Richmond’s desire to annex portions of the surrounding counties is better understood when juxtaposed against population figures for blacks and whites within the city and aggregate population figures for the two surrounding counties (see Tables 2 and 3). According to Table 2, Richmond’s white population can be characterized as a population in decline, whereas the city’s black population growth has been steadily increasing. The “suspended” population percentages for both blacks and whites for 1940 and 1950 and for 1960 and 1970 can be explained by the annexation by Richmond of portions of Henrico County in 1942 and of portions of Chesterfield County in 1970. Specifically, the 1950 figures include the increases from the 1942 Henrico County annexation; the 1970 figures include the increases from the 1970 Chesterfield County annexation. Without the 1970 annexation figures, blacks would have composed 52 percent of the city’s population. The dramatic shift in the city’s racial composition is clearly seen in the 10 percent decline of the white population between 1950 and 1960. The black population, conversely, increased during the same period.

Population gains for the surrounding counties were even more dramatic than those gains experienced by blacks within the city. The sharp increases in the counties’ population were mainly at the expense of Richmond and represented “white flight” to the suburbs. The suburbanization of Richmond was taking place simultaneously with that in areas surrounding major Northeast and Middle West cities. Flight to Richmond’s counties was consistent, therefore, with the national city-to-suburb migration trek among whites. The black population, with minor exceptions, was still moving from the predominately rural South to the urban centers of the Northeast and Midwest. But as Richmond, Atlanta, Charleston, and other Southern cities demonstrated,
there was still a steady, and often heavy, flow of blacks from the rural South to Southern urban centers; it might be argued, as some have, that white flight can also be explained partially as one of the results of planned governmental action, (1) the national highway system, and (2) the low-interest housing market (FHA and VA mortgage options were extra incentives). Even if the policies of the national government made suburban housing easier to purchase in the surrounding counties, and even if they paved the road (highway) which led from Richmond to Chesterfield and Henrico counties, Richmond could boast, during the postwar years, that it maintained one of the strongest urban economies among large and medium-sized American cities. Thus, the out-migrations were not examples of citizens fleeing a fiscally crippled city. In fact, the city’s balance of production and service industries enabled its citizens, especially its white citizens, to avoid the ravages of high unemployment.

Table 2. Population of Richmond, Virginia, 1930–1975

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of census</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>White Percentage</th>
<th>Nonwhite</th>
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<td>182,929</td>
<td>129,871</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>193,042</td>
<td>131,706</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>230,310</td>
<td>157,228</td>
<td>68</td>
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<td>219,958</td>
<td>127,627</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>92,331</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965 (estimate)</td>
<td>219,065</td>
<td>118,952</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>100,113</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968 (estimate)</td>
<td>216,451</td>
<td>108,398</td>
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<td>108,053</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>249,621</td>
<td>143,857</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>105,764</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>219,214</td>
<td>104,743</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>114,471</td>
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*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.*


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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Chesterfield</th>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
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*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.*
Black Richmonders did not fare as well—the rate of unemployment was usually double that of whites, and when employed, blacks were usually relegated to low-prestige and low-paying jobs. According to the latest data, a higher percentage of whites were employed in the professional, managerial, and administrative areas. Conversely, blacks were concentrated in categories such as service workers, operatives, and clerical and private household workers. Richmond’s economic strength derived from several sources. It was (and is) a major center for tobacco and its products, metals, pharmaceuticals, paints, food products, fertilizer, and wood products. It was also a regional center for banking and insurance; many large companies had their regional, national, or international headquarters in the city. The city, therefore, maintained a fairly healthy economy prior to and during the white exodus of the postwar period, and it is important to understand these economic and demographic trends as major political events of the 1950s are explored.

**Massive Resistance Movement**

The Massive Resistance movement, a response by Southern white leaders to the 1954 *Brown* case, was intended to accomplish several goals: (1) hold the South to an undeviating adherence to the caste system; (2) reestablish a pre–Civil War concept of states’ rights; and (3) insulate the South from the intrusion of new ideas and social practices. The opening shots for Massive Resistance were sounded by none other than Senator Harry Flood Byrd on February 24, 1956, when he said: “If we can organize the Southern States for massive resistance to this order [of the Supreme Court in the school segregation cases] I think that in time the rest of the country will realize that racial integration is not going to be accepted in the South.” Virginia’s position within the Massive Resistance movement took many Virginians and non-Virginians by surprise since many viewed the state as harboring few of the excesses of the Deep South or of the North. Moreover, many believed that Virginia would never associate with a movement, and especially not lead one, that had the support of “rabble-rousing and Negro-baiting” states such as Mississippi, Georgia, or South Carolina. But, Massive Resistance demonstrated that Virginia had a greater affinity to these states than had formerly been assumed; though she was geographically not as Southern as the Deep Southern states, she was—ideologically and culturally—more Southern with respect to adhering to the “spirit of the Old South.”
Massive Resistance may be said to have deepened or sharpened antiblack feelings among whites. The cornerstone of the resistance was the belief in the myth of white supremacy. The ultimate failure of Massive Resistance had nothing to do with any problack sentiment, nor anything to do with any sudden awakening among whites of feelings of brotherhood, justice, and liberty. Rather, it had everything to do with other factors that were important to whites who found themselves in the eye of a social hurricane. These factors included (1) the increasing awareness by Governor J. Lindsey Almond that Massive Resistance was legally doomed; (2) citizens’ concern over the closing of public schools; (3) the disapproval by the Virginia press of any prolonged radical resistance; and (4) the opposition of businessmen who informed Governor Almond that Massive Resistance was hurting the state’s reputation and undermining its development. The death knell for Massive Resistance was sounded in Virginia in 1959 when the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals declared that both the school-closing and public school fund cut-offs were illegal.

