]

The Wayne Commission echoed that sentiment and added:

> Even though site limitations restrict future expansion at the Medical College of Virginia, the school cannot realistically be relocated. This fact necessitates a commitment to a dual-campus university.[2]

In elaborating upon this conclusion, the Wayne Commission noted that the Medical College of Virginia was located in an urban setting "hemmed in on the west by City and Federal buildings, on the south by State property, and on the north and east by the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike."[3] As an academic health center with five teaching

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[1] Report of the Higher Education Study Commission to the Governor and General Assembly of Virginia, by Lloyd C. Bird, Chairman (Richmond, Virginia: Department of Purchases and Supply, 1965), p. 43.

[2] Report of the Commission to Plan for the Establishment of a Proposed State-Supported University in the Richmond Metropolitan Area, by Edward A. Wayne, Chairman (Richmond, Virginia: Department of Purchases and Supply, 1967), p. 47.

[3] Ibid., p. A-8.

hospitals, it was considered to be mandatory that it be located in a major metropolitan area to ensure ample patient case mix for the education of health science students, including physicians. Additionally, the physical plant's replacement cost was estimated to be $60,328,000.[4] While these arguments were valid ones for maintaining the existing physical location for the Medical College of Virginia, they were not germane to the Richmond Professional Institute portion of the proposed institution.

The existing physical plant at the Richmond Professional Institute was not satisfactory for a modern academic community. Its appraised value was only $6,581,000.[5] Many classrooms and offices were located in converted townhouses which, if sold, could have been reconverted to family dwellings. Although there were several academic buildings, the investment in them was not so great as to preclude their abandonment and the subsequent removal of the current Academic Campus (formerly the Richmond Professional Institute campus) to another location. Thus the decision of whether the Academic Campus should continue in its existing physical plant or be moved to another site had to be made. This decision, that is the

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[4] Ibid., p. A-8.

[5] Ibid., p. 48.

location of the physical plant of the Academic Campus, would determine whether Virginia Commonwealth University would in fact be an urban institution in an urban environment or whether it would be another traditional academic community in a rural environment.

This was a critical decision. Indeed, the University of Richmond had faced the issue, made a decision and moved to the suburbs about 50 years earlier. Now the planners of Virginia Commonwealth University were faced with the same basic decision and accompanying dilemma. Was Virginia Commonwealth University to be an urban university with an urban commitment or would it be a more traditional institution? The problem which this study addresses is to determine whether financial or academic considerations were of primary importance in establishing the location of Virginia Commonwealth University.

Hypothesis

As with most decisions, there were a multiplicity of factors to be evaluated. Although the Wayne Commission cites academic mission as the basic criterion, other criteria were also crucial determinants of the location of Virginia Commonwealth University. These other factors include political, historical, and social ones. My hypothesis is that, although there were numerous factors affecting

the selection of a site, it was primarily a financial decision to maintain the urban environment of the former Richmond Professional Institute campus as the basis of the new Academic Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University. This hypothesis does not exclude other factors, but it does assert that, when all reasons are considered, the selection of the site was primarily a financial decision and not an academic one.

This paper will examine political, historical, social, academic and financial factors to show how they operated at the time of the decision with the result that the Academic Campus was left in an urban environment.

Review of Related Literature

The two major sources of background information relevant to this study are works on campus planning and on urban universities. Berube, in The Urban University in America, makes an excellent comparison of European urban universities with the generally accepted notion of the pastoral New England College in the United States. He described the "anti-urban bias of American intellectuals /which/ has been partly traced to an agrarian tradition /that/ developed early in America."[6] The new country had

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[6]Maurice R. Berube, The Urban University in America (Westport, Ct., Greenwood Press, Inc., 1978), p. 45.

wide open spaces, and the city "was not conducive to the rarefied atmosphere of learning."[7] And yet, 100 years after the enactment of the Morrill Act which established the land-grant colleges, the major population of America was to be found in urban, not rural, regions.

An urban university often could not consider moving because of the extensive investment in its physical plant. The only way to grow was by enlarging its urban campus, frequently to the detriment of its neighbors. The Richmond Professional Institute, for example, was surrounded by large homes that had been divided so that they were now rooming houses owned by absentee landlords. The owners were often pleased by the sale of their property, and tenants were generally the urban poor who could not fight the process. Community relations necessarily deteriorated and distrust escalated. The situation in the United States was contrasted with the integrated landscape of the urban university in Europe. Instead of an entity distinct and separate from its environment such as an American urban university, a European urban university blends into and makes use of its surroundings.

Klotsche's The Urban University and the Future of Our Cities chronicles the decisions by a number of urban

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[7] Ibid.

institutions which have had the opportunity to address the issue of remaining in an urban setting or relocating. Institutions which decided to remain in the city include Temple University, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, and the University of Chicago. He also indicates that what is attempted by some institutions is to build a secluded, walled institution in a city rather than to be a part of the city.

> To be a part of the city and not apart from it is a challenge that urban institutions are beginning to accept, at the very moment when cities are re-examining their place in society and reassessing the means by which they can provide an attractive environment for their people.[8]

Klotsche emphasizes the need for an environment of an urban university to be conducive to learning and discovery.

Marshak's Problems and Prospects of an Urban Public University deals strictly with the City College of New York and its development in a major urban setting. He also indicates the need for an environment where learning can occur. "While it has been said that education, when necessity dictates, can take place in a barn, a clean, well-lighted classroom is far more conducive to effective

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[8] J. Martin Klotsche, The Urban University and the Future of Our Cities (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 65.

learning."[9] The students and faculty of an urban university have as much need for adequate facilities as those of a rural institution.

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education published The Campus and the City: Maximizing Assets and Reducing Liabilities which attempted to define an urban university and then presented the advantages and disadvantages of being located in a city. According to the Carnegie Commission, the term, urban university,

> as used in educational circles, designates something beyond mere accident of location. The term implies that the university accepts a special obligation to respond to the immediate educational needs of the community in which it is set; that, without compromising the standards appropriate to university instruction and investigation, it plans its offerings with direct reference to these needs, and that within the limits of its resources it is hospitable to all local requests for those intellectual services which a university may legitimately render.[10]

The Carnegie Commission emphasized the importance of an urban university recognizing that it was "an academic institution first and foremost."[11]

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[9] Robert E. Marshak, Problems and Prospects of an Urban Public University (New York: The City College, 1973), p. 144.

[10] The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, The Campus and the City: Maximizing Assets and Reducing Liabilities (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1972), p. iii.

[11] Ibid., p. 8.

Campus Planning by Richard Dober is a good source of a discussion of Section 112 of the 1959 amendments to the Housing Act of 1949. The purpose of Section 112 was to "establish a cohesive neighborhood environment compatible with the functions and needs of institutions of higher learning."[12]

Klotsche addressed Section 112 in a favorable light. The purpose of the Housing Act of 1949 was to help cities with urban renewal. The Act, however, was not helpful to universities since it required that 51 percent of land cleared or redeveloped had to be residential in nature. Universities needed campus facilities, not residential properties. Section 112 allowed universities to buy land from the city which was for urban renewal at one-fifth of its cost on the open market. The federal government provided two-thirds of the cost of renewal projects while the city bore one-third. By 1964, more than 75 institutions had used this means of urban renewal.[13]

Berube lambasted Section 112, saying it encouraged urban universities "to pursue their agrarian myth."[14] No cooperation between urban universities and urban residents

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[12]Klotsche, p. 73.

[13]Ibid., pp. 73-75.

[14]Berube, p. 50.

existed. Rather, urban universities were trying to eradicate many urban problems from their environment. This eradication was merely a facade. The problems were only moved, not eliminated, and the urban universities came to be seen as the enemy to the urban poor.

Weinstock's Space and Dollars: An Urban University Expands is based on a case study of the Drexel Institute of Technology. Its major point applicable to the current study is the discussion of the use of tall structures versus four-story ones.

The specific issue of site selection for the Academic Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University is recorded in both primary and secondary sources. Basic primary sources include the working papers of the Wayne Commission and minutes of the Board of Visitors of the Richmond Professional Institute and of the Medical College of Virginia. Secondary sources include Hibbs' A History of the Richmond Professional Institute and copies of newspaper articles related to the Bird and Wayne Commissions. Unfortunately, the working papers of the Bird Commission were apparently not retained in any known depository.

Further background data for this study, in addition to the written records pertaining to the issue of site selection, were obtained from oral interviews with a number of individuals involved in the discussions surrounding the

decision to maintain the Academic Campus on the existing Richmond Professional Institute site in the Richmond neighborhood known as the Fan District. Interviews were held with selected members of the Bird and Wayne Commisions, with Governor Mills E. Godwin, Jr., with Board members and administrators of the Richmond Professional Institute, and with the consultants to the Wayne Commission. Those interviewed were chosen on the basis of their background for discussion of the topic and their availability for interviewing.

Although oral history techniques are valuable historical tools, the use of this approach is limited by the availability of people willing and/or able to be interviewed. For example, Ed Crockin who was recommended as one who could provide valuable information on the State budget died before he could be contacted. Supposedly there was $1 million in the Governor's discretionary budget allocated for the new university to upgrade its academic programs and faculty. No one interviewed could substantiate that claim, but several indicated that Crockin was so familiar with the State budgets that he would have been able to verify whether or not such a sum existed.

Virginia Commonwealth Uniersity is almost 17 years old but already many documents are missing. For

example, Parkerson's proposed amendment to the legislation creating Virginia Commonwealth University is available only as a quotation in a student newspaper. The data collected by the Bird Commission are no longer available. The minutes of the Board of Visitors are of little value in determining the issues that dealt with site selection. Indeed, there are very few written documents which were of value in this research.

The new university had many tasks in its early years. The maintenance of records for posterity does not appear to have been one of its top priorities. In any case, very few records have been retained by Virginia Commonwealth University relating to the merger.

Significance

To establish the significance of this study, it is necessary briefly to trace the critical developments which resulted in the creation of Virginia Commonwealth University and the subsequent need to consider the issue of physical plant location. It should be noted that the Medical College of Virginia's site was never a major factor. It was determined at an early stage that the Medical College of Virginia would remain in its present location. Therefore, the major issue of site selection revolved around the possible relocation of the Richmond Professional Institute

campus.

Another major development with respect to the Richmond Professional Institute campus was the Serviceman's Readjustment Act, better known as the G. I. Bill, which was adopted in 1944 and opened the floodgates for veterans to attend colleges and universities by providing funds for their education. Richmond Professional Institute was selected by many veterans; their presence made a dramatic change in the size and character of the student body. Prior to World War II, the enrollment had been almost totally female. By the fall of 1947, the enrollment had grown to 1,638 students of which 49 percent were male.[15] From a predominantly female college, the institute became attractive to many male students.

