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A City Invincible?

The Transition of Camden, NJ, From Industrial to Postindustrial City

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Introduction:

The inscription on City Hall in Camden, New Jersey reads, “In a dream I saw a city invincible.” These are the words of the poet Walt Whitman, who lived in Camden during the late nineteenth century. His sentiment on the city seems far from the current state of affairs, where the mere mention of Camden in the regional media conjures up images of abandoned buildings and rampant crime. What was at the turn of the twentieth century a thriving industrial powerhouse had become a collection of shelled out factories and a deteriorated quality of life. Arguments exist for the collapse of Camden beginning as early as 1926, with the poorly thought out terminus of the Delaware River Bridge; however, most historians agree that the spiral downward began as it did with many other American cities, at the end of the Second World War. The most telling years for the transition between an industrial and a post-industrial city were between 1960 and 1980, during which the city completely transformed from working class neighborhoods to centers of poverty and abandonment.

What had caused such a change in Camden? In a simplified explanation, the city deteriorated because of a removal of capital in the latter half of the twentieth century. The changes seen in the urban landscape in Camden did not occur overnight, nor can they be blamed on one singular reason. Rather, the deterioration of the city can be traced to a few distinct categories.

The first and most important factor was economic. The basic tenets of supply and demand in a free-market economy states that capital will flow to where there is a demand, and, in this case, to where supply can be obtained for the lowest cost. Camden through the twentieth century had developed into an industrial hub, and with it came the bitter fights and rivalries between factory managers and labor unions. Both sides upheld viable arguments for their

decisions, but regardless of their motives, the tensions created surrounding labor gave way to many of Camden's factories relocating to other areas of the country (Cammarota 192). Also to the detriment of the city, when Americans began to become conscious about the correlation of living in polluted conditions and health concerns, many households abandoned the inner city. The lack of jobs and the growing realization of poor environmental conditions caused a lack of demand for property within Camden's oldest neighborhoods, especially those nearest to the Delaware River waterfront (Sicotte 14).

The second reason for the disinvestment was social. From this social aspect, Camden was not altogether unique from other American cities. After World War II, many African Americans moved from rural southern areas to northeastern cities with the hope of securing a factory job. In addition to the growing African American community, new communities of Puerto Ricans moved into the city also in search of work (Dorwart 47). The diminishing factory work coupled with the increase in a workforce led to a labor surplus (Staudohar 203). The fight for jobs and the changes in neighborhoods built on ethnic ties led to social unrest between the established white working class and the new African American and Puerto Rican communities. Political factors, as much social as they were economic, also affected Camden during its deindustrialization. On a national level, the force of the EPA made it a prudent business decision for many industrial corporations to move out of Camden to the Southern United States, where regulation was less stringent and applied differently (Morgenstern 24-25). Local politics in Camden City during the postindustrial era were plagued with scandal and corruption, affecting the administration of city services and the enforcement of the law. In an area that was once a powerhouse model city, urban deterioration from 1960 to 1980 made Camden a prime example of a dilapidated urban

environment (Dorwart 48). The changes that swept Camden City were neither static nor unilateral, but instead occurred over a number of decades for a variety of reasons.

Camden's Rise from Rural to Urban:

People of European descent have lived in what is now Camden County since the seventeenth century, but it was not until 1828 that Camden was officially incorporated. Modernization and industrialization would be the driving forces behind the early success of the city. While much of the surrounding rural areas had riverfront areas, Camden flourished because of its proximity to the city of Philadelphia and its point of convergence with the Delaware and Cooper Rivers and Newton Creek (Prowell 20). In a world of seafaring commerce, this strategic position on the Delaware was key to success.¹ The earliest ferries connecting New Jersey and Pennsylvania began in the mid-1600s, and by 1800 there was a reliable ferry service between Camden and Philadelphia. With Camden's growing importance and incorporation in 1828, private investment in the city skyrocketed. Through the 1830s, the United New Jersey Railroad and Canal Company constructed the Camden-Amboy Railroad, essentially connecting New York City and Philadelphia, with Camden at the crossroads (Dorwart 67-68). Through the nineteenth century, the most convenient means of commerce between Philadelphia and New York was through Camden City. While New York was directly connected to Camden via the railroad, a deliberate stop in Camden was necessary in order to catch the ferry to Philadelphia (Prowell 22). In a prime location serving two metropolitan locations, Camden transformed into an industrial center. As a medium sized American city, it was never known exclusively for one particular industry. Instead, Camden became home to a plethora of small factories making products like textiles, perishables, and cigars (Dorwart 125). Camden, however, was not void of large

¹ The location allowed Camden to thrive in early colonial times through the Industrial Age. From a capital investment perspective, the proximity to a large water artery was an advantage. This same benefit would become a detriment to continued growth, however. Surrounded on virtually all sides by water, Camden was a small city with nowhere to expand. This geographical issue would become one of the factors that caused disinvestment. See Jeffery Dorwart's *Camden County* for more information on the benefits and setbacks of Camden's location (15).

companies. The largest company employers in Camden through the industrial era were RCA Victor and New York Shipbuilding Corporation (“Victor Collection”). These companies represent a multitude of industrial feats of the United States at the time.