Besides trying to circumvent school segregation, blacks were also engaged in the debate concerning their “place” in the Richmond order; though the black population may have been, as one black businessman commented, “tranquilized,” it was not dead. The population gains were more than numerical increases. Inner dynamics may have accompanied these increases, dynamics that related to the psychosociological dimensions of collective behavior. For example, an oppressed people might gain greater confidence when they composed a sizable proportion of a community in contrast to composing a small proportion. The population gains of blacks in Richmond resulted in the emergence of a variety of black organizations in the 1940s, chief among these being the Richmond Civic Council, a loose confederation of civic, fraternal, and religious organizations. Prior to the 1948 city council election the council led a parade through predominately black Jackson Ward and held a series of “freedom rallies.” These activities were designed to register new black voters who, because of the disenfranchisement practices operating in Richmond, only numbered 6,587. They were also intended to gain support for attorney Oliver Hill whose subsequent election to city council in 1948 made him the first black to be elected to that body since 1895. His defeat in the 1950 council election made the council an all-white institution until the election of B. A. Cephas in 1964. (After the 1966 council election Cephas was joined by two other black electees—Winfred Mundle and Henry L. Marsh, III.) Ironically,
Hill’s election to the council in 1948 resulted from Richmond’s reform movement, which saw the enactment of a change in the city charter that called for the abolition of the ward system and partisan elections in favor of at-large elections and nonpartisan elections. The Richmond Citizens Association (RCA), a forerunner to Richmond Forward and Team of Progress, spearheaded this charter change. The logic for the change paralleled the logic of city officials in Houston who similarly changed from the single-member district system to the at-large system in 1955. The ward system had become inefficient and, according to the RCA, contributed to a council torn by personal, party, regional, class, and interest conflict.

The old charter had a bicameral city council with a directly elected mayor. The Common Council consisted of twenty members and a twelve member Board of Aldermen. Under the new charter the mayor’s post became largely ceremonial with administrative powers invested solely in a city manager who was to be appointed by the new nine-member council. The charter change was supported by the then major black sociopolitical group, the Richmond Civic Council. It is important to know that under the pre-1948 election system, the wards were so gerrymandered by white officials as to prevent blacks from consolidating their voting strength in any one ward. Before Hill’s election no black had yet joined the thirty-two member council. The white leadership endorsement of Hill can be viewed perhaps as “payback” to blacks for their support for the charter change. In any case, since blacks had not been able to field any successful candidates under the gerrymandered ward system, members of the Civic Council, no doubt, felt that there was really nothing to lose and possibly something to gain from cooperation with the local white leadership. According to A. J. Dickinson, black and white leaders supported interracial cooperation for different reasons. Blacks viewed cooperation with the white power structure as a means of breaking down the “physical and psychological barrier” between the two groups—with the added incentive that if a black were eventually elected to the council it “would be a symbol of renewed aspirations and a focal point around which to arouse and rally a segregated and politically apathetic community.” Many whites may have reasoned that Richmond’s business climate would be enhanced by “a reputation for good race relations.” They also feared that the “stifling and archaic tradition such as segregation” could prompt many blacks to view any change as progress and thus “sanction change for the sake of change.”

The Crusade for Voters emerged out of this racially charged environment.
It grew out of the Committee to Save Public Schools, an ad hoc group formed in 1956 to challenge Massive Resistance by campaigning against a special referendum on January 9, 1956. The referendum was intended to circumvent the 1954 *Brown* decision by permitting localities to close schools rather than integrate them. The referendum passed. Its passage sent a message to a newly emerging segment of the black community—the professional class. By 1956, this new class of blacks had begun to make its presence felt in the Richmond black community. These younger blacks—some of whom were doctors, lawyers, and university professors who taught at Virginia Union University—were frustrated by the lack of political coordination within the black community. They saw the need for a new sociopolitical orientation, one that was more aggressive than the leadership heretofore provided by the Richmond Civic Council. These blacks contended that the Civic Council had many weaknesses and therefore lacked the elements that would serve as a catalyst for black advancement. These young turks, no doubt, rejected the posture of the black ministers who generally set the policies for the Civic Council; they wanted a more systematic approach to black politics, an approach that essentially discouraged racial rhetoric and emphasized highly organized precinct-level leadership. Speaking of the formation of the Crusade in 1956, Dr. William Thornton, one of the founders and a graduate of Virginia Union and the Ohio College of Podiatry, said, “We were originally the revolutionaries.” With the missionary zeal akin to W. E. B. DuBois’s conception of the “talented tenth,” these young professionals set out to alter Richmond’s political mosaic by first increasing the political consciousness of blacks and then translating that consciousness into voting power.