Richmond Professional Institute was selected by veterans for a number of reasons. First, its urban location provided many opportunities for students to be employed in local businesses while attending college. Second, students were permitted, even encouraged, to enroll directly in courses in their majors without first taking a two-year program in general education. These courses gave students specific skills which would immediately help

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[15]Henry H. Hibbs, The History of the Richmond Professional Institute (Richmond: RPI Foundation, 1973), p. 93.

them in the marketplace. Since many veterans had families to support and needed to be employed, they liked the idea of acquiring marketable skills without having first to take a two-year liberal arts program.

Richmond Professional Institute continued to grow in both student body and physical plant. By the 1960s, Richmond Professional Institute, like many other Virginia institutions of higher education, did not have the space to accommodate additional students. This factor, among others, caused the Commonwealth to realize that demand for access to its colleges and universities was bringing with it a need for more space, more facilities and, importantly, new institutions. To address these issues, the Bird Commission was established to study higher education throughout the Commonwealth. As part of its report, it recommended the establishment of a new university in central Virginia. After the Bird Commission report on higher education was evaluated, the Wayne Commission was established to examine the feasibility of a merger of the Medical College of Virginia and the Richmond Professional Institute.

This study is intended to show the interplay of factors which were considered when the proposal to merge the Richmond Professional Institute and the Medical College ov Virginia was made, and the location of the physical plants of the resulting institution became an issue. The

lessons learned from this merger may be helpful to other institutions in the 1980s and early 1990s when there will be a reduction in the traditionally college-aged population which may then be reflected in a decrease in the numbers attending colleges. A major question that may face many institutions at that time is how to adjust their physical plant when there are more classrooms than are needed. What factors must be considered in the 1980s in light of the situation in the 1990s when there may be yet another surge in the college population? This study shows how one academic community was faced with this dilemma and responded to it. Indeed, what is learned from the experience of Virginia Commonwealth University may help others to avoid similar mistakes while replicating its successes.

Limitations and Scope

In 1964 the Bird Commission was appointed to study higher education in Virginia and proposed a merger of the Medical College of Virginia with the Richmond Professional Institute. This was followed by the Wayne Commission report in 1967. The recommendation as to the location of Virginia Commonwealth University was made by the Wayne Commission, as follows:

> The Commission recommends that the University be developed initially as a dual-campus institution, consisting of the present Richmond Pro-

> fessional Institute properties and such additional land in the area south of Richmond Professional Institute as may be needed, and a Health Sciences Division campus on the present site of the Medical College of Virginia.[16]

This was followed by the establishment of Virginia Commonwealth University. Therefore, the appropriate scope of this dissertation is from 1964 with the appointment of the Bird Commission to the establishment of Virginia Commonwealth University on July 1, 1968. This study is restricted to an analysis of the selection of the site for the Academic Campus of the new university. Limitations of the study include its retrospective nature and the few existing written documents with the attendant need to rely heavily on oral interviews.

Transition

In order to prove the hypothesis that financial considerations were the primary ones in the selection of the location of the Academic Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University, this study is organized as follows. First, the Bird and Wayne Commission reports are reviewed with attention given to those sections pertaining to site selection. Second, the major factors instrumental in the selection of a site are discussed. This includes

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[16]Wayne Commission report, p. 6.

factors of a political, historical, social, academic and financial nature. Finally, the impact of financial considerations is demonstrated as the primary reason for the location of the Academic Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University and conclusions are drawn.

CHAPTER II

SITE SELECTION AS INDICATED IN THE BIRD AND WAYNE COMMISSION REPORTS

In order to provide support for the hypothesis that the financial factor was the primary factor in site selection for the Academic campus of Virginia Commonwealth University, it was necessary to review the sections of both the Bird and Wayne Commission reports which pertain to this topic.

Overview of the Bird Commission Report

At the time the Bird Commission was established in 1964, the "baby boom" was already hitting colleges and universities, and it was readily apparent that Virginia lacked adequate facilities and resources to provide for the increased enrollment facing higher education. Virginia was exporting its high school graduates to other states for their education and thereby losing a valuable resource. Adults were also seeking access to institutions of higher education in larger numbers. This trend had begun with returning veterans after World War II and was continuing. The Bird Commission was established with a mandate to examine the future of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Pursuant to this charge from the General Assembly and

its appointment by Governor Albertis S. Harrison, the Bird Commission addressed a number of issues during the debates and hearings which preceded the formulation of its recommendations. These issues included the following: the possible need for a comprehensive community college system in Virginia, the development of policies of coeduation and admissions for institutions of higher education, the possible need for new four-year institutions, plans for the development of new academic programs, the need for control and coordination of higher education in Virginia, and the potential value of the concept of a merger of the Medical College of Virginia with the Richmond Professional Institute. The merger of these two State-supported institutions of higher education would serve to solve accreditation problems of the Medical College of Virginia which was one of only nine free-standing medical colleges in the United States. Abraham Flexner in his Report of Medical Education in the United States and Canada, generally referred to as the Flexner Report, developed a model for medical schools which placed an emphasis on biological research with attendant clinical facilities and laboratories.[1]

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[1]Martin Kaufman, American Medical Education: The Formative Years, 1765-1910 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976), p. 172.

The primary place for such laboratories and facilities was in universities and, therefore, Flexner recommended that medical schools affiliate with universities.[2] His recommendation was widely accepted and by 1965, of the 99 medical schools in the United States, only nine remained independent institutions without university ties. The Medical College of Virginia was one.

When the Association of American Medical Colleges announced that it would no longer accredit free-standing medical schools, the Medical College of Virginia came face to face with a problem it had been flirting with since it received confidential probation in 1935. A building program and strong recruiting efforts paid off when, in 1953, the confidential probation was removed. However, the research program of the Medical College of Virginia was dependent on support from national foundations, and the foundations were making most of their awards to medical schools with university affiliations. The decision of the Association of American Medical Colleges not to accredit unaffiliated medical schools made it mandatory that the Medical College of Virginia become part of a university.

University status would also add academic programs

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[2]Abraham Flexner, Report of Medical Education in the United States and Canada (New York: Carnegie Foundation, 1910), p. xi.

and faculty to the Richmond Professional Institute and thus increase its stature in the higher education community. In 1965 the Richmond Professional Institute was comprised of a number of professional schools, but no school of arts and sciences.

> About 1964-65 the State Council of Higher Education and a study committee of the Southern Association of Colleges recommended that a School of Arts and Sciences be added to the offerings of Richmond Professional Institute.[3]

Just prior to the merger with the Medical College of Virginia, the Richmond Professional Institute included the following schools and programs:

> Two exclusively graduate-professional schools open to college graduates only: Social Work, Rehabilitation Counseling.
>
> Eleven professional schools or departments, each of which offers the Bachelor's Degree and several of which offer the Master's.
>
> One school of Engineering in cooperation with Virginia Polytechnic Institute.
>
> One school (or college) of Arts and Sciences,

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[3] Henry H. Bibbs, The History of the Richmond Professional Institute (Richmond: RPI Foundation, 1973), p. 136.

with a dean in charge, and with the usual departments.

Several two-year semiprofessional or junior college programs of study.[4]

The development of the School of Arts and Sciences brought with it the need to attract new faculty. Often those with doctorates were not attracted to an institution where classes were held in makeshift surroundings. But those attracted had to be dedicated to teaching, the primary mission of the Richmond Professional Institute.

In the fall of 1965, there were 7,855 students. The student body had grown to more than 10,000 students by the fall of 1967.[5]

After determining that the merger would be beneficial to both institutions, the final report of the Commission sought to support such a merger by citing the lack of a substantial graduate school in the Richmond area and the accreditation problems associated with the Medical College of Virginia. However, the Bird Commission tempered its proposal with the observation that the creation of a university campus in the capital city would be "inordinately expensive and most certainly it would be

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., p. 137.

difficult."[6] Thus it would appear that one of the major problems associated with a new university might be that of locating and developing a satisfactory site.

Bird Commission Recommendations as to Site

The Bird Commission analyzed the physical plants of both institutions. According to this commission, the existing Richmond Professional Institute campus:

> . . . could be retained for use as a downtown division of the new Central Virginia State University. There will be a heavy and continuing demand for evening classes and other services for part-time students, and facilities in the present downtown location of Richmond Professional Institute can, at least for a number of years in the future, serve this need well.[7]

There was precedent for this type of plan already in Richmond. The University of Richmond in the 1960s opened its University College in several renovated buildings in downtown Richmond to house its evening college.

With respect to the medical campus, the Bird Commission indicated that:

> As needs for expansion beyond the capacity of the present site develop, however, some units of the Medical College which do not require close proximity to hospitals, such as the

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[6] Report of the Higher Education Study Commission to the Governor and General Assembly of Virginia, by Lloyd C. Bird, Chairman (Richmond, Virginia: Department of Purchases and Supply, 1965), p. 43.

[7] Ibid., p. 44.

> School of Pharmacy, might be moved to the main campus of the proposed new University.[8]

After reviewing the two existing campuses, the Bird Commission described the optimal site by stating:

> The best solution probably will involve the acquisition of a new site for the proposed Central Virginia State University. In order to secure sufficient land area, the site will probably have to be on the perimeter of the city or even in the suburban area in Chesterfield, Henrico, or Hanover County. The site should have good transportation facilities and plenty of land for immediate development and future expansions. The minimum would probably be about 1,000 acres to begin with, but there should be undeveloped land adjacent which could be acquired later as needs for expansion become evident, as they most certainly will.[9]

In its suggestion, the Bird Commission recommended the retention of the two existing campuses coupled with the proposal for a new campus to be located in a rural area with room for expansion. The issue of why a third campus was proposed was discussed with Daniel C. Lewis, a member of the Bird Commission. Lewis observed that there did not seem to be any reason for this proposal except for tradition.[10] Colleges and universities historically were located away from congested cities; therefore, the new

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[8] Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[9] Ibid., p. 44.

[10] Daniel C. Lewis, interview held by telephone to Williamsburg, Virginia, 6 June 1984.

university's main campus should be in a pastoral setting. This plan anticipated that there would be three campuses, each serving a different student clientele.

Overview of the Wayne Commission Report

As a result of the recommendations of the Bird Commission, the need for a detailed examination of the proposed Central Virginia State University was recognized, and in March, 1966, the General Assembly of Virginia responded and authorized the establishment of a 15-member Commission to study the proposal. Accordingly, Governor Mills E. Godwin, Jr. appointed the Commission to Plan for the Establishment of a Proposed State-Supported University in the Richmond Metropolitan Area under the leadership of Edward A. Wayne, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, who gave his name to the Commission.