During the industrial age, the RCA Victor was a pioneer in the field of audio recording. Victor Talking Machine Company, as it was first named, was officially incorporated in 1901, with its world headquarters in Camden. The facilities were developed in a sprawling campus in the Cooper Grant neighborhood of Camden, which when RCA first began, was home to the long-running Camden and Philadelphia Ferry terminal² (Prowell 306). Victor developed at the heart of Camden City, within close proximity to all of the modern amenities of the time, including the recently laid railroad tracks (Cowie 15). When the Delaware River Bridge was completed in 1926, it not only served as a backdrop to RCA’s industrial buildings, but it also provided the easiest access yet to Philadelphia. The prevalence of this industry in Camden not only made the city an industrial leader, but also put Camden at the epicenter of the early record industry. For owners of gramophones in the early twentieth century, it was more than likely that their music was captured within the Victor’s recording studio. Victor, through rigorous branding efforts, had created a market for records as a means of entertainment, and Camden was at the heart of the production of both the actual “talking machines,” and the records to play on them.³ The Victor Talking Machine Company would later be renamed RCA Victor because of a 1929 merger with the Radio Corporation of America (Levins 1). While World War II is generally credited with

² The Camden and Philadelphia Steamboat Ferry Company first launched a ferry from the Cooper Grant site in 1840, as referenced by both Dorwart (53) and Prowell (306). The completion of a regularly running ferry is often credited as the force that led to the prominence of Camden City in the industrial era.

³ See Mark Sample’s *A package deal: Branding, technology, and advertising in music of the 20th and 21st centuries*. for a comprehensive and detailed description of the marketing and branding undertaken by the Victor Talking Machine Company in its early years.

stimulating the economy as a whole, RCA Victor did not experience significant growth in its record business. The reason, independent from the war, was because of a strike carried out by the American Federation of Musicians. The strike affected only union member studio musicians within the recording studio, and did not include live radio performances. Because of the nature of the strike, RCA Victor was the most negatively affected party. Before the means of synthetic music, all recordings had to be done with a recording orchestra. The style of music that was popular during the 1940s was referred to as “Big Band,” alluding to the fact that a union orchestra was pivotal to the production of music. Because of the war, however, RCA Victor would find itself shifting from primarily an entertainment company to a military contractor (“Victor Collection”). In the short term, the investment from the military and from the dominance of the aerospace industry would keep RCA Victor strong through the 1960s.

While RCA Victor employed many people, the largest employer in Camden for the first half of the twentieth century was the New York Shipbuilding Corporation. Despite its name, all of New York Ship’s operations took place on the Camden City waterfront. New York Ship commanded not only a large portion of the South Camden access to the Delaware River, but also commanded a large portion of Broadway through the Waterfront South neighborhood of Camden. New York Shipbuilding was incorporated in 1899, began turning out ships the next year, and was officially completed with covered dry docks by 1907 (“New York Ship Collection”). Similar to RCA Victor’s reliance on military contracts, New York Ship’s revenues depended on contract awards primarily from the US Navy, Mercantile Marines, and the US Coast Guard. Through the first half of the twentieth century, these contracts were in very high supply, eventually making the South Camden shipyard the largest in the world. The First and Second World Wars brought the most prosperity for New York Ship, which helped Camden City

flourish through both wars, and even for about a decade after the Second World War (“New York Ship Collection”).

During New York Ship’s tenure as an anchor in the neighborhood, many massive projects were undertaken to develop the area. This included the construction of Yorkship Village⁴ in 1918, a neighborhood built by the company for company employees and their families (Dorwart 120). The construction of Yorkship Village was done because at the time, the shipbuilding business was booming, and Camden did not have adequate housing to suit New York Ship’s workforce needs. While many of the company’s employees remained in other nearby neighborhoods such as Waterfront South, Central Waterfront, and Liberty Park, others opted to move to the newer and more suburban Yorkship Village (Commarata 151). Yorkship Village is unique in its position within Camden City. The neighborhood is situated at the far southeastern corner of the city on the other side of Newton Creek, which physically separates the neighborhood from the rest of the city. When Camden City began to experience a demographic shift in its neighborhoods through the 1960s and 1970s, Fairview remained virtually unchanged (US Census 1970).