When she was asked about the success of the Crusade, Edwina Clay Hall, former president of the organization, replied that the Crusade had made it possible for the number of registered black voters to increase from 8,500 in 1956 to 32,500 in 1966. The secret of this success stemmed from the very structure of the Crusade. The organization was tightly organized and governed by the officers and the executive board, a structure that permitted the Crusade to weather the storm of personal as well as political infighting. Its highly centralized structure, therefore, permitted it to make quick decisions on important matters. On the grass-roots level, the Crusade operated as an effective umbrella group. Each predominately black precinct was organized around a precinct “club” which served as problem-solving agent for the precinct. The predominately black precincts elected representatives who sat on
the board of the Crusade. The Crusade also kept an updated list of all the major black social, civic, fraternal, and religious groups and the leaders of these groups. When major issues arose that required broad-based community discussions, these individuals were contacted and asked to attend public forums. The major decisions of the Crusade, however, were not made by those groups included under the umbrella; rather, they were made by the governing board, the chairman, and the group’s officers. For example, during elections, when tempers and political jockeying were usually high, the question of whom to endorse was not thrown open to the at-large membership. Instead, the chair appointed a research committee composed of four members: the chair, the president, and two at-large members. This committee evaluated each prospective endorsee and then made a recommendation. To maximize the Crusade’s political clout, the organization announced its approved slate the Sunday prior to the election, usually in black churches.28

Both the timing and the location of these announcements attest to the Crusade’s awareness of the position of the black church in black communities and the necessity to not tip the organization’s hand to those who might attempt to penalize some persons endorsed. The decisive power of the Crusade is more clearly viewed when its activities are analyzed later in this chapter.

The Richmond-Henrico Merger Attempt

In enumerating the racial factors that may have precipitated Richmond’s efforts to merge with Henrico County in 1960, we see these important forces at work: racial population shifts within Richmond; the U.S. Supreme Court’s desegregation mandate of 1954 and 1955, Brown I and Brown II; the emergence of black sociopolitical organizations, and the increase in black voting strength. By the 1950s the black geographical and political presence had arisen phoenix-like from almost out of nowhere. The white response to this emergence, given the image of blacks in the mind of many whites, was one of terror.29 Now the seemingly harmless quest by many Richmond white leaders for a “greater Richmond” that would rival Atlanta, Charlotte, and New Orleans as a regional economic, political, and cultural center was accompanied by and largely out-distanced by overt concern with the politics of race whose importance was often cloaked in subtleties and coded in nonracial terms. These code terms could, on the surface, be viewed as virtues and, therefore, acceptable for those not yet initiated into the art of racial coding.30
By 1960, the Richmond black population was already 42 percent of the total population. Black voting registration rose from 12,486 in 1957 to 16,396 in 1961. With white flight already in high gear, and with blacks exerting their political power at the polls, it was clear that the latter had become a major force in the city’s electoral politics. The idea to consolidate the governments of Richmond and Henrico County in 1961 came at a time when numerous other cities throughout the United States were trying to induce their surrounding counties to merge. Consolidation, the argument went, would “simplify the local government structure, provide a more realistic framework for approaching common problems, eliminate duplications of functions and services, facilitate the establishment of uniform levels of services, provide a sound tax base . . . [and] establish a governmental structure capable of coping with urban development.”

The Richmond-Henrico merger plan was designed and shaped by a six-member joint Richmond and Henrico Consolidation committee which met between August, 1960 and July, 1961. The agreement reached by the Consolidation Committee called for the creation of a five-borough system consisting of the county’s four magisterial districts plus the old city of Richmond. The committee also proposed the formation of an interim government to become effective on January 1, 1963. The interim city council would consist of eleven members with four members elected from each of the four “county” boroughs, four elected at-large in the old city of Richmond, and three elected at-large from the consolidated city. Following the five-and-a-half-year interim period, the council membership would be reduced from eleven to nine, all of whom would be elected at-large, though at least one councilperson would have to reside in each of four boroughs (the four boroughs consisted of the old magisterial districts whose boundaries were extended into the old city since the old city no longer was to constitute a separate borough). In addition, special provisions were made for the county area added to the city. For example, county real estate would be assessed at 90 percent of market value and county tax rates would gradually increase over fourteen years until they reached the city rates. Also, county personnel, including teachers and principals, were assured of a job with Richmond at a pay rate no lower than the rate then in use.