The charge of the Wayne Commission was:

> . . . to undertake a compehrensive study of the proposal to create a major new university in the Richmond metropolitan area, including the utilization of the Medical College of Virginia and Richmond Professional Institute as parts thereof, and a long-range plan of objectives, needs and resources for such a university, and the name therefor.[11]

Pursuant to this mandate, the Wayne Commission examined in

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[11]Virginia Senate. Senate Joint Resolution #63, March, 1966.

detail the implications and ramifications of a new university.

Analysis of Existing Facilities by the Wayne Commission

One of the areas prescribed for study by the enabling legislation was the location of the new university. To accomplish this, a subgroup of the Wayne Commission (the Committee on Facilities and Site) was:

> . . . to make or have made an engineering appraisal of the physical facilities now available at Medical College of Virginia and Richmond Professional Institute, to estimate the prospective life and usefulness of these facilities, to review and appraise campus sites proposed by the respective political units in the Richmond Metropolitan Area, and to recommend to the full Commission such site or sites which, in their judgement (sic), appeared most feasible to conform to the projected needs of the proposed university.[12]

The Wayne Commission accomplished this by using a study of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia which earlier had analyzed the facilities of Virginia's institutions of higher education. According to its report, the Medical College of Virginia had 94.3 percent of its non-residential facilities evaluated as being in

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[12] Report of the Commission to Plan for the Establishment of a Proposed State-Supported University in the Richmond Metropolitan Area, by Edward A. Wayne, Chairman (Richmond, Virginia: Department of Purchases and Supply, 1967), p. 47.

satisfactory condition.[13] This was the second highest percentage in the state. Additionally, it had 52 square feet of instructional space per student, surpassed only by the Virginia Military Institute and Virginia State College in Petersburg.[14] The physical plant of the Medical College of Virginia was valued at more than $60 million. The abandonment of this campus was never seriously considered because of the heavy investment in physical plant, its satisfactory condition and its strategic location. Therefore, the issue as to the location of the Medical College of Virginia was closed.

Richmond Professional Institute, however, had the least general classroom instructional space per full-time equivalent student at 8.1 square feet.[15] It was evaluated by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia as having 34.9 percent of its non-residential properties in the "should be razed and replaced" category.[16] The report of the State Council further indicated:

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[13]State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, Staff Report #10 to the Virginia Higher Education Study Commission, Instructional Plant Facilities in Virginia's Institutions of Higher Education (Richmond, Virginia, 1965), p. 40.

[14]Ibid., p. 30.

[15]Ibid., p. 30.

[16]Ibid., p. 40.

> At . . . Richmond Professional Institute, slightly more than one-third of all instructional space was in the category "should be replaced;" a casual visitor to the institution would doubtless condlude quickly that the percentage is an understatement.[17]

Indeed, the report of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia continued:

> The Institute has in the past had rather specialized professional programs. In recent years it has added more general college curriculums (sic). It now enrolls some 6,500 students, many of whom are part-time. If the institution were provided with adequate land facilities, it could enroll as many as 17,000 students by 1975. This focuses on the major issue in the Richmond area as to what institution (and where it should be located) should provide for the large enrollment growth here.
>
> . . . . With the rapid growth and pressures of additional enrollment, it is evident that Richmond Professional Institute will have to develop a basic, long-term plan. Its present location, restricted very tightly to a small area, suggests that the whole matter of location of this institution and what may be projected for it be reviewed before too much additional money is invested in new buildings and remodeling of old residences.[18]

The reports indicated that Richmond Professional Institute could be abandoned. This gave the Wayne Commission the flexibility to renovate an existing campus, select a new one, or some combination of the two proposals. The

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[17] Ibid., pp. 43-45.

[18] Ibid., pp. 55-56.

issue of site was thus open and had to be addressed.

Site Proposals Reviewed by the Wayne Commission

With this flexibility, the Wayne Commission established criteria to use in recommending a site. The factors to be considered were "accessibility to the population to be served, the state of development of the prospective site, the purposes to be served by the institution, and the proximity of other units of the university. . . ."[19]

The Counties of Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico and the City of Richmond proposed a total of 10 sites for the new university which were visited by the Committee on Facilities and Site. These sites were:

1. Chesterfield County - Swift Creek area
2. Hanover County
    a. Poor House Tract four miles west of Ashland on State Route 696 and Stagg Creek
    b. Sliding Hill Intersection of Interstate Route 95
    c. North of Chickahominy River near Route 33
    d. Two locations in the Rockville-Hylas area
3. Henrico County - Elko Tract owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia

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[19]Wayne Commission report, p. A-7.

4. City of Richmond

   a. Richmond Professional Institute/ Oregon Hill Area

   b. Broad Street Station/Parker Field area

   c. Southside riverfront/Hull Street area[20]

It is appropriate to divide the proposed sites into two groups. The first group to be addressed is comprised of sites which, although reviewed, were rejected for failure to meet the site profile formulated by the Wayne Commission. After reviewing these sites, I will examine in the next chapter those sites that did meet the Wayne Commission profile and attempt to determine which factors contributed to the ultimate decision.

Chesterfield County

Chesterfield County proposed a site which was given some consideration by the Wayne Commission. Located 15 miles from Richmond, it would have provided a 1,000-acre rural site with plenty of room for expansion for a university. However, it was not accessible to the population of the entire region; it was not in close proximity to the Medical College of Virginia campus; it was undeveloped property in that there were no improvements to the land,

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[20] Ibid., Exhibit A.

and the urban nature of the new university might have been difficult to develop in such a rural setting. The criteria of the Wayne Commission included accessibility, development of the property, the purposes of the institution and the proximity to other units of the institution. The Chesterfield County site did not meet these criteria. According to Mrs. Eleanor P. Sheppard, the only surviving member of the Committee on Facilities and Site, some consideration was given to the site in Chesterfield, but little, if any, to the locations in Hanover County.[21]

Hanover County

Hanover County proposed five sites to the north and west of Richmond. All of these sites with the exception of the Poor House Tract were clearly rural in nature and posed some difficulty in access. Although the Sliding Hill site could be reached via Interstate 95, the other three sites would definitely mean a trip over rural roads. The other Hanover site, known as the Poor House Tract, would have been in close proximity to Ashland which is also the home of Randolph-Macon College. Although this site would have had the advantage of accessibility, it was 17 miles north

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[21]Eleanor P. Sheppard, interview in Richmond, Virginia, 8 June, 1984.

of Richmond.

In summary, had the decision been made to locate the new Academic Campus in Hanover, it would have been in an essentially rural location which would require travel along a heavily utilized interstate highway or along underdeveloped rural roads. Without question, the selection of any of these sites would have required extensive commitment of financial resources for development and would be significantly removed from the City of Richmond. This presented difficult problems in accessibility, in terms of both students and faculty. The possibility of linking academic programs with those on the Medical College of Virginia campus would also have been decreased.

The distance from the city would also make it more difficult to draw upon the resources of the city and would separate the new campus from the existing campus in such a way as to make administration difficult. Although the traditional argument to locate universities in rural communities to facilitate uninterrupted study had some persuasion attached to it, it would seem that such a location would have defeated the proposal of the Wayne Commission to have a major urban university where "the city is a living laboratory."[22]

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[22]Wayne Commission Report, p. 47.

With respect to the Hanover County sites, no evidence could be located which suggested that any of these sites was given serious consideration.

City of Richmond

Two sites in the City of Richmond (Broad Street Station/Parker Field area and the Southside riverfront/Hull Street area) never received any serious consideration according to Sheppard,[23] Edward A. Wayne,[24] and H. I. Willett.[25] There was little if any advantage to these sites over the Richmond Professional Institute campus, and nothing would have been gained by moving the institution within the city.[26]

Viable Alternatives

For the reasons cited above, the Chesterfield and Hanover County sites and two of the proposals in the City of Richmond were rejected by the Wayne Commission. This left the Elko Tract in Henrico County and the Richmond Professional Institute/Oregon Hill site in the City of

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[23] Mrs. Eleanor P. Sheppard, ibid.

[24] Edward A. Wayne, interview, Richmond, Virginia, 19 June 1984.

[25] H. I. Willett, interview, Richmond, Virginia, 21 June 1984.

[26] Wayne, ibid.

Richmond as possible locations. Therefore, the major attention of the Wayne Commission was directed toward the existing physical plant of the Richmond Professional Institute and the Elko Tract. As stated previously, the issues were whether to enlarge an existing campus, to retain it in its present form as an auxiliary operation, or to close it down and move to a new campus.

CHAPTER III

A COMPARISON OF THE ELKO TRACT WITH THE RICHMOND PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTE/OREGON HILL SITE

As noted earlier, after the initial review of sites by the Wayne Commission, there were two locations which emerged as the most viable alternatives for the Academic Campus of the proposed university. These sites were the Elko Tract in eastern Henrico County and the existing site of the Richmond Professional Institute campus in Richmond. These possibilities will now be examined before addressing the factors which dictated a final decision.

History and Geography of the Elko Tract

The Elko Tract in Henrico County is located 12 miles from downtown Richmond in a largely rural area. It was best known for two war-related activities. During the Civil War Battle of White Oak Swamp on June 30, 1862, "Stonewall" Jackson's forces fired on the Union Army from what is now Portugee Road which runs through the Elko Tract.[1] During World War II, the United States government used the Elko Tract as a dummy airport to protect the

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[1]Douglas Southall Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), Vol. I, pp. 573-4.

Richmond Army Air Base, now Byrd International Airport.

After the Second World War, the Commonwealth of Virginia acquired the property from the War Assets Administration with three stipulations:

> One of the stipulations of the transfer is that the property shall be used as a site for the construction of a State institution for medical care and special training for feeble-minded and epileptic Negroes of Virginia. Another point stressed in the deed is that construction shall begin within two years of the date of conveyance. Also, the property must be used for a Negro mental institution for 25 years or it reverts back to the United States government.[2]

Pursuant to these stipulations, it was proposed by the State Hospital Board to locate the Virginia State Colony for Negroes on the Elko Tract. Although there was vigorous opposition by Henrico County residents and officials to this proposal, their opposition was not heeded. Between 1951 and 1955, more than $500,000 was expended to improve the site in terms of roads, curbs, gutters, sewage disposal, water storage, water and sewer lines, storm drainage, underground wiring, and fire hydrants.[3]

The State eventually got clear title to the land when it "paid some $39,000 to the federal government for the

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[2]"Negroes' Institution To Be Built: Mental Hospital To Be at Elko," Richmond News Leader, 6 October 1948.