Just as the entrance of New York Ship brought prosperity to the neighborhood, the company’s departure from the neighborhood brought the opposite. The Cold War era saw minor success for the company, but the number of orders was not at the same level as during the Second World War, and was not enough to sustain the large-scale production at New York Shipbuilding (Dorwart 138). The company went bankrupt in 1967. The closing of New York Shipbuilding was a negative turning point for the city of Camden, and marked the first of many major disinvestments from the private sector. The opening of the shipyard in 1899 had

⁴ While originally called Yorkship Village as a play on the New York Shipbuilding name, the neighborhood was renamed Fairview in 1920 (Commarata 150).

transformed South Camden from a poor and desolate area of the city into an overnight success story. The loss of New York Ship meant a loss of well-paying jobs in the neighborhood, and acted as one of the key reasons why many residents were pushed from Camden City through the 1970s. For those who stayed in Camden, whether out of stubbornness, necessity, or other reasons, conditions continued to deteriorate, as the loss of investment signaled a massive loss of capital for the neighborhood and the city in its entirety through the 1960s.

The industry that developed in Camden partially dictated how the city progressed in the early twentieth century. The other more notable factor that dictated urban life in Camden City was the communities of people living within the city. Until the rise of industrialism in the mid nineteenth century, Camden and the surrounding areas were largely made up of collections of farms.⁵ Life was typically decentralized in the Camden and Gloucester areas at the time, and government affairs reflected this. This portion of West Jersey would remain a grouping of farms until the first manufacturing began in Camden around the 1850s (Gillette 19). When manufacturing took hold of the city because of the more convenient connections brought about by the railroad and a more extensive network of turnpikes, a new wave of immigrants flocked to Camden City in search of jobs. Camden's new immigrants accounted for the massive population influx over four industrial decades. From 1880 to 1920, Camden City's population grew from 41,659 to 116,309, constituting growth of about one hundred eighty percent, largely because of immigration (Cammarota 97). Consistent with national trends of the era, immigrants in the late nineteenth century first came from areas in Northern and Western Europe, most notably Ireland and Germany, while later immigrants into the twentieth century came from areas South and East,

⁵ The term "Camden and the surrounding areas" is used here to reference what would become Camden County at its formation in 1844. Camden City was officially incorporated in 1828, but as a part of Gloucester County. See Jeffery Dorwart's *Camden County, New Jersey*. for a detailed analysis of political struggle to create Camden County.

namely Italy and Poland. As Jeffery Dorwart states in *Camden County, New Jersey*, “British American Protestants, many related to the original founders of the county, created urban industrial Camden County, but a Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant urban working middle-class built the city.” (Dorwart 103). While immigration was similar to what was experienced in large and medium sized cities across the eastern seaboard, living situations differed in Camden. In many other cities immigrants lived in neighborhoods surrounded by others of similar ethnicity. In Camden, immigrants were less segregated by ethnicity, but still managed to isolate themselves through their organizations and parishes (Dorwart 104). Camden was a city whose infrastructure grew because of the industrial era, and whose character grew out of the working class European immigrants that made it their home.

Postwar Camden and the Beginning of Deindustrialization

It is clear from this small snapshot that Camden was an industrial superpower from the turn of the twentieth century through World War II. Such companies as RCA Victor and New York Shipbuilding employed thousands of people over their many decades in the city. With the presence of good factory jobs, middle class residents were able to enjoy a good life in Camden, complete with typical amenities like churches, stores, and organizations. The prosperity would not last, however, and after 1960, the conditions in Camden City would rapidly deteriorate. As the years progressed, a greater disparity would occur between the City of Camden and the surrounding suburbs. This situation of inequality would be felt on multiple levels, and can be adequately described through the issues surrounding environmental inequality.

The period from 1960 to 1980 arguably contains many of the most pivotal moments in United States history, and in many ways the City of Camden was a microcosm of the vast changes that were sweeping the nation. The two most significant factors that relate to Camden and pertain to this research were the deindustrialization of cities in the Northeast United States, as well as the growing prevalence of the environmental movement. Each of these had profound social and economic effects on Camden City, and the prosperity the city enjoyed through the Industrial age would not last. Powerhouse industrial cities with multiple large corporations and industries were waning in the wake of the Second World War, and come to all but complete extinction by the 1980s. Industrial corporations sought cheaper labor and less stringent environmental laws. Both of these conditions posed serious problems in Camden City.

As in other major urban centers, some of the largest social and political forces in Camden were trade unions. Unions held considerable power among the urban working class, and union demands were difficult to ignore within Camden City. Employees at New York Shipbuilding

Corporation were unionized under the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America starting in 1934. This union began as at New York Shipbuilding and spread to other shipyards nationally (IUMSWA Archives). RCA Victor was under the jurisdiction of multiple unions, but by the 1940s most workers were members of the International Union of Electrical Workers (Arnesen 646). Beginning in the 1950s and occurring regularly in the 1960s, many of the smaller industrial firms in Camden relocated to other areas because of hostile relations with trade unions. As Jefferson Cowie argues in his book *Capital Moves: RCA's 70-Year Quest for Cheap Labor*, RCA Victor constantly sought out the cheapest labor pools. He makes the argument that once RCA developed an area, as they had done with Camden, the workers had too much leverage. With the additional leverage, RCA found it economically advantageous to relocate to where labor could more easily be exploited (Cowie 34). Industrial powers fought with trade unions, and trade unions bitterly clashed with other trade Unions throughout the 1960s. Considering this within the framework of a growing disinvestment in industry within Camden City and the international issue of the Cold War brought disastrous consequences for the city.