Christopher Silver’s analysis of Richmond’s effort to merge with Henrico County points to the importance of race. According to Silver, race “remained at the heart of the controversy over merger.” In subtle tones consolidation supporters sought to convince county residents that it was in their mutual interest.
to prevent a black takeover of Richmond. Silver cites a memorandum by the Richmond First Club in which race was highlighted as a major factor underlying the consolidation effort. The memorandum emphasized the dramatic consequences of population shifts during the 1950s: whites were fleeing the city in record numbers, while the black population was steadily increasing. The report added that the Richmond public school system was predominately black. Finally, the report noted that the decline of the white population and the increase in the black population jeopardized the city’s tax base in that “the city tax base is automatically lowered when the black population increases.”

The racial nexus became the unspoken theme and the hidden agenda, and white leaders, while refraining from introducing race as a topic for public discussion, understood the importance of consolidation for its economic as well as its racial advantages to the white political and business sectors.

On the other hand, there was very little support for consolidation among Henrico County’s residents. S. A. Burnette (Chairman of the Henrico Board of Supervisors), other Henrico officials, and many Henrico citizens argued that the city was indeed pushing for merger because it sought to exploit county lands and resources. They countered the city’s claim that the county was unable to provide adequate services for its citizens or that county residents would be equal to city residents under the merger plan. Opponents of merger also attacked the Richmond business community which generally supported the merger. The Merger Opposition Reporter, a periodical initiated to spearhead opposition to the merger, informed its readers that all the talk of gains for Henrico citizens was merely propaganda by Richmond’s business sector which wanted to use the county’s resources in order to further its own business interests.

Case studies of consolidation attempts demonstrate that black support for city-county mergers was basically situational. In unsuccessful merger attempts in St. Louis, Cleveland, and Newark, blacks voted overwhelmingly against the idea since black representation under the existing city government was higher than it would have been under the proposed consolidation government. In cities where blacks supported city-county merger, blacks either were not represented in the present government or had minimal representation. Consequently, they felt there was little chance of increased representation unless some kind of reform was instituted. It was explained earlier that Richmond blacks had used a similar logic when they supported the 1948 charter change
from ward to at-large elections because the wards were gerrymandered to in-
sure that there would be no chance of a black winning ward elections.

By the time the Richmond-Henrico consolidation issue came up for a spe-
cial vote in December of 1961, the Richmond Crusade for Voters had already
begun formulating its political agenda for Richmond’s blacks. The new black
professional class which founded the Crusade had, in effect, staged a “double
revolution” — one against the minister-led traditionalist group, the Richmond
Civic Council, and the other against the traditional black-white relationship
in which the black political leadership took its cues from the white leadership
structure. Now this well organized, highly educated, close-knit group was ea-
ger to tackle more problems and demonstrate its political sophistication and
strength.

The Crusade, unlike the Civic Council, chose to participate in the political
process rather than merely engage in protest voting. This meant that it had to
enter alliances with white power brokers on certain issues. In adopting this
strategy the Crusade ran a grave risk: “[The] endorsement of a former white
racist might lead some Negroes to label them an ‘Uncle Tom’ or accommoda-
tionist leadership, thus undermining any prestige or influence they might have
in the black community.”38 This, in fact, was the case presented against the
Crusade years later by Curtis Holt after he failed to get the Crusade’s endorse-
ment in an election he had lost. On the other hand, the Crusade reasoned that
this possible negative reaction by the black community could be offset by
playing the political game and thus incurring “political” debts which could be
paid off with the enactment of sympathetic legislation, the weakening of racial
barriers and the procurement of better jobs in the city government. 39 Using
this logic, the Crusade decided to support the Richmond-Henrico merger on
several conditions: The new consolidated government should include single-
member districts or wards rather than the at-large system; it should retain the
nine-member city council, as well as the city manager form of government.
When it became clear to the Crusade that the most important of these pro-
visions was not going to be adopted, election of council members by single-
member district or ward elections, it decided to oppose the consolidation ef-
fort since it knew that under at-large elections the black vote would be greatly
diluted and black political leverage and participation greatly diminished. Rich-
mond city officials sought to offset the arguments by blacks against the merger
by appointing five blacks to the steering committee of the Greater Richmond
Committee in July, 1961, but this did not reverse the black opposition to the merger which was now viewed by the Crusade as an attempt to insure continued white control in Richmond.

When the votes were tallied for the consolidation referendum held on December 12, 1961, it was clear that the city was not able to persuade the majority of Henrico voters to merge. County voters opposed the merger 13,647 to 8,862. Only one district, Tuckahoe, voted in favor of the merger. The City of Richmond supported the merger 15,051 to 6,700. An analysis of voting precincts also showed that the city did not convince its black citizens that consolidation was in their collective political interest for 100 percent of the black voter precincts voted overwhelmingly against the merger. Sixty-eight percent of the mixed precincts voted against the merger, while 95.7 percent of the white voter precincts supported it. Proconsolidation forces in the city, however, saw a few bright spots in the county’s response, namely the support which was registered in Tuckahoe, the county’s most affluent district. At least these Henrico citizens, it was argued, recognized the long-standing interdependence which existed between Richmond and the surrounding counties and were willing to merge the two jurisdictions. Though this argument kept the hopes of merger advocates alive and increased the hopes for those wanting to annex the area, it was clear that the county as a whole did not want the merger and that the city would have to seek other means to expand its boundaries.