[3]"Elko Called University Possibility," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 1 October 1966.

property."[4] In 1958, the State Hospital Board declared the Elko property and facilities surplus to its needs when the decision was made to locate the proposed training school adjacent to the Central State Hospital in Petersburg.[5] Since the Elko Tract was not needed by the State Hospital Board, it was available as an improved site for the Academic Campus of the proposed university.

History and Geography of the Richmond Professional Institute Site

In distinct and dramatic contrast to the rural Elko Tract, the other proposed area for the new campus was the existing Richmond Professional Institute located in the Fan District of Richmond. Less than two miles from the Medical College of Virginia, the Cobblestone Campus (as the Richmond Professional Institute campus was known) was composed of a conglomeration of facilities most of which were more than 50 years old. Many townhouses had been converted into faculty offices and classrooms. The School of Social Work was housed in a former medical office building. Excellent works of art were being produced by

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[4]Elko Abandonment Plan is Attacked, Defended," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 14 February 1957.

[5]The Elko Tract: Potential Alternative Land Uses. (Dover, Delaware: Bivens & Associates, Inc., 1973), p. 4.

both faculty and students in garages up and down the alleys of the campus. These alleys and garages were not charming, quaint areas but rather rat-infested, dirty places. An old stable served as the library, and a renovated high-rise apartment was used as a women's dormitory. The dramatic arts were taught and the student cafeteria was located in a building that had originally been a church and then the Scottish Rite Temple. It was not unusual for the lights to go out in the middle of a play or a meal because of faulty wiring. These old facilities were distinctive in their state of disrepair. Only a few relatively new academic buildings existed. Interspersed with the buildings of the Richmond Professional Institute were churches, obstetricians' offices, private dwellings, alleys and streets. Much of the surrounding area was in a state of stagnation or decline. The beatniks of the 1950s had been replaced by the hippies of the 1960s, and derelicts and other degenerates continued to meander through the neighborhood and campus. Many Richmonders found a drive through the Richmond Professional Institute campus both a challenge and a source of humor.

How had the campus developed to this point? When the institution began in 1917 during World War I as the Richmond School of Social Economy, its first home was on the third floor of a building otherwise occupied by the

Richmond Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. Henry H. Hibbs, the developer of the Richmond Professional Institute, was a wise manager of money. Using a borrowed facility was far less expensive than constructing a new building.

In 1919, the Richmond Professional Institute moved to its second home at 1228 East Broad Street, a three-story building next to Monumental Church. The Church owned the facility and lent it to the college rent-free. However, the location:

> . . ."was then rather slummy." The night students were the first to reject the 1228 East Broad Street area. They said they were afraid to go there. It was too close to the former "red light" district and also only a block, and a short block at that, from "Jail Alley," they complained.[6]

To increase revenue by increasing enrollment, the Richmond Professional Institute moved to still another home at 17 North Fifth Street in 1923, where it remained for two years until it moved to its fourth and permanent location at Shafer and West Franklin Street in a building now known as Founders Hall. This was its fourth location and once again a building designed for something other than an academic building was used by Hibbs.

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[6]Henry H. Hibbs, The History of the Richmond Professional Institute (Richmond, The RPI Foundation, 1973), p. 25.

The School had constantly been plagued by inadequate resources. As an independent institution, the Richmond School of Social Work and Public Health, as it was now known, relied heavily upon a group of citizens for support. Eventually, their support could not stretch far enough and, in 1925, the institution became a division of the College of William and Mary. Hibbs' financial problems did not end with this affiliation, however. From 1925 until 1940, the Richmond School of Social Work and Public Health was the only State institution which received no State funding.

The name of the Richmond School of Social Work and Public Health was changed in 1939 to the Richmond Professional Institute, a Division of the College of William and Mary. According to Hibbs, this was done for two reasons:

> . . . first, that while a part of the William and Mary system and operated by the College of William and Mary with the same president and Board, the Richmond Professional Institute really comes of a sufficiently important educational family to have a name of its own and a purpose of its own and a faculty of its own, and to change the figure, to be a sufficiently important tub in the educational world to stand on its own bottom; and, second, we changed the name to make it clear that here at the Richmond Professional Institute technical, vocational, and professional work are not merely incidental features added to a general college curriculum in order to attract students, but on the contrary that these fields of study constitute the things

> in which Richmond Professional Institute specializes and on which it places the main emphasis.[7]

The General Assembly appropriated its first tax dollars to the Richmond Professional Institute in 1940.[8] The level of support was not great, but it was a step in a new direction. By 1962, the institution had developed sufficiently for the State legislature to approve an independent status for the Richmond Professional Institute.

Hibbs was gifted in converting old facilities into makeshift classrooms. It can be easily determined that the investment of funds in the Richmond Professional Institute was not large. The State Council of Higher Education in its report on facilities of the Richmond Professional Institute noted:

> The Student Center is being suggested as a building to remodel. The Consultants do not recommend that this building be remodeled for a student center. It is an old residence and will really be inadequate as a substantial student center. There are miscellaneous other old residences which have been purchased and which are at best a makeshift situation. These should be demolished in the very near future and replaced with adequate classroom and laboratory facilities.
>
> The Administration Building contains mostly classrooms and certain administrative

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[7] The Wigwam (Richmond Professional Institute, 1940), n. p.

[8] Virginia Commonwealth University Self-Study (Richmond, Virginia: Virginia Commonwealth University, 1972), p. xix.

> offices. The building is a "hodgepodge" of many different types of hallways and varying size rooms. It is badly in need of renovation in all areas. The faculty offices are in unsatisfactory condition.[9]

Thus, the Richmond Professional Institute campus could have been abandoned, used in combination with other facilities, or expanded into an academic campus.

The Elko Tract and the existing Richmond Professional Institute campus were both available. Whereas the Elko Tract harbored raccoons, chipmunks and deer, the Richmond Professional Institute campus was the home of hippies, derelicts and other exotic creatures. To put it another way, these two campus sites were diametrically opposed in their characteristics, and the final decision as to the location of the Academic Campus of the new university had the potential to influence the ultimate development and emphases of the new Virginia Commonwealth University.

Each of these sites will have to be examined in light of the political, historical, social and academic factors.

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[9] State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, Staff Report #10 to the Virginia Higher Education Study Commission, Instructional Plant Facilities in Virginia's Institutions of Higher Education (Richmond, Virginia, 1965), pp. 55-56.

Political Factors

Because of numerous annexation attempts on the part of Richmond to absorb portions of Henrico County, the political climate between the two jurisdictions was not particularly cordial in the 1960s. In fact, there was a strong, competitive spirit. The Wayne Commission was composed of several members with strong ties to downtown Richmond. Eppa Hunton, IV, chairman of the commission, was a principal in a large law firm in the city. Eleanor Sheppard had served as vice mayor and as mayor of the city from 1960 to 1964 and was currently serving as a Richmond delegate to the Virginia General Assembly. G. William Norris was associated with a major corporation, also of downtown Richmond. In addition, Norris was an alumnus of the Richmond Professional Institute. Other members of the Commission with downtown interests included Wayne as President of the Federal Reserve Bank; Joseph C. Carter, Jr., a lawyer with a prominent firm in the central city; Frederic H. Cox, an architect and the President of the Fan District Association; Franklin W. Gayles, a faculty member at Virginia Union University; J. Sargeant Reynolds, a Richmond delegate to the Virginia General Assembly; Stuart Shumate of the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad; William B. Trapnell of Common-

wealth Natural Gas; and H. I. Willett, former Superintendent of the Richmond Public Schools. Only four of the 15 members of the Wayne Commission lacked strong city connections.

Additionally, the three consultants to the Wayne Commission were all from Temple University, an urban university with several campuses in both downtown Philadelphia and its suburban areas and a free-standing hospital.

A vast majority of the Commission members were connected to the City of Richmond, personally or professionally. Since it was certainly to the advantage of the City of Richmond to have a new university in its center, political gain could thus be achieved from such a location.

While the members of the Wayne Commission had ties to the City of Richmond, the primary supporter of the Elko Tract was Senator William F. Parkerson, Jr. Parkerson, who represented Henrico County in the Senate of the Virginia General Assembly, led the charge to have the new university located in his senatorial district. Parkerson developed a list of arguments to support his position. His arguments related to the new university included the proximity to the Medical College of Virginia campus, its capital improvements of roads, sewers and lights, ingress and egress via Interstate 64 for faculty, students, staff and visitors, and its close proximity to the airport for

visiting scholars. Additionally, Parkerson argued that, since the Elko Tract contains almost 2,400 acres, there would be no problem with room for expansion. There would have been no people displaced from their homes and businesses, and no properties would have been removed from the tax rolls of the City of Richmond. Much of the land contained timber which could have been sold by the new university to increase revenues.

The Elko Tract was a viable alternative to the Richmond Professional Institute campus expansion as a site, but some arguments favored the city location. For example, the Richmond Professional Institute was located less than two miles from the Medical College of Virginia while the Elko Tract was more than 12 miles from the medical campus. The developed state of the Elko Tract was far superior to that of other rural locations, but the Richmond Profesional Institute was a "going concern," albeit in many dilapidated buildings, but usable and in existence. The interstate highways would have provided access to those with automobiles, but no public transportation existed or was planned for the area in eastern Henrico County. It would have been relatively accessible to those on the northern and eastern parts of the area, but not accessible even with access to public transportation to those students residing in southern and western

portions of the metropolitan area.

Therefore, the legitimate arguments of supporters of the Elko Tract included the vast amount of land for expansion; the uninhabited state of the property; thereby not displacing homes, business and churches with the concommitant loss of tax revenues, and the availability of timber as a possible source of revenue for the new university.