The act of companies moving out of Camden is best described as a snowball effect, one that transformed into an avalanche in 1967. In 1960, many industries had been rooted in Camden for roughly fifty to sixty years. New York Ship and RCA followed this pattern with their incorporations in Camden in 1899 and 1901, respectively. In that time, the companies saw good returns and long term stable profit, but they also witnessed a change in the labor force. The industry of Camden City was brought about in many ways by the military industrial complex⁶, and at its core thrived because of military contracts. After the Second World War, Camden saw a decline in demand for some of its products. Though the Cold War still kept military contracted

⁶ The term “military industrial complex” was first used in the farewell speech of Dwight D. Eisenhower. See Andrew Bacevich’s *The Long War: A History of U.S. National Security Policy since World War II* for more information about the term and its effect on war policy in the United States.

businesses like New York Shipbuilding afloat, the volume of production had been severely cut since the 1940s. These small downgrades in production throughout Camden created issues with labor. What had been a city burgeoning in population and industrial jobs through 1950 would witness a cut in jobs. Labor unions began to feel this crunch, and already plagued by corruption in many forms, engaged in increasingly hostile labor discussions with companies. For some companies, this involved relocation. RCA Victor relocated the majority of production out of Camden to the Midwest by 1970, choosing to keep only a portion of their skilled labor force at their original Camden City location (Cowie 39).

For other companies, this situation of the labor market meant bankruptcy, as was the case for New York Ship in 1967 (Gillette 32). New York Shipbuilding had become the world's largest private shipbuilder by 1940, employing about 35,000 people at that time, accounting for sixty-five percent of factory jobs within Camden by 1948. According to historical accounts of the shipyard, Camden residents were proud that the ships they helped to create at New York Shipbuilding helped the United States win the war (Levins 1). After the war, with such a large workforce no longer necessary, New York Shipbuilding was forced to lay off many of their workers. Large-scale layoffs, however, would not come until the early 1960s. The bigger picture of why demand lessened for government contracted naval ships in the 1960s is intricate, and involves public policy. Looking back in retrospect in 1972, Thomas Bowe, a member of the South Jersey business community, posited that the closure of New York Shipbuilding could be attributed to capital poured into fighting the Vietnam War. He argued that it was the change in political policy from a desire to design and create new technologies to the need to spend money for troops on the ground that doomed companies like New York Shipbuilding (Briggs 29).

Regardless of the cause, the dwindling contracts available for large-scale shipbuilders created fierce competition among companies and led to layoffs for employees.

This reduction in workforce led to the tensions felt between New York Shipbuilding and the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America. Disagreements between shipyard executives and union leaders were highly publicized as big news, especially given the amount of people in Camden who were employed by New York Ship. One such example of tension is documented in a February 1955 edition of the *Courier-Post*. The newspaper article discusses a lawsuit filed against Louis Wolfson, a New York Ship executive, because he used company funds to invest in a business venture. The union had an issue with this because he did not consult the appropriate shareholders of the company, all of which were employees, and therefore members of the union (“Wolfson is Sued”).

Another factor which is central to the disinvestment of Camden was the green movement, and later the enforcement by the EPA of the newly ratified Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. By all accounts, the green movement was an awakening among many Americans of the fragility of Earth. Those most entrenched in the movement felt a call to action to actively clean up the pollution in the nation’s cities that had begun with the Industrial Revolution. While the movement’s early scientific basis and legislation was certainly not inclusive of all environmental issues, it did bring an awareness to many Americans of the dangers of industrial pollution. For the average middle class American, an awareness was where the green movement stopped. Americans began to realize that pollutants expelled from smokestacks and from automobiles were detrimental to health, but most did not actively seek to address the issues. The solution many found to the negative health effects plaguing Camden City was similar to the solution corporations found – a relocation to a better area. For the average working class Camden family,

this meant the suburban communities (Commarata 4). With the importance of environmental quality growing, the issue of environmental injustice came to the forefront in Camden City. Environmental injustice is still a debated subject and would not have been the terminology used during this postindustrial era in Camden; nonetheless, it describes the situation. Environmental injustice is defined as a situations where disproportionately harmful environmental conditions are found within low income areas (Downey 2). The environmental treatment and lack thereof for Camden was one situation where both disinvestment and disregard occurred from the 1970s to recent times.