Richmond’s pro-merger vote delivered by its white voters meant several things, not necessarily mutually exclusive. It meant that some whites were now aware of the potential political threat posed by blacks and were now moving to offset that threat. It meant that the subtle racial messages had been received and the white elite were now acting to preserve their special interests. The vote also demonstrated the effectiveness of the “Crusade Machine” and its ease in getting its message down to the precinct level on issues affecting blacks. Though the black anti-merger vote was not enough to spell defeat for pro-merger forces in the city, it was another example to Richmond’s white leadership of one of the grave consequences of black political power: the inability of the white leadership to determine the policies and direction of an independent black constituency. Silver noted that Richmond’s urban elite, however, did secure a victory from the merger defeat: they were able to forge a new consensus among Richmond’s white population on the elite’s perception of a “Greater Richmond.” Whereas such projects in the 1950s as urban renewal and highway construction had engendered much rancor and had caused splits
among whites, the merger attempt and the idea of a “Greater Richmond” were less divisive.42

Henrico officials and those Henrico voters who opposed consolidation were elated over their victory. S. A. Burnette, the Chairman of the Henrico Board of Supervisors who bitterly opposed the consolidation, issued a conciliatory statement two days after the defeat of the referendum. He said that Henrico was “wide open so far as any cooperation in support of the metropolitan area is concerned . . . [We] would entertain any proposal, but we are not in a position to instigate one right now.”43 According to the Richmond Times-Dispatch, Burnette had not squashed all future consolidation efforts, but merely contended that “another and better consolidation plan was possible.”44 Meanwhile a member of the Richmond Citizens Association (RCA), the organization that initiated the charter revision of 1948, probably spoke for the pro-merger forces when he said that the anti-merger vote showed that people had voted “with their hearts instead of their heads.”45 Throughout the merger negotiations and the discussions leading up to the December 12 vote, Richmond city officials kept an agenda that was not so hidden. The city sought to convince county residents that consolidation was the best option for Henrico. Failing a vote for consolidation, Richmond officials had made it known that Richmond would follow the annexation route.46 Indeed, just before the referendum, Richmond City Manager Horace H. Edwards advised Henricoans to vote for the merger lest they face a city-initiated annexation that would not require their consent. According to several city and county officials interviewed by the authors, while some county leaders viewed the city threat as a bluff, practically all the leaders saw Edwards’s efforts as counterproductive inasmuch as they created a backlash among the county voters, thus increasing the number of opposition votes to the consolidation. Nevertheless, as Edwards had predicted, the city council, on December 26, 1961, passed two annexation ordinances, one against Henrico County and one against Chesterfield County.

The Henrico and Chesterfield Annexation Suits

With the defeat of the consolidation proposal, city officials thought it best to move quickly with annexation. Thus, the day after the city council passed the two annexation ordinances, the city filed the annexation suit against Henrico and asked the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals to designate two judges to sit with one of the Henrico circuit court judges on an annexation court.47 The
following week a suit was instituted against Chesterfield County. The city’s speed in filing these suits was prompted by the city’s fears that the 1962 General Assembly might enact legislation to make future annexations difficult. City officials thought that county members of the General Assembly might make an effort to change the annexation laws in favor of counties. For example, the Association of Virginia Counties favored a law that would permit voters in the areas to be annexed to decide whether or not they wanted to be annexed. This was in contrast to judicially determined annexations. Filing the suits under the existing annexation laws would allow the city to gain its objectives without a long and protracted battle. Also, city officials thought it better to proceed against Henrico and Chesterfield simultaneously since its case in court might be hurt if it tried to justify the annexation of adjacent land in Henrico without including land from another adjoining area, Chesterfield. The ordinance directed at Henrico proposed to annex 152 square miles which included a population of 115,000. This would leave Henrico with a land area of only ninety square miles and a population of a little more than two thousand. By seeking such a large area from Henrico, Richmond was actually seeking to acquire the entire county since “the latter area [the ninety square miles] would hardly have sufficient population and resources to support a county government and public schools.” The city sought fifty-one square miles of Chesterfield County with a population of 40,000. By annexing territory from both counties, the city’s boundaries would expand from forty to 312 square miles and its population increase from 219,000 to 376,000. With its increased square miles, Richmond would become the sixth largest city in land area in the country. (The figures in Table 4 depict Richmond’s growth through annexation.)