Politically, it would have been an astounding accomplishment had Parkerson been able to get a major university to locate in his county. The Henrico County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution stressing the financial feasibility of selecting the Elko Tract as a third campus site for the new university, as follows:

> WHEREAS, the 1968 Virginia General Assembly is now considering the creation of a State Supported University in the Richmond Metropolitan Area by merging the Medical College of Virginia and the Richmond Professional Institute, and
>
> WHEREAS, the proposed expansion of RPI's 9 acres to 193 acres in downtown Richmond to create the major portion of this university will cost the State of Virginia millions of dollars in land acquisition alone, and
>
> WHEREAS, removing this large parcel of land from the tax roles (sic), which contains many homes, businesses and churches, will either financially burden Richmond residents within the central city, or cause local officials to request the State for supplemental appropriations as the result of this expansion program, and
>
> WHEREAS, the recent U. S. Federal Court ruling,

> which bars federal impact funds from being computed in the State Aid formula for public school systems will require the taxpayers of Virginia to make up the next biennium's deficit of over $21 million dollars (sic), and
>
> WHEREAS, the State of Virginia has already invested a half million dollars worth of operable utility improvements on the Elko tract site, which lies between two major rivers, is convenient to all residents in the Metropolitan Richmond Area, and is ideally suited for environmental health studies and has the space to accommodate specialized laboratories in chemistry, biology, physics and geology.
>
> NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Henrico Board of County Supervisors hereby urges local officials across the State to request their representatives in the 1968 Virginia General Assembly to abandon the costly plan of expanding RPI to the James River across 193 acres in the high density area of downtown Richmond, since the State will be financially hard pressed as never before, and
>
> BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 2,372 acre State-owned Elko Tract in the Metropolitan Richmond Area be utilized as a third site for the State University without expanding State funds for site acquisition, to form a tri-campus site for a great State University utilizing existing facilities and locations of MCV and RPI as parts thereof.[10]

It is not apparent that they considered either the time or the money necessary to build a new campus from the ground up nor did they address the complications of administering a university with multiple campus locations.

Parkerson coupled his articulate support of the

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[10]Item No. 65-68, Minutes, Henrico County Board of Supervisors, 7 February, 1968, p. 329.

Elko Tract with a clever, but unsuccessful, amendment before the Senate Education Committee on February 16, 1968, as follows:

> The Board (of Visitors) shall, before purchasing or otherwise acquiring land for any capital improvement, inquire of (State) Division of Engineering and Buildings if there is available any suitable land owned by the State which can be authorized for the purpose for which additional land is needed.[11]

This amendment died in committee. However, even if this amendment had been adopted, there is no indication that the Elko Tract would necessarily have been chosen as the site.

An analysis of the impact of these political factors reveals that the power of the Wayne Commission and its members withstood the arguments proposed by Parkerson. It should also be recognized, however, that it is much easier to maintain the status quo insofar as the site is concerned than to make the type of dramatic change that a move to the Elko Tract would have entailed.

Historical Factors

The historical influences on site selection also essentially favor the continuation of an established

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[11] "RPI-MCV consolidation given assembly approval," Proscript, Richmond Professional Institute, 16 February 1968.

campus in contrast to the complete relocation of the campus to another location. Interestingly, the Medical College of Virginia had physically moved from Hampden-Sydney College to the City of Richmond in the 1800s. The purpose of this move was to locate the medical school in proximity to an adequate patient case mix. Richmond Professional Institute had occupied numerous sites in the course of its relatively short history. Indeed, there are a number of instances where major universities have moved from one place to another. For example, Columbia University had moved to avoid being an urban university, but New York City followed and surrounded it.[12]

The Administration of the Richmond Professional Institute wanted the new university to be an expansion of its existing campus and worked diligently to influence the decision in that direction. A revision of its Master Site Plan in December 1966 (one year after the Bird Commission report) projected an expansion of the campus from 10.5 acres to between 150-200 acres by 1980.[13]

President George J. Oliver of Richmond Professional

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[12] J. Martin Klotsche, The Urban University and the Future of Our Cities (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), p. 62.

[13] Robert Holland, "RPI Wants Present Site Expanded: Officials Quietly Aiming for 150 to 200 Acres," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 25 December 1966.

Institute stated that the "current programs should remain at their existing location, rather than being transferred to the new campus of the proposed university."[14]

In addressing the historical arguments which surrounded the decision, it is appropriate to suggest that the Richmond Professional Institute had always been closely bound to the City of Richmond. It was named after the city; it had drawn heavily upon the resources of the city for its adjunct faculty and related resources, and its student population was generally associated with the City of Richmond. It was a city college which had a loyal following of graduates who identified with the Cobblestone Campus.

The Elko Tract had no such established tradition and indeed had no meaningful identity. There were no overwhelming historical reasons which demanded a change from urban to rural. Hopefully, historical change is the result of meaningful arguments. Fortunately for the raccoons at Elko, no such arguments could be mustered. It is interesting to note, however, that if the Elko Tract had been selected, there would have been a University of Richmond on the western edge of the city, a

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[14]"RPI President Says School to Aid University Creation," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 13 September 1966.

Virginia Commonwealth University on the eastern edge, and a city with no major comprehensive university within its political boundaries.

Social Factors

Social factors were also important in the deliberations of the Wayne Commission. The debates about the site for the campus took place less than 15 years after the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, which sought to strike down the last vestiges of racial discrimination. In the 1960s, the white-black racial conflicts were still intense. The selection of an eastern Henrico County site might well have deprived many of Richmond's low-income groups from easy access to the benefits of higher education. Even a complex transportation system would not have overcome the problems related to getting to and from their homes. This would have been further complicated for many working students who would have a double commuting problem; from home to the campus and from the campus to their places of employment, which were likely to be in the central city.

The Richmond Professional Institute campus, however, was located in the midst of a low-income community, was readily accessible to all people and was close enough

to business centers to give students optimum opportunities for employment. Regional accessibility would soon be improved through the planned construction of the downtown expressway. These factors were important. It appears evident that many social benefits were achieved by maintaining the status quo and that these same social benefits probably would have been lost by a change in locale.

Incidentally, rumors have persisted for years that the university was located in the city to provide an education for black students while discouraging these students from attending other, more prestigious State universities. Although such rumors have surfaced from time to time, extensive research through interviews both on and off the record have failed to substantiate them.

Academic Factors

The final factor to be reviewed is the academic one. Most universities position themselves to serve identifiable populations. Historically, many of the early universities were established to train clergymen. Later, land-grant colleges were developed to meet the needs of the agricultural community. The concept of an urban university was developed to meet the needs of the growing cities. According to the Carnegie Commission,

> . . . the term, as used in educational circles, designates something beyond the mere accident

> of location. The term implies that the university accepts a special obligation to respond to the immediate educational needs of the community in which it is set; that, without compromising the standards appropriate to university instruction and investigation, it plans its offerings with direct reference to these needs; and that within the limits of its resources it is hospitable to all local requests for those intellectual services which a university may legitimately render.[15]

Indeed, Hibbs originally chose the center of Richmond as the location for his institution because of "the kind of study and training it was providing."[16] It was important to be located in the city if students were to study social work, the original curriculum. At the time of the development of the Richmond Professional Institute, the idea of an urban university was a very forward-looking one for Virginia.

Although it is not suggested that an Elko location would have precluded a close identity with the City of Richmond and the use of the city as a living laboratory, it certainly would have been more difficult to obtain such impact from a rural location. One of the consultants to the Wayne Commission was asked by a member of the Board of

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[15] The Campus and the City; Maximizing Assets and Reducing Liabilities, The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1972, p. iii.

[16] Hibbs, p. 124.

Visitors of the Richmond Professional Institute "if it is essential that parts of the university be physically adjacent."[17] The consultant, Edwin P. Adkins, indicated that "while it is not necessary, it should be considered since it is better to have certain allied programs on the same campus . . . and the trend in education is the interdependence of academic areas or disciplines."[18] The selection of the Richmond Professional Institute site would closely tie the university with the city and its use as an academic laboratory.

Another academic consideration which impinged on the ultimate selection was the need to make two distinct academic institutions into a new university. This objective was easier to meet by selecting the Richmond Professional Institute campus rather than the Elko Tract because of its proximity to the Medical College of Virginia. For example, the Elko Tract would have put much greater distance between the two campuses, and thus would have practically eliminated any possibility of students attending classes on both campuses and would have had essentially

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[17]Minutes of a special meeting of the Board of Visitors with the Executive Committee of the Wayne Commission, 9 September 1966, p. 9. Minutes of the Board of Visitors of the Richmond Professional Institute, Richmond, Virginia.

[18]Ibid.

the same impact on the assignment and the work of the faculty.

At this point, the Elko site and the Richmond Professional Institute campus have been examined in light of political, historical, social and academic factors which influenced the decision on site. On balance, the use of the existing campus was probably the easier decision to make. It could also be suggested that the combined weight of these factors might have resulted in the selection of the Richmond Professional Institute site. It is proposed, however, that none of these factors, either singly or in concert, was the primary source of the ultimate decision. Rather, it is suggested that financial factors brought about the ultimate location, and it is now appropriate to examine the impact of finances on the decision-making process.

CHAPTER IV

FINANCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE DECISION OF SITE SELECTION

Obviously a multiplicity of factors influenced the final site selection for the new Academic Campus. Although political, historical, social and academic factors were important as secondary influences on site selection, it is proposed that financial factors primarily influenced the final decision of a site for the Academic Campus.

For the purposes of this research, financial factors are defined as factors of direct cost alone and not as an aspect of related areas that might also have had a financial impact, either on the University itself or on the supporting community.

Resistance to the Proposed Merger by Those Associated with the Medical College of Virginia

The financial factors have to be put in the appropriate context. They cannot be fully understood unless the attitude toward the merger displayed by the Medical College of Virginia and the Richmond Professional Institute is examined.

The Board of Visitors and the Administration of the Medical College of Virginia recognized the need for becoming part of a university. The need for the merger

derived from the fact that the School of Medicine was under pressure from the Association of American Medical Colleges to become associated with a university or experience accreditation difficulties. At the time of the Wayne Commission study (1966), only nine medical colleges in the United States were not affiliated with a university. Pressure for affiliation with a university was growing in order to provide interdisciplinary approaches to instruction and research related to medical education.

According to the Wayne Commission report:

> The modern medical college has an obligation to its students, its faculty, its graduates and the patients it serves, to provide the intellectual setting where the highest standards will be enforced, where an atmosphere of academic stimulation will be maintained, and where the resources are available to permit unrestricted growth and development. That intellectual stimulation is found only in the university.[1]

Even though the need for university affiliation was recognized by the Board and Administration, the desire to retain the identity and continued autonomy of the Medical College of Virginia was widespread. Many alumni were adamant that the identity and reputation of their alma mater not be tarnished by associating with the Richmond

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[1] Report of the Commission to Plan for the Establishment of a Proposed State-Supported University in the Richmond Metropolitan Area, by Edward A. Wayne, Chairman (Richmond, Virginia: Department of Purchases and Supply, 1967), pp. B-2-3.