An Analysis of Camden's Employment and Demographic Statistics

The time period from 1960 to 1980 clearly witnessed the majority of the changes that occurred in Camden City, and the previous section seeks to pinpoint a number of the changes. The actual changes that occurred within the population of the city are best explained through the information collected in the United States Census. Each decade, the United States Census Bureau collected data on each household across the United States. From this data, demographic information was released shortly after, while specific name information has been retained to protect privacy. The 1960, 1970, and 1980 Censuses showed radical changes not only in the total population of Camden City, but also in the racial and economic makeup of the city. Juxtaposed to this steep decline within Camden City was a growth in the suburban townships surrounding Camden City and making up the rest of Camden County. This disparity shows that a push from the city was not the primary reason for leaving, but instead a pull from the suburbs and the convenience of the automobile was the initial reason for the demographic shifts in Camden City. The population of Camden City peaked in 1950 at 124,555. By 1960, when Camden began to experience the brunt of deindustrialization, the population had fallen to 117,159, representing a drop of about 6%. Though a six percent drop may seem minimal over a decade, it is also important to note that a major demographic shift occurred in the same time period. Namely, Camden experienced the shift of its working class white population to the suburbs, while a new previously rural population of African Americans moved into the city. The movement of the black population from areas in the South to urban industrial centers was a trend that began as a result of World War II. During the war, there was a need for more workers in war related industries, both because of an increase of production volume, and a scarcity in the typical workforce due to military enlistment (Cowie 6). The need for additional workers in the

northeastern industrial cities like Camden worked in the favor of many African American laborers. The benefits were both economic and social – the black workers had the opportunity to earn more money doing similar industrial work, and racism in northern cities was much less oppressive than in the South (Cowie 23). The good fortune for the relocated community was short lived, however, as factory jobs in Camden diminished after the Second World War. The situation led those who were able, mainly working class, second-generation European immigrants, to leave the city in search of other work, while the less advantaged African American newcomers had no choice but to remain within Camden (Gillette 42). According to US Census report data, jobs in Camden totaled 62,564 in 1954 and 58,883 in 1958 (Census 1960). A slight increase to 58,883 occurred in 1960, likely caused by the contract New York Shipbuilding received and executed to construct the USS *Kitty Hawk*. It would be the last major project undertaken by New York Ship, but at its completion in February 1961, all eyes were on Camden in what seemed to be continued industrial success even in the postwar era (Beverley 4). As Howard Gillette notes in *Camden After the Fall: Decline and Renewal in a Postindustrial City*, total jobs within Camden City, including industrial jobs, had actually risen since 1945 despite the end of the Second World War (Gillette 34). Camden seemed to have somehow beaten the deindustrialization many other cities were facing postwar, and common belief at the time was that it beat the odds because of its strength. The sentiment would not last, however, as the job numbers for Camden City revealed a downward trend beginning in 1960 (Census 1970). By 1967, the number of jobs in Camden had fallen drastically to 46,222, a negative change of twenty-two percent. Small and medium scale factories in Camden were closing rapidly as demand decline, and still viable businesses found increasingly fewer reasons to remain in the city. The largest blow to hit Camden in its process of deindustrialization was the bankruptcy and

closing of New York Shipbuilding Corporation in 1967. With already dwindling jobs in the city in 1967, by the time New York Ship's closure affected the jobs report in 1970, total city jobs had sunken further to 41,588. Considering the employment records of New York Shipbuilding in February 1966, roughly 1000 people were employed full time by the company (Employee Directory 1966), which while still constituting a large number of people, represented a major decline from the over thirty-thousand employed during World War II. About a fourth of Camden's job losses from 1967 to 1970 can be directly attributed to the closure of Camden's premier shipbuilder. Many other job losses occurred as a result of the shipyard's closure. With many men out of work, the once flourishing neighborhood economies of Camden suffered. Many families left the city in search of employment elsewhere. Once thriving neighborhood bars and stores found themselves with fewer customers (Paprzycki). The pillars of the neighborhood economy were destroyed with the closure of Camden's largest industrial plants, and with it came the closure of other smaller plants and providers of services.

The decreasing number of jobs in Camden led to the disenfranchisement of the established working class. Camden residents saw fewer jobs available and the growing depreciation of established neighborhoods. In such moments of desperation, white working class citizens often blamed their newfound financial problems on those who were new to the neighborhood and ethnically different than them. For many white Camden residents, their primary scapegoats were the African American and Puerto Rican American enclaves of their city. In 1960, 76.2% of residents in Camden were of European descent, constituting the vast majority. Of the data that was reported in that year's census, the majority of those who responded "white" were from Polish, Italian and Irish descent. In contrast, the data for 1960 showed 23.4% of the population was Black. The majority of the African American population in this census had

been settled in the city for many years, comprising the historically black enclaves of the city, most notably in areas of South Camden (Dorwart 32). When considering what percentage of Camden's population was a new group of people, the answer was virtually none in 1960. Almost no persons of Hispanic descent were reported in Camden in 1960. Furthermore, the effects of the Second Great Migration had not yet been felt. Camden in 1960 was comprised a majority white and minority black population of people who had been in the city for many decades. It would be through the sixties that Southern-born African Americans moved north, in search of manufacturing jobs that would soon disappear. At the same time, persons of Hispanic origins also moved to the city.