Richmond’s annexation arguments were similar to its merger arguments, the chief among these being that a community of interest existed between the city and its county suburbs. The annexation ordinances declared that “Richmond must expand or decline.” If the latter occurred the entire metropolitan area would be affected since the city was the community’s economic, financial, cultural, educational, medical, and recreational center. Annexation, the ordinance continued, would provide for a “political union” between the city and its suburbs, and “present new opportunities for community progress.” Richmond further contended that the counties could not economically and adequately provide the necessary urban services. It cited the suburban areas’ dependence on Richmond for water and sewerage services. The city’s
annexation petition also cited the services in Richmond that were crucial to the metropolitan area—city employment, postal facilities, libraries, recreation facilities, parks, museums, hospitals, and cemeteries. The people in the territory designated for annexation, the city argued, “make no substantial contribution to the cost of providing the municipal services and the management and administrative functions necessary to keep such institutions available for their well-being, comfort, safety, health, enjoyment and welfare.”

Richmond’s proposal to annex all of Henrico County was unprecedented in Virginia’s long tradition of annexations. While many of Richmond’s administrative and legal officials viewed the city’s arguments as valid, many others, including lawyers, were convinced that the annexation court would not permit Richmond to annex an entire county. Henrico appealed to Richmond to drop its annexation suit against it, but the city refused. The Richmond business community, with the Chamber of Commerce and the Central Richmond Association in the forefront, either sent letters to the city council or appeared before the council in support of the annexation. Several council members opposed Richmond’s annexation suit. One councilman, Robert C. Throckmorton, objected to what he considered the “threatening manner in which the city was proceeding.” Comparing Richmond’s attempt to annex all of Henrico

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<td>1910</td>
<td>127,628</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>10.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>145,244</td>
<td>12.21</td>
<td>22.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>208,039</td>
<td>16.93</td>
<td>39.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

County to Indian Premier Nehru’s annexation of the Portuguese colony of Goa, he said: “We can’t pull a Nehru on the county.” He further contended that the city was “seeking more territory than it could provide with municipal services.” As inadequate as county services may have been, Henrico was not then over the barrel as it was when Richmond annexed portions of the county in 1941. Then, when county residents complained about being annexed Richmond simply “threatened to curtail public utilities and fire protection.”

Meanwhile, other legal maneuvering took place. On January 30, 1962, W. Stirling King, a former Richmond mayor, filed a petition before the state supreme court at the city’s request, in a test case, questioning whether Richmond was right in filing separate suits against the counties or whether Richmond should have consolidated the suits. Fearful that it might win the cases only to have them thrown out on technical grounds, Richmond wanted the issue clarified before the case went to court.

The city was given some legislative encouragement when city officials found out that the antiannexation legislation pending before the 1962 General Assembly “would be amended—if enacted at all—” so that the city’s suits against Henrico and Chesterfield counties would not be affected. The first bill would declare a two-year moratorium on annexation pending a special study of the annexation issue; the second bill would empower residents of the areas proposed for annexation to approve or disapprove the annexation; the last bill would require the annexing city to give conclusive proof that it could provide the area to be annexed with the needed services. These measures were all under discussion in various committees, and there was talk that they might not even emerge from their committees for consideration by the total legislative body. In the meantime, Richmond’s annexation suit against Chesterfield County was postponed on a motion by Chesterfield Commonwealth’s Attorney Ernest Gates. The postponement was made in order to await the results of the King appeal which sought to make a test case of the annexation procedure. Since the city had been given assurances that it had nothing to fear from the annexation legislation in the General Assembly, and since the Chesterfield circuit court had postponed the Chesterfield suit, the city was in a position to actively pursue the Henrico case while the Chesterfield case was on the back burner. But each county was struggling to make sure that it would not be the first to confront Richmond in the annexation court.

Chesterfield and Henrico filed separate appeals to the Virginia Supreme Court.
Court of Appeals on March 12, 1962, but each used different arguments to support its respective claims. In requesting the court to force Richmond to proceed against the counties separately, Chesterfield County officials believed that if Richmond succeeded in annexing considerable territory from Henrico, the pressures on Chesterfield to grant large land concessions to the city would abate. Lawyers for Chesterfield also reasoned that Richmond, having annexed parts of Henrico County, would find it difficult to prove that it needed yet more land from Chesterfield County. Since Richmond filed its annexation suit against Henrico a week before it filed the suit against Chesterfield, Chesterfield wanted the Henrico case to be the first on the docket. Henrico argued that the question of the single versus the consolidated annexation suit should first go to the three judge annexation court, and, therefore, sought to get the case dismissed on procedural grounds. Were this to happen, Richmond, according to Virginia’s annexation law, would be prohibited from resuming an annexation suit against Henrico for five years. On June 11, 1962, the Virginia Supreme Court rejected the Henrico County petition which asked that both annexation cases be dropped because of improper procedures.