Professional Institute, and individual medical school alumni generally have considerable influence with members of the General Assembly. The Board and Administration understood the accreditation problems which were a catalyst that led to the merger, but it is not apparent that alumni were informed. It apparently was not deemed desirable to let alumni know that their alma mater had accreditation problems. In fact, the alumni office of the Medical College of Virginia continued to stir up sentiment against the merger and the new university for years after the merger was completed. A low-budgeted merger at little additional cost to the taxpayers and a pro forma merger at little additional organizational change except one president and university name as an immediate appendage by legislative act was far easier for the Medical College of Virginia to accept than would have been a merger associated with the development of a new Academic Campus which might grow to overshadow the medical complex.

Resistance to the Proposed Merger by Those Associated with the Richmond Professional Institute

Not everyone associated with the Richmond Professional Institute welcomed the merger. There were several reasons for this. Alumni were afraid that the name of the institution would be lost. The name of the new university,

Virginia Commonwealth University, meant little to them. Unlike the Medical College of Virginia, the name Richmond Professional Institute would not be retained. Additionally, the views of the Medical College of Virginia held by the faculty of the Richmond Professional Institute were not as laudatory as some suspected or hoped. For example, one quote read, "The MCV reputation is highly exaggerated in the minds of MCV people."[2]

In essence, a low-budgeted merger was quite acceptable to the Richmond Professional Institute since it would preserve its existing physical plant and, possibly, its autonomy. The environment of both institutions made it desirable to keep the existing physical plants intact. Perhaps it was desirable for both institutions to support a low-budgeted merger since it was not easy to secure State approval for the establishment of a new university.

Financial Pressures on the Virginia General Assembly

As guardians of the public purse with a long history of financial conservatism, the Virginia General Assembly had never been noted for its liberal attitude

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[2] Quotations. Interviews conducted with selected administrators, faculty and students of the Virginia Commonwealth University by Schechter & Luth, October-November 1968. Schechter & Luth Report File, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia.

toward spending money. This was especially true in the 1968 legislature which was faced with many demands for increased funding which would produce monumental problems if the tenets of traditional Virginia conservatism were to remain intact.

Governor Mills E. Godwin, Jr. proposed a $3.06 billion budget for Virginia for the 1968-70 biennium. For Higher Education, the Governor recommended $201 million from State general fund appropriations--an increase of about $68 million, and $185.6 million in special funds--an increase of $42.8 million over the previous biennium. Of this amount, some of the Governor's recommendations for operating funds included:

Institution	Requested (millions)	Governor's Recommendation (millions)
Richmond Professional Institute	$23.4	$19.0
Medical College of Virginia	$21.5	$19.3
Medical College of Virginia Hospitals	$45.8	$43.3
Virginia State College - Petersburg	$15.5	$14.0

Institution	Requested (millions)	Governor's Recommendation (millions)
Virginia State College - Norfolk	$12.4	$10.5
Longwood College	$ 8.3	$ 7.1
Madison College	$14.7	$11.9
Radford College	$13.8	$12.2
Old Dominion College	$21.1	$13.8[3]

Some college and university presidents were not pleased with the recommendation. For example, Henry I. Willett, Jr., President of Longwood College, indicated that the proposed budget bill:

> . . . contains $319,865 less in operating funds for 1968-70 than Longwood needs to maintain its current level of faculty. This cutback would mean that Longwood would see its authorized faculty of 130 reduced by 15. Five of these reduced positions are current vacancies for which the college has already made contract obligations. Ten current faculty members, some of whom have tenure, would have to be released.[4]

Edward F. Shannon, Jr., President of the University

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[3] "RPI Cost is $19 Million, MCV to Total $62.6 Million," Richmond News Leader, 11 January 1968.

[4] Robert Holland, "Two Colleges Bid Assembly Restore Funds," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 25 January 1968.

of Virginia, observed that "the 1966-67 instructional cost per graduate credit hour was notably below the average of the Virginia institutions producing the bulk of doctoral degrees."[5]

Roland H. Nelson, Jr., President of the Richmond Professional Institute, stressed that "We are under instructions by two accreditation agencies to show marked improvement in the number of full-time faculty employed who possess the doctoral degree."[6] Nelson continued that:

> RPI's growth has exacted a price. Our educational commitments have outrun our resources. The 15 percent of faculty holding a doctorate is the lowest of the four-year state institutions, and below accreditation standards; the heavy use of part-time faculty members needs to be reduced; and RPI's 13.8 library volumes per student is considered adequate--for a four-year high school.[7]

It should be noted that "over the last four years (1965-66 -- 1968-69) total operating income (for all State institutions of higher education) has increased

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[5]Hamilton Crockford, "Budget Group Hears Pleas From Colleges," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 30 January 1968.

[6]Stewart Jones, "RPI Asks Added $2 Million," Richmond News Leader, 31 January 1968.

[7]Robert Holland, "Added $4.3 Million Asked for Buildings," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 1 February 1968.

82.3 per cent."[8] The amount from the State General Fund increased "135.4 per cent since 1965-66 and the amount of State General Fund support per full-time equivalent (FTE) student has increased 73.0 per cent since 1965-66."[9] These figures include the developing community colleges which were planned to require less support per student than four-year institutions. Full-time enrollment at four-year institutions increased 24.1 percent in the two years between 1966-67 and 1968-69.

In addition to the heavy demands for operating funds, the needs for capital expenditures were especially pressing since the Virginia Community College System was a recent phenomenon on the educational scene in Virginia and was experiencing a very rapid growth and expansion. The community college system was proposed by the Bird Commission report of 1965, and the proposal was given very high priority by Governor Godwin. The Virginia Community College System requested $17.5 million in construction funds for the 1968-70 biennium of which only $7 million would come from federal funds. Godwin recom-

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[8] Financing Virginia's Colleges: Current Operating Income and Expenditures, 1968-69, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, December 1969, p. 4.

[9] Ibid., p. 8.

mended $9 million from State funds for a net of seven new colleges. The Virginia Community College System Board had planned for six new colleges and the new conversion of three vocational schools for a total of nine new colleges.[10] To pay for these and other requests, approval of an $81 million general obligation bond issue was included in the budget passed by the legislature. Of this amount, $67.3 million would be for projects for education and $13.7 million for mental hospital facilities. A voter referendum would be held in November 1968 to determine the fate of the bond issue.

The legislature was thus supporting a number of institutions of higher education and funding new ones. The existing institutions were not satisfied with the Governor's recommendations, and the newly established institutions also wanted more of the educational dollars. Since a new university would also require additional funds which would reduce the total dollars available to all institutions of higher education, it was not deemed to be financially desirable to dissipate the education funds further unless it was absolutely unavoidable.

Significantly, the new university would have been more expensive than two existing institutions, the Richmond

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[10] Ibid., "Added $4.3 Million Asked for Buildings."

Professional Institute and the Medical College of Virginia if, indeed, the merger were to be more than simply combining two institutions with one Board of Visitors and one President. To develop a true university would have necessitated a significant investment in the academic programs and faculty. One of the recommendations of the Wayne Commission was for an additional $300,000 to get the proposed university's academic offerings enlarged and upgraded. This enhanced funding was not in keeping with the history of the Richmond Professional Institute. Indeed, in 1964-65 and in 1966-67, the Richmond Professional Institute received the lowest percentage of State General Fund appropriations of all four-year institutions.

	State General Fund as a Percentage of Total Educational and General Dollars			
Institution	1964-65	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68
Richmond Professional Institute	27.1%	31.9%	34.3%	41.5%
Medical College of Virginia	58.3%	52.0%	60.5%	52.8%
All Other Four-year Institutions	51.1%	47.6%	53.9%	52.7%[11]

[11] Financing Virginia Colleges: Current Operating Income and Expenditures/1967-68, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, February 1969, p. 15.

With the low percentage of Education and General monies coming from the State General Fund to the Richmond Professional Institute, student tuition and fees contributed a much higher percentage. For example, the percentage of Educational and General dollars to all four-year institutions coming from student fees was 32.0 percent as compared with Richmond Professional Institute's 50.1 percent in 1967-68.[12]

In addition, a higher-than-average percentage of Education and General dollars was being spent on instruction by the Richmond Professional Institute. The average for all four-year institutions was 62.8 percent in 1967-68 in comparison with the Richmond Professional Institute's 73.6 percent.[13] Its library and physical plant were neglected in comparison to other institutions because of a lower percentage of the Education and General budget was being spent in those two areas.[14] Since General Fund appropriations usually support the instructional programs and the percentage for the Richmond Professional Institute was so low, doctorally-qualified faculty were not attracted by the salaries available. To make a university

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[12] Ibid., p. 16.

[13] Ibid., p. 39.

[14] Ibid., pp. 43-44.

by combining the Richmond Professional Institute and the Medical College of Virginia would require the expenditure of significant funds to improve and expand the academic programs.

Succinctly stated, the merger was at best difficult to accomplish, both through the legislature and within the respective academic institutions. The Commonwealth of Virginia was facing unprecedented demands for the funding of higher education. It was responding to the many needs quickly, but it could not afford to satisfy all institutions in such a short time period. Therefore, it is appropriate to suggest that a massive outlay of funds would have destroyed the possibility of the university being created. It seems evident that the cost had to be minimized. A low-budgeted merger with a semblance of autonomy retained seemed to be much more acceptable.

Financial Factors in the Selection of Site

It is important to re-emphasize here that, through various processes of elimination, all sites had previously been rejected except the Elko Tract and the Richmond Professional Institute campus. These two sites were examined with respect to four financial factors: value of land, value of improvements to the land, relocation costs of people and businesses, and income potential.

Value of Land

With respect to the value of the land, the Elko Tract consisted of 2,372 acres. Two sections of property comprised the Richmond Professional Institute/Oregon Hill site proposed for the new university. The first section included the existing campus plus an additional 53 acres of land north of Main Street. According to calculations by the City of Richmond, the assessed value of the additional 53 acres was $8,078,262 including the Mosque and Monroe Park.[15] The second section of the proposed Richmond Professional Institute campus expansion included 112.3 acres of land south of Main Street assessed at $4,848,670.[16]

It can now be seen that, with respect to land alone, the cost of acquiring the Elko Tract would have been zero, but the total Richmond Professional Institute site would have exceeded $12 million. Therefore, it would have been less expensive, insofar as land value is concerned, to develop the new university on the Elko Tract.

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[15]Letter from James C. Park, Assistant Director of the (Richmond) City Planning Commission, to Mr. Eppa Hunton, IV, Chairman of the Site Committee of the Wayne Commission, 23 June 1967, p. 2.

[16]Ibid.