With this new population emerging parallel to the growing decrease in factory jobs, many came to the faulty conclusion that it was this new population responsible. One such source that shows the undercurrent of racism that prevailed in Camden during the deindustrialization years is *Last Rites*, a play written by Camden native Joseph Paprzycki. While the work takes some liberties for the sake of drama, the play is based on a true story. The play revolved around a neighborhood bar after the closure of New York Shipbuilding in 1967. Though the setting of the bar, Paprzycki details the effects of the closing on different community members such as laborers, the bartender and other service workers of the neighborhood, and the parish priests at Sacred Heart Church. The play documents the daily life of residents in South Camden through 1967, while portraying the feeling of betrayal from trusted politicians and subtle scapegoating of African Americans (Paprzycki 3-42).

The subtly of racial tension would not last forever. By 1969, tensions had grown significantly, causing the first race riot in Camden. Racial tensions in the city had been growing in the years leading up to the 1969 riots, and became especially pronounced with the closure of

New York Shipbuilding in 1967. In many cases, formerly employed residents equated their misfortune in losing their jobs with the arrival of new ethnic populations. The summer of 1969 saw the tensions begin to turn to violence, with a number of altercations occurring during July and August (Dorwart 153). The climax of 1969 racial tension occurred in the full race riots that occurred over the Labor Day Weekend. According to the *Courier Post*'s coverage on September 3, 1969, the Tuesday after Labor Day,

A 21-year-old Camden patrolman and a 15-year-old girl died in a hail of sniper's bullets last night on a city street. Their deaths climaxed a night of racial violence in Camden that was punctuated by flurries of gunfire and confrontations between rock-throwing crowds and city policemen. ("Camden Patrolman" 1).

Also according to the *Courier Post*, the tension turned to violence with the attempted arrest of an African American man who was alleged to have been a fugitive. Citing unjust treatment of ethnic minorities by a largely white police force, crowds began to gather in downtown Camden in protest. What began as a relatively peaceful mediation between protesters and city officials – including an African American police captain – quickly turned to violence. The violence and rioting continued into the early hours of the morning ("Camden Patrolman" 2). After the dust had settled the next morning, it was clear that Camden had changed forever. Up until late summer of 1969, the movement of the white working class out of the city was gradual. The main motivation for relocating was not the factors pushing residents from the city, but instead the factors pulling working class families to the suburbs. After 1969, with racial tensions still virtually insurmountable, many long-established white residents believed their best option for safety and prosperity was to relocate. The riots of 1969 changed the dynamics of the city, but did not ultimately change the urban landscape. The demographic shift in the city after the 1969 riots

showed increasing numbers of the white population leaving the city (Census 1970), but it would not be until the riots of 1971 that full-scale evacuation from the Camden would occur.

The riots that took place in Camden during the summer of 1971 were the turning point for the social and demographic changes that occurred in the city. In a similar fashion to the riots of 1969, this unrest began over the mistreatment of a person of color by white police officers. In this case, the victim of police abuse was Hispanic. Unlike the previous riots, however, the backlash caused by this uprising essentially destroyed the city's infrastructure, particularly in the downtown region. The looting and arson that occurred during the riots, whether perpetrated by rioters or others, caused the majority of the cityscape to turn into a "burned-out war zone" (Sicotte 104). With virtually all of the amenities of the downtown area destroyed and the perception of safety at an all-time low, the months and years following the riots experienced the highest migration of the white working class out of city. Between 1970 and 1980, 35,300 white residents of Camden moved out of the area. Some left the region altogether, but the vast majority relocated to nearby suburbs such as Pennsauken and Cherry Hill (Sicotte 105-108).

Two important aspects of the unrest in 1971 were that it included more than only the ethnic minorities directly involved and it did not restrain itself to only local issues, but instead included the national issues of the era. The main issues at the forefront both on the local and national level were civil rights and the Vietnam War. The year 1971 was not only infamous in Camden's history for its race riots, but also included South Jersey in the national spotlight due to the actions of the Camden 28. The Camden 28, as the name suggests, was a group of twenty-eight anti-war activists who campaigned heavily for nonviolence and an end to the Vietnam War. Under cover of darkness on August 22, 1971, amid the intermittent riots occurring in Camden, members of the Camden 28 broke into and raided the city draft board records. They did this as a

demonstration to prove their belief that the war in Vietnam was unjust. The Camden 28's message corresponded to civil rights advocates because the group noted that a disproportionate number of minorities were being drafted to Vietnam (Camden 28).⁷ The actions by this activist group are not only credited with swaying public opinion on the war, but act as an example of the social changes that were taking place in Camden in the early 1970s. As Anthony Giacchino's documentary highlights in the interviews of Camden residents and members of the group, the urban landscape of Camden was completely different in late 1971 than it was even a year prior. According to interviewee Gene Dixon, when men who had served in the military would return from active duty and return to Camden, they wouldn't find anything like what they had left. Returning soldiers, eager to return to their lives in Camden, found that their families had abandoned their houses for elsewhere and the downtown area had been ravaged beyond a point of repair (Camden 28).