The Henrico annexation trials convened in June, 1963. After ten months of arguments by each side the annexation court finally reached a verdict. The city’s request for 152 square miles of the county was denied. Instead, Richmond was awarded seventeen square miles and 45,000 people (98.5 percent of whom was white). The land won by Richmond did not include as much undeveloped and commercial land as the city cited for its present and future needs. The city filed an appeal to enlarge the area given in the award, but this motion was denied by the annexation court. Ironically, the Richmond officials waited more than a year before deciding to reject the award which they did on March 8, 1965. In the meantime, the fact that the city received less than it requested shifted the battleground to Chesterfield. Chesterfield officials reacted to the Henrico decision with some dismay, though they began to refocus their arguments as a result of the Henrico award. Some believed that Chesterfield County had a better case in fighting annexation by the city and they cited the differences between their county and Henrico: Chesterfield had always been a more self-sustaining county, less dependent upon the services of Richmond than Henrico. These officials knew that they could not keep Richmond at bay forever. What they really sought was more breathing space to enable them to sharpen their arguments against the city.
Municipal Elections 1960–1964

The Crusade had to contend with the major white political organization that had long dominated electoral politics, the Richmond Citizens Association (RCA), the group that had played the leading role in the charter reform movement of the late 1940s. Though there were other groups such as the Harmony Efficiency Progress (HEP) Organization and the Civic Economy Association (CEA), the Richmond Citizens Association clearly exerted the primary influence in Richmond’s councilmanic elections. By the June 14, 1960, election, there were some 13,000 registered black voters in the city.72 In an effort to ascertain how council candidates felt about some issues vital to blacks, the Crusade sent each candidate an eight-part questionnaire. Only one of the twenty-two candidates for the nine council seats, Howard H. Carwile, refused to answer the questionnaire.73 This refusal was strange in light of the endorsements he had received from blacks in previous elections. Most of the candidates approached the questions with caution. One, Chandler A. Simpson, Jr., a member of the HEP ticket responded to the Crusade’s inquiry regarding a biracial commission to handle problems between blacks and whites by saying that he would be in favor of such a commission if he could be assured that blacks would approach the problems “fairly and intelligently, giving due consideration to the full impact of recent decisions of the United States Supreme Court on the civilization and culture of the people of Richmond and Virginia.”74 Though there were no black candidates running for city council, the Crusade had agreed to recommend a full slate of nine white candidates rather than continue its previous policy of using “the single-shot approach.” The Crusade believed that the “single-shot,” in which blacks would be asked to vote for only one person, did not permit blacks to play “balance of power” politics. Even if nine thousand blacks cast their votes for any one candidate, that would not be sufficient to elect the candidate since a minimum of 14,000 votes was necessary for election. However, reasoned the Crusade, if these nine thousand votes were cast for nine candidates (each of whom got a minimum of five thousand votes from whites), the nine thousand votes cast by blacks would be decisive and act as a balance of power. Likewise, if all nine thousand black votes were cast for the same nine candidates in a field of twenty-two candidates, it would put these candidates ahead of the thirteen others.75

The Crusade’s “full slate” strategy paid off at the polls. By playing “balance of power” politics, it was able to elect seven city council candidates and to unseat
two incumbents who had received unfavorable ratings from the group. The *Richmond Afro-American* noted that of the three major groups which had recommended a slate of candidates, the Crusade, the Richmond Citizen Association (RCA), and Harmony-Economy-Progress (HEP), the Crusade received a .777 “batting average” since seven of its nine candidates were elected; RCA received a .666 average because six of its nine slate of candidates were elected; and HEP acquired a .250 rating inasmuch as only two of its eight candidates were elected. Opposition to the Crusade’s slate emerged from a group of black Richmonders. Calling their group the Human Rights Crusade, four ministers and two physicians sought to influence blacks to revert to the “one-shot vote” in order to elect Howard Carwile who, because he refused to respond to the questionnaire sent out by the Crusade for Voters, was not given its endorsement. Carwile was defeated.

The 1960 election results clearly revealed the power of blacks at the ballot. Likewise, it demonstrated how a highly organized well-disciplined organization could effectively channel the black vote and thus increase black political leverage in municipal elections. The Crusade’s awareness of its importance in Richmond electoral politics was expressed by its president, then George A. Pannell:

> We . . . would like to thank the many organizations and individuals . . . [who] made it possible for us to be a more potent force in our city government. The mere fact that seven of the nine persons recommended by the Research Committee [of the Crusade] were elected is a high tribute to all concerned. The riddance of two of the foes of the Negro in Richmond is a step in the direction of harmony. There were no deals made with other organizations or individuals . . . we shall not be deterred by the theory that we are divided in our aims for first class citizenship . . . Let those who say we are divided and are trying to divide us at the same time—take heed. The colored voters of today will not be long fooled by anyone.