Value of Improvements to the Land

The second financial category to be considered is the value of improvements to the land. The Elko Tract had been developed with respect to water and sewer facilities, roads, curbs and gutters and underground electrical wiring in the amount of $500,000. However, there were no existing buildings on the Elko Tract property. Construction would have had to begin immediately, and estimates of over $100 million of necessary construction before the university could begin operation were made by several people interviewed.[17, 18, 19] A new university would be built de novo.

On the other hand, the Richmond Professional Institute campus was developed. The Bird Commission had recognized this, and in its final report of December 1965, stated that:

> Further plant development at the present location of Richmond Professional Institute should include only such land area and structure as are urgently needed in the interim before plans can be completed and the new facilities on the new site are put into operation. In the planning of any additional construction on the present

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[17] Paul Anderson, interview, 8 June 1984.

[18] Raymond T. Holmes, Jr., interview, 3 February 1984.

[19] H. I. Willett, interview, 21 June 1984.

> site of Richmond Professional Institute, due consideration should be given to the future usefulness of the structures after transfer of the principal operations to the new location is accomplished.[20]

But the Richmond Professional Institute continued to grow and develop. In the two years between 1965 when the Bird Commission filed its report and 1967 when the Wayne Commission made its recommendations, the Richmond Professional Institute grew significantly. Its enrollment surged from 7,855 to 10,300[21] and was projected to grow to 15,750 by 1970.[22] The curriculum expanded to include the School of Arts and Sciences, graduate programs in education, and baccalaureate programs in law enforcement and in mathematics.[23]

To accommodate the growing curriculum and the enlarged student body, the full-time faculty increased from 176 to 199 in the biennium. The physical plant also expanded rapidly. From a physical plant value of $5,167,687 in 1965, the institution grew through purchases, construc-

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[20] Bird Commission report, p. 45.

[21] George J. Oliver, "A New University in Central Virginia: An Analysis and Evaluation of the Role of the Richmond Professional Institute in the Establishment of an Urban University," 6 September 1966.

[22] "Richmond Professional Institute: An Urban College Growing in Service to Higher Education in Virginia," p. 4, 6 December 1967.

[23] Ibid., p. 5.

tion and planned acquisitions and construction through 1968 to $17,807,091. The value had more than tripled,[24] and the 1968-70 capital outlay requests totaled $24,370,000.

With respect to the value of improvements to the land, the Richmond Professional Institute campus had a substantially greater value (more than $17 million) in comparison to the Elko Tract of only $500,000. Therefore, it would have been less expensive insofar as improvements to the land to locate the new university on an existing campus.

Relocation Costs

The situation is complicated by a third financial factor--the relocation costs of people and businesses. The Elko Tract was not inhabited by humans so no people or businesses would have been displaced. This would have avoided purchase and moving costs.

The Richmond Professional Institute campus was in the central city, and a number of people who owned or rented houses or apartments and who had businesses in the area would have been displaced to make room for the university. The City Planning Commission divided the pro-

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[24] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

posed campus site into two sections for evaluation and analysis. The first section of 53 acres included "the existing Richmond Professional Institute campus and projected enlargement north of Main Street . . . and section 2 /of more than 112 acres included/ Oregon Hill proper extending southward from Main Street . . . ."[25] An estimate of the first section of the area indicated "less than 400 dwellings and a population of less than 2,000 not counting RPI resident students."[26]

The population of the second section included 3,663 persons in 1,078 housing units. The City's report indicated that two-thirds of these were tenant occupied in 1960 and that percentage was expected to have increased in the seven intervening years. Additionally, there were six churches and 96 businesses in the area.[27]

The assessed value of the land and facilities in the area was almost $13 million.[28] This cost does not

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[25]Letter from James C. Park, Assistant Director of the City Planning Commission, City of Richmond, to Eppa Hunton, IV, Chairman, Site Committee, Richmond Metropolitan University Study Commission, 23 June 1967, p. 1.

[26]Letter from Morrill Crowe, Mayor, City of Richmond, to the members of the Richmond Metropolitan University Study Committee, 19 October 1967, p. 2.

27 Letter from James C. Park to Eppa Hunton, IV, p. 2.

[28]Ibid.

include the time involved for the university Administration to make the many different real estate transactions nor to respond to the negative publicity associated with displacing individuals from their family homes and relocating them in new sites. It can therefore be seen that the Elko Tract would have been the chosen site if only displacement and relocation costs had been considered.

Income Potential

The final financial factor to be considered is that of income potential. The Elko Tract had over 7,500,000 board feet of timber that would have been available for sale by the new university. In fact, the Commonwealth on several occasions tried to sell timber to obtain revenues from the Elko Tract, but all bids were rejected as being too low. Therefore, the probability that Virginia Commonwealth University could have gained revenues from the sale of timber may not have been as great as that envisioned by the supporters of the Elko Tract.

There was no such income-generating entity on the Richmond Professional Institute campus. A former luxury apartment building had been purchased by the Richmond Professional Institute administration, but it was renovated as a woman's dormitory since space was so desperately needed for a student residence. Had it not been renovated,

the university might have continued to rent apartments, but this was definitely not compatible with the mission of the institution.

Even though the Elko Tract might have had a slight advantage over the Richmond Professional Institute campus in terms of income potential, it is not clear that the revenues would have been forthcoming.

It has been demonstrated that the Elko Tract had a definite financial advantage over the Richmond Professional Institute campus with respect to the value of land and relocation costs. There was at least some income potential associated with the timber on the Elko Tract. But the current value of the existing campus ultimately wielded greater influence.

The comments by many of those interviewed during the course of this research confirm this. Governor Godwin stated that the primary reason for the selection of the Richmond Professional Institute campus as the site of the new Academic Campus was because

> It was already there with facilities in place. There was already so much investment that we had a considerable stake. Also there was additional land available that would have been no more expensive to acquire than to build the university in a new location.[29]

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[29]Interview of Governor Mills E. Godwin, Jr., 14 August 1984.

Carter Lowance, Executive Assistant to Governor Godwin, echoed that sentiment by stating:

> One consideration was the investment in the ground and the thought that, perhaps in the long run, construction costs and land acquisition could be done as cheaply, or less so than starting from scratch.[30]

The Battle Between the City of Richmond and the County of Henrico for the New University

Throughout the deliberations, the membership of the Wayne Commission relied upon data supplied by Henrico County for the Elko Tract and by the City of Richmond for the Richmond Professional Institute campus area. William F. Parkerson, Jr., Henrico's State Senator and the chief supporter of the Elko Tract, did not give up easily. He went on the offensive by attacking the data supplied by the City of Richmond. His figures for the 53-acre addition and the entire 165-acre expansion were approximately $18 million and $55 million. A substantial difference between the data of the City of Richmond and Parkerson can be seen as shown on the next page:

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[30]Interview of Carter Lowance, 14 August 1984.

	Section 1	Total
Acreage		
Richmond	53.0	165.3
Parkerson	53.0	165.3
Valuation (Millions)		
Richmond	$ 8.1	$12.9
Parkerson	$18.0	$55.0
Population		
Richmond	2,000	3,663
Parkerson	n.a.	8,471
Dwellings		
Richmond	400	1,078
Parkerson	n.a.	3,178

How could this discrepancy in data occur? Parkerson's figures for land valuation were over four times that of Richmond's; his population count was almost 2.3 times as great as Richmond's; and the number of dwellings was three times that of Richmond's. While Richmond used a full-value assessment of the real estate, there was acknowledgement that "selling prices of real estate in Richmond average about 11 percent above assessment value."[31]

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[31]Letter from Morrill Crowe, 19 October 1967.

Adding 11 percent to the value of the land only increased Richmond's figure to $14,250,004. That is still approximately one-fourth of Parkerson's value. Whether or not Parkerson's data excluded the property in the area slated to be acquired by the Richmond Expressway Authority is not clear, but that property was only assessed at $840,000.

Parkerson's estimated land costs were "arrived at by projecting past land acquisition cost of RPI's 9 acres over the proposed 165 acre site."[32]

With respect to the numbers of persons and dwellings to be displaced, Parkerson used 1960 census data. The City of Richmond included the planned expressway demolition with an attendant loss of homes and residents. It also suggested that the area had changed considerably in the seven years since the 1960 census and that use of those data would not provide an accurate estimate.

The Mayor of Richmond called Parkerson's statement about the land valuation a "most immature, unfounded and completely illogical" one.[33] Parkerson waited to

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[32]"The Elko Tract: Additional Data and Comparative Cost Study," Chart on Mosque-Oregon Hill Site, 18 October 1967.

[33]Bill Sauder, "University Site Remark Hit," Richmond News Leader, 19 October 1967.

retaliate until the Wayne Commission had filed its report and then countered that:

> The Wayne Commission report succeeded in ignoring the basic premise of the site proposal offered by Henrico County. Our contribution to this one aspect of the Commission's study was the suggestion that a great university be created for the capitol (sic) region by utilizing the two existing college campuses and facilities located at MCV and RPI and by adding thereto the tremendous potential of Elko as the new university's third college campus.
>
> The Commission report treats our concept of a tri-campus university as a proposal to abandon the MCV and RPI locations and to locate the total university on a single site at Elko. Having accomplished this distortion, the Commission proceeds to picture the resulting chaos which, of course, wasn't hard to do.[34]

The Bird Commission had raised the hopes of the surrounding counties in terms of acquiring the new university in 1965 when it reported:

> Parking alone will demand much more acreage than can be economically provided at the present site of Richmond Professional Institute.
>
> The best solution probably will involve the acquisition of a new site for the proposed Central Virginia State University. In order to secure sufficient land area, the site will probably have to be on the perimeter

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[34] Letter from William F. Parkerson, Jr. to Governor Mills E. Godwin, Jr. 25 November 1967, p. 1.

> of the city or even in the suburban area in Chesterfield, Henrico, or Hanover County.[35]

Neither Chesterfield nor Hanover County seemed as determined in their efforts to persuade the Wayne Commission of the advantages of their proposed sites as did Henrico. Even though the Bird Commission's suggestion of a site in an outlying region had elicited hopes and proposals, only Henrico County persisted in its efforts. Henrico County was the only suburban site given final consideration by the Wayne Commission as a location for the new university.

It is easy to understand why each of the localities wanted the new university in their jurisdiction and were willing to fight to get it. The initial payroll of 2,000 employees with more than $11 million in take-home pay was expected to increase by 3,000 people and $19 million in seven years. The stimulation of the economy by the growth of the university would create 5,220 additional jobs off campus. And all of this is without taking into account the likelihood that the enrollment would double, which was projected to add another $9 million to the retail sales in Richmond.[36]

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[35] Bird Commission report, pp. 43-44.