The personal testaments of the Camden 28 were corroborated by the statistical information comparisons of the 1970 and 1980 censuses. In 1970, the total population of Camden City was 102,551. By 1980, only a decade later, the total population had fallen to 84,910. The population shift represents a drastic change of -17.2%. In the perspective of other cities that were in similar postindustrial downturns and socially turbulent times, it is clear that Camden fared significantly worse than its neighbors. For instance, compared to other medium sized cities in New Jersey, Newark's population fell by 13.79%, while Trenton's population fell by 12.08%. Both of these cities had experienced similar race riots in the late sixties and early

⁷ A brief description of the Camden 28 is described here to supplement the social factors transforming Camden. See the documentary *The Camden 28*, directed by Anthony Giacchino, and Edward McGowan's book *Peace Warriors* for more information on the group and the subsequent trial following their trespassing arrest. Their story was important to the decade in South Jersey history, and the impact of their trial was a pivotal moment in public opinion on the war in Vietnam. Their case was also a precedent-setting case of jury nullification in the United States.

seventies, yet their populations had not dropped as Camden's numbers had. Though a much larger city, neighboring Philadelphia also fared much better. Race riots had also occurred in the late sixties, and vast expanses of North Philadelphia had experienced a great amount of disinvestment due to deindustrialization. Nevertheless, Philadelphia's population sustained a drop in population over the same time period of only 13.36%. While these neighboring cities show large population drops, signifying economic and social issues of their own, the important fact to note is that Camden's 17.2% drop represents an unmatched drop in the region. While the issues associated with deindustrialization affected a large majority of cities in the northeast United States, the magnitude of the misfortunes affecting Camden caused the city to experience changes unparalleled in others. With Camden as such a small city geographically,⁸ residents chose to relocate to the suburbs instead of to other areas within city limits (Census 1970) (Census 1980).

The physical destruction of the downtown area by rioters was further exacerbated by a number of local political factors. Since the disinvestment in Camden by the majority of its former industrial tenants, the tax base in the city was at a low point in 1970. Coupled with this was the reality that politicians had incited residents with promises of past prosperity that they could not keep. In some cases, their intentions were good but mismanaged, and in other instances the politicians were seeking self-gain at the expense of the city. Angelo Errichetti became mayor of Camden in 1973. An Italian-American and Camden native, Errichetti became mayor on the promise of restoring the city to its former glory that had been experienced during the industrial era (Dorwart 156-157). By all accounts, Errichetti's first years in office showed him to be a dedicated worker for the city. According to later accounts detailed in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*,

⁸ Camden City is 10.34 square miles (Census 1980).

he regularly worked twelve-hour days and tirelessly plugged for his city (Colimore A01).

Through his style of leadership, Errichetti soon became the most powerful figure in the city, and much of the government responsibility fell to him. Without the usual checks and balances provided by a well-rounded local government, the mayor found himself in complete control of most aspects of city government. Whether his motivation was malicious from the beginning of his term or if his corruption developed henceforth may never be known, but the fact remains that Errichetti ushered in an era of corrupt politics in Camden that would last for several decades. The corrupt political arena would cause the downfall of several city government politicians and mayors, and would drive further the process of disinvestment and urban decay within Camden (Dorwart 157).

One of the areas most affected by the political changes within the city was the Camden public school system. The failure of the city to gain tax revenue led to the chain of disinvestment to be extended to the education system. Similar to within the business spectrum, disinvestment in the infrastructure and government of the city also had a snowball effect on the Camden's status (Sicotte 68). As increasing numbers of residents left the city, the demand for property fell drastically. With many people moving out, those who could afford to live elsewhere did just this, and those who had enough money opted not to move into the city. The only remaining movement into the city was the small trickle of African Americans and Puerto Rican immigrants who still sought to join family members and friends in a northeastern city. The large movement out of the city outnumbered the small inward movement, and demand for homes dropped significantly. With the demand dropping and the supply of houses remaining constant, home prices fell considerably starting around 1970. The living environment had deteriorated, and those who could move out chose to do so. Except for the few business owners who believed the city

would soon improve, the only other movement into the city was of people who could not afford to live elsewhere.⁹

The data for the entirety of Camden County shows that while many middle working class households left Camden City boundaries between 1970 and 1980, these families did not move far. While the city showed a major decline between the two census collections, the overall population of the county did not only remain constant, but actually grew. There was a correlation between the decline of population in the city and a growth in population in the county. Though in a decade the city's population had declined by about 17%, the county as a whole grew by 2.83% (Census 1980). Clearly, the city decline faster than the county was growing, but it should be noted that not all who moved from Camden relocated within the county. Many households relocated to nearby Burlington County, Gloucester City and County, and the newer neighborhoods of Philadelphia. Regardless of whether the middle class families fled the city to a different community within the boundaries of Camden County or outside of them, the suburban boroughs and townships saw major progress during the same period Camden experienced decline (Cammarota 192).