On the eve of the June, 1962, councilmanic election, there were some 11,000 black voters. When one of the councilmen supported the Crusade’s fair employment practices resolution presented before the city council in May, 1962, he was accused of doing so to curry the favor of the black vote. His response was: “Ninety thousand of our citizens are Negroes, and we can only be fair with them as we are with other citizens.” Such discussions were the order of the day as the black vote became a potent force that could neither be denied
nor circumvented. Prior to the 1962 councilmanic elections, the Crusade made its concerns known. It announced support of (1) a compulsory school attendance ordinance, (2) a local pupil assignment plan that would divorce the Richmond School Board from the state Pupil Placement Board, (3) a $1.15 minimum hourly wage, and (4) a change in the term for which council members are elected from two to four years.\textsuperscript{82} The Crusade’s role in electoral politics was recognized by its friends and foes, but white politicians were wary of openly soliciting the black vote. One commenter noted that whereas none of the white political organizations would publicly seek the black vote because of the possible reaction of white voters, “each accuses the other of making secret deals with Negro political leaders.”\textsuperscript{83} The Crusade’s petition to the city council for equal job opportunities for blacks and its list of four concerns were not the only areas that received its attention. It continued to express its disapproval of any city-county merger plan that did not assure the election of at least one black to the council of the consolidated city. Likewise, it opposed the city’s attempt to annex surrounding county areas for fear that the black vote would be diluted.\textsuperscript{84}

Two blacks, Clarence Newsome, an attorney, and Mrs. Esther Smith, a housewife, were among the twenty-five candidates who ran for city council in 1962. Both lost, however. Only Newsome had the support of the Crusade. Newsome’s eleventh place position for one of the nine council seats was attributed by the \textit{Richmond Afro-American} to the light voter turnout which was partially blamed on the rain.\textsuperscript{85} The Crusade suffered only two losses in this election in that two of its nine endorsees went down to defeat. Even with these losses, however, the Crusade was able to repeat its 1960s winning electoral rating of .777.

Three blacks entered the race for the 1964 council election. Two of them, Ronald Charity and Neverett Eggleston, Jr., ran on the slate of a new black organization, The Voter’s Voice. The third, B. A. Cephas, Jr., was endorsed by Richmond Forward and, unlike the other two, also by the Crusade. By 1964, the Richmond Citizens Association (RCA) had disbanded and a new political organization, Richmond Forward (RF), had been formed. Many whites, including vice-mayor Phil Bagley and councilman Robert Heberle, viewed the group as “anti-democratic and controlled.” Bagley said that the candidates put forward by the group for the 1964 city elections were inexperienced and thus susceptible to “political manipulation of the string pullers who think
Richmond begins and ends at Sixth and Broad Streets.\textsuperscript{86} There was much infighting among white city officials as to the status of Richmond Forward. Many accused the organization of acting like a political party in that it was attempting to control city government through the election of its candidates to office. This, critics said, was in violation of the 1948 city charter which banned political parties from participation in the election of city councilmen.\textsuperscript{87}

The Crusade was also subjected to criticism from some blacks. Two of the three losing black candidates for council seats, Eggleston and Charity, attacked the Crusade for “working hand-in-glove with RF.” They accused the group of sacrificing two council incumbents, Herrink and Smithers, on the altar of expediency. Also, the Crusade was warned by a local black minister that other black organizations were rising to challenge its power.\textsuperscript{88} The Crusade was subjected to heavy criticism from predominately black groups because it failed to back all of the black candidates. Under the umbrella of the West End Council of Leagues these groups included the Leagues of the 19th and 24th precincts, the West End Improvement League, the West End Nonpartisan League, the Randolph Street Neighborhood Organization, and the PTA units of Amelia, Randolph, Maymont, and West End Schools.\textsuperscript{89} The Crusade had been aware of the challenge and kept urging black voters to “keep our vote solid. This is the only way we can have political influence. Solidarity is more important than one election or any candidate. We can always vote out a bad candidate, but we can’t do this if we don’t keep our solidarity.”\textsuperscript{90}

The Crusade again proved its strength at the polls in the 1964 elections. Eight of the nine persons on the Crusade’s slate won council seats.\textsuperscript{91} The Richmond evening newspaper had seen the Crusade as “the balance of power” in the campaign, and noted that all citizens were eager to know the Crusade’s slate.\textsuperscript{92} After the election results were known, the same press viewed the winners as the combination of dual efforts by the “better-to-do white business community, centered in the West End, and the Negro leadership.”\textsuperscript{93} It was also conceded that the Crusade played a major role in determining the outcome of the elections. Moreover, the election of B. A. Cephas, a black realtor, was viewed by a few whites as ushering in a new era of good relations between the races. He was to be the first black to sit on city council since Oliver Hill won election in 1948.

The annexation question had not been discussed publicly during the 1964 councilmanic election, but it was deemed important by a majority of council
candidates. The League of Women Voters sent a questionnaire to all twenty-one candidates prior to the June election. All seven incumbents seeking re-election cited boundary expansion as the most important issue facing city council in 1964. Five others mentioned decisions and problems stemming from the Henrico annexation court’s decision to award seventeen square miles to Richmond and how such a small award might pose a handicap to the city.\textsuperscript{94}