[36] "Effect Called As Much as a Complex of Plants," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 12 May 1968.

Parkerson made a valiant effort to get the new university in his jurisdiction, but he lost. He simply could not overcome the powerful argument that the immediate cost of the present site of the Richmond Professional Institute would be less than the Elko Tract if developed as the Academic Campus of the new university. For example, the cost of administering a third campus was never addressed. It has proved to be difficult enough to administer two campuses without envisioning the complications attendant with yet a third site. Of course, there also has never been an accounting of the State's ownership of the Elko Tract and the maintenance to keep the area free of problems.

Cost arguments prevailed and the Elko Tract was left undisturbed. In retrospect, its selection might well have increased both industrial and residential development in the relatively unpopulated area of eastern Henrico County. The problems that Virginia Commonwealth University has had to face as a result of its urban location that would not have occurred in such a rural setting as the Elko Tract were considered. Years later, H. I. Willett, a member of the Wayne Commission who later served as Acting President of Virginia Commonwealth University in 1977, indicated that he often wondered during that year if the Wayne Commission made a good recommendation

for the site by suggesting the central city.[37] In time, the logic and ideas of Parkerson might well be vindicated.

The major issues facing the Wayne Commission included the need to prevent accreditation difficulties of the Medical College of Virginia, the limited resources available to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the impending surge in the college-aged population and the attendant need to expand higher education, the pressure on the General Assembly from several education institutions not to dilute their share of State appropriations, and the need to decide on a site for the Academic Campus. Given the above, it was much more feasible to expand and improve an existing campus slowly and over an extended period of time than to build an entire campus de novo before it could begin operating. My comparison clearly indicates that the less expensive way was to upgrade an existing campus and thereby to eliminate the large expenses which would have been incurred had the campus been started at the Elko Tract.

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[37]Interview, H. I. Willett, 21 June 1984.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Wayne Commission stipulated that academic factors pertaining to the mission of the new university should guide the selection of a site for the new Academic Campus. The purpose of this study was to determine what factors actually influenced the final selection of a site for the new university. It is concluded, based on careful analysis, that financial factors, not academic mission, played the dominant role in the selection of a site for the new university and that academic mission logically followed.

Through both published documents and personal interviews, the reasons for selecting a site within the City of Richmond were probed. The willingness of many people to discuss the issues were gratifying. Occasionally, however, there were inconsistencies between statements made by one person and those of another. If a statement could not be verified by another person or document, it was not used in this study. Some individuals discussed the issues but would not allow themselves to be quoted. They were concerned that their statements could harm their reputations. Indeed, some information was given only on the condition that it not be used. Obviously,

that information was not included in this study.

Need for a Site

The Bird Commission's recommendation of a Central Virginia State University was examined by the Wayne Commission. The possibility of merging the Medical College of Virginia with the Richmond Professional Institute was probed in detail by the Wayne Commission. One of its important considerations was where the new Academic Campus should be located.

It was quickly determined that it would be impractical to move the campus of the Medical College of Virginia. Its physical plant was well developed and its estimated value was more than $60 million. The availability of an adequate patient case mix was crucial to a teaching hospital, and this was provided by its current urban location. A teaching hospital must be in close proximity to the other academic components of a health science education and, therefore, such academic units could not be separated from the hospital.

The Richmond Professional Institute campus, on the other hand, had a relatively small investment in its physical plant with a value of only $6 million. Many of its buildings were in great need of being renovated or replaced. The condition of the physical plant of the

Richmond Professional Institute campus made its abandonment feasible. Therefore, the location of the Academic Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University was subject to a relocation study.

Proposed Sites

The counties of Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico and the City of Richmond proposed a total of 10 sites for the new university which were visited and reviewed by the Wayne Commission. Of the 10, only two were studied in detail by the Commission. First was the existing campus of the Richmond Professional Institute with proposed expansion into the Oregon Hill neighborhood. Second was the Elko Tract in Henrico County. The study, therefore, is primarily concerned with the choice between these two locations.

Factors Influencing Site Selection

Political, historical, social, academic and financial factors all had an influence on site selection of the new university. Political factors, for example, almost prevented the legislation creating the new university from being adopted. Both Henrico and Richmond wanted the new university to help develop sections of their area and to provide jobs for their citizens. But political influence was not the determining factor in selecting a

site for Virginia Commonwealth University.

Historically, the Richmond Professional Institute had been in Richmond for 50 years and had served a segment of its population well. Traditionally, many of its students worked and attended school on a part-time basis. Since the institution was well known for its downtown location and was working well in its present site, there was no compelling historical reason to move it.

Social factors related to the accessibility of the campus to the student population the university was to serve. The Richmond Professional Institute site was served by public transportation but had severe parking problems. The Elko Tract would have had more than enough room for parking but might not have been accessible to those students who did not have private transportation unless the university had provided some means of mass transportation. It would have been less convenient for most students to have the university at Elko.

The academic factor of mission, to be an urban-oriented university, did play an important role in the selection of a site for the new university. If it were to continue to be an urban university using the city as a living laboratory, it would have had difficulty doing so, being 12 miles away from the city.

Yet, these factors alone did not ultimately

result in the decision to locate the university in the Fan District. Even if all of these factors had suggested that a move out of Richmond were desirable, the institution's Academic Campus probably would not have been moved. It was the financial factors which were the ultimate determinants of site selection The value of the existing physical plant, regardless of condition, of the Richmond Professional Institute simply could not be ignored, and the prospect of an expenditure of millions of dollars over a protracted period of time was overwhelming.[1, 2, 3] The cost of creating a new and expensive campus was far outweighed by the benefit to be derived from using the existing one as a base for beginning a new university.

Ultimately, however, the decision to locate the Academic Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University on the former Richmond Profesional Institute site was delayed. Instead of settling on a site, the Wayne Commission recommended the Richmond Professional Institute one but acknowledged that a decision as to final site selection was beyond its scope. Such a decision, they said, should be made by the Board of Visitors of the new

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[1] Interview with Paul Anderson, 8 June 1984.

[2] Interview with Raymond T. Holmes, Jr., 3 February 1984.

[3] Interview with H. I. Willett, 21 June 1984.

university. "The institution's board, which the governor would appoint, should guide the university's destiny," explained Edward A. Wayne in discussing why the issue of site would be left to the institution's Board of Visitors.[4] Ultimately, however, the Board of Visitors never considered the issue of site. Instead, they proceeded to develop the University using, without discussion, the Wayne Commission recommendation as to site for the Academic Campus. Consequently, the old site of the Richmond Professional Institute became the nucleus around which the new Academic Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University was developed.

Need for Further Research

The Bird Commission analyzed higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia with such far-reaching conclusions as to the need for a community college system. How did the Bird Commission decide what aspects of higher education to study?

The new university was to be more than a merger of two institutions. It was to be a university going far beyond either of the two existing institutions. Did

[4] "Third Hearing Set on University Plant," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 9 February 1968.

this occur or was it merely a merger? Did more than a merger of central administrative responsibilities occur while the two institutions continued to go their separate ways? Even today, about 17 years after the merger, some see the two campuses as autonomous institutions. From the enabling legislation, the name and identity of the Medical College of Virginia were protected. Has this helped to keep the two institutions separate rather than becoming one university?

How should an institution deal with its faculty as it grows and develops? The Richmond Professional Institute was primarily a teaching institution, with little emphasis on research. Virginia Commonwealth University, as a major, comprehensive university, stresses the research component. What happens to the dedicated, loyal faculty of an institution when the institution changes its emphasis but the faculty remain the same?

There have been numerous problems at Virginia Commonwealth University as a result of being located in the central city. Were the financial influences on the Wayne Commission of short duration while the longer-run financial issues not given consideration? Indeed, have subsequent developments negated the impact of financial factors?

Henry H. Hibbs is usually thought of as the

founder of the Richmond Professional Institute. However, I discovered that a board already existing in Richmond hired Hibbs as the first director of the Richmond School of Social Economy. Who had the vision to understand the need for such an institution in Richmond? Who, in fact, was the founder of the Richmond Professional Institute?

The College of William and Mary "adopted" the Richmond Professional Institute in 1925. No immediate benefit appears to have accrued to either institution as a result. Why did William and Mary adopt Richmond Professional Institute?

The decision to expand the Richmond Professional Institute campus has wrought a revolution. Since the establishment of Virginia Commonwealth University, more than $200 million have been expended on construction and renovation of the physical plant. The surrounding neighborhood has retreated against the rapid expansion of the Academic Campus. At the same time, there has been a renaissance in the Fan District based in part on the influence of the academic community. Subsequent developments will determine the ultimate wisdom of the decision to keep the university in the central City of Richmond. In the meantime, and for obvious reasons, it is there.

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ABSTRACT

IN SEARCH OF A HOME: AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MAJOR FACTORS CONCERNING THE LOCATION OF VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

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The College of William and Mary in Virginia, May 1985

Chairman: Professor John R. Thelin

This dissertation was written to examine the hypothesis that, although there were numerous factors affecting the selection of a site, it was primarily a financial decision to maintain the urban environment of the former Richmond Professional Institute campus as the basis of the new Academic Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University. Other factors involved in the decision include political, historical, social and academic ones.

The political factor involved a division between the City of Richmond and the County of Henrico as to the location of the Academic Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University. Senator William F. Parkerson, Jr., of Henrico County fought hard to win the political plum of a new university in his district located on the Elko Tract. The City of Richmond succeeded in its attempts to have the Academic Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University remain on the existing site of the Richmond Professional Institute.

Historically, the Richmond Professional Institute had always been closely bound to the City of Richmond, was named after the city, had drawn heavily upon the resources of the city for its adjunct faculty and related resources, and its student population was generally associated with the City of Richmond. The Elko Tract had no such historical ties to demand a change from urban to rural.

Social benefits associated with the Richmond Professional Institute site include the ready accessibility

to business centers for student employment. No indication is given that a change in location would have preserved these social benefits which were possible by maintaining the status quo.

The major academic factor was that of an urban university which would use the city as an academic laboratory. From its inception as a school of social work, the Richmond Professional Institute had been closely tied to the urban setting.

The need to combine two distinct institutions into one new university was another significant academic factor. The proximity of the two campuses was important for students and faculty to cross campus lines and take or teach classes on both campuses.

Financial factors were the ultimate determinants of site selection. The value of the existing phyiscal plant, regardless of condition, of the Richmond Professional Institute could not be ignored. The cost of creating a new and expensive campus was far outweighed by the benefit to be derived from using the existing one as a base for beginning a new university.