The most notable example in New Jersey, and what has been called a national model of a suburban city, was Cherry Hill¹⁰. Until the mid twentieth century, Cherry Hill was mainly a large expanse of farmland. Around the turn of the century, infrastructure was improved that developed railroad and turnpike systems, but generally the area did not develop as a suburban alternative to Camden until after the Second World War. The improvement of transportation infrastructure is

⁹ See Howard Gillette's *Camden After the Fall* for anecdotes about some Camden business owners who moved into the city in the late 1970s. Gillette and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* detail the unique story of Stan Brown, owner of Triangle Liquor Store, who bought his business around 1980 (Gillette xii-xiii) (Quinn 26).

¹⁰ What is now known as Cherry Hill was originally named Delaware Township until 1961. In that year, residents voted in a referendum to rename the township based on successful businesses in the area that used the name "Cherry Hill," most notably the Cherry Hill Mall ("What's in a name" 3).

what made Cherry Hill and the neighboring suburbs accessible, but it was the institution of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, or the G.I. Bill, that made the development of Cherry Hill viable. G.I.s returning from the war were aided in their ability to start a life for themselves with a variety of social and economic benefits. The most widespread use of the G.I. Bill was through the cash payments of college tuition and the provision for very low-interest mortgage availability. Both of these features of the act, primarily the latter, caused a boom in population and development for the suburbs. The suburbs developed because of investment. Developers and township planners worked to build new construction to meet the demand caused by the G.I. Bill. After the war and into the fifties and sixties, the mindset of the American Dream spread throughout much of the white working class. For the suburbs surrounding Camden, this newfound focus on upward mobility led to the success of these townships. Many American consumers went from being content with a small city row house¹¹ to desiring a medium-sized standalone residence with a yard. Cherry Hill was an ideal suburb because it provided many of the amenities once found in the city, but on a more modernized scale. A pinnacle of early twentieth century consumerism, storefront shopping districts had been very popular in most northeastern cities. In Camden, residents once could walk to Broadway in the downtown area to find a bustling shopping district, complete with a flagship Lit Brothers Department Store. Responding to the demands posed by the suburban sprawl that had begun in the fifties, many new shops and businesses opened in Cherry Hill in the 1960s. Most notable in this consumerist development was the completion of the Cherry Hill Mall in October of 1961. This regional shopping center was the largest indoor mall on the east coast when it was built, standing as a testament to the popularity of the suburbs in Camden County (Cammarota 164-165). Working

¹¹ "Row house" is a colloquial term for a townhouse used primarily in Philadelphia. By the time Camden's development during the industrial era, the term was used there as well. See Amanda Casper's article entitled "Row Houses" for a more detailed description of their history (Casper).

class families no longer found it convenient to walk to their nearby outdoor storefronts, and instead preferred to drive to a modern, indoor shopping mall. Cherry Hill grew very fast during the postwar boom, with a population of 10,358 in 1950, 31,522 in 1960, and 64,395 in 1970 (Census of the Population 1970). Over this thirty-year period, the population more than doubled every decade. As the population grew, the demand for better services, housing, and infrastructure increased as well (Cammarota 182). These improvements led to many of the pull factors that drew people out of Camden to the suburbs. Public policy of the era facilitated the relocation of working class families to the suburbs, and private investment cemented the trend into place. The suburbs became a desirable place to live, while Camden City suffered disinvestment.

Camden began the twentieth century as an emerging industrial powerhouse, but by 1960 was experiencing serious decline due to a number of economic and social factors. In 1960, the decline was unbeknownst to anyone in the city, and Camden seemed more powerful than ever as war industries seemed to make a successful transition into peacetime production. The analysis for this essay began in 1960 for that very reason – hopes were high in Camden and many predicted that the city was on the right track to continue as an urban center. From the statistics, it is clear that the prosperity did not last. Initially, a disinvestment by the cities largest industrial employers created a lack of jobs for the growing supply of laborers. In the precarious economic situation, the white working class made up of first- and second-generation European immigrants and the Hispanic and African American minority populations clashed over jobs and neighborhood. In the pivotal years of 1969 and 1971, the racial tension erupted into riots, the actions of which further doomed Camden through perceived and real fears for not only safety, but also neighborhood and home value security. The information collected during the decadal census showed the demographic effects of the actions taken by the national and local

governments, businesses, organizations, and residents. Looking back on the actions taken by multiple contingencies of people it is clear that each of the actions fell into a cause and effect cycle that ultimately led to the failure of a once prosperous city. The analysis of the causes of urban decline for this essay concludes in the year 1980. The rationale for this as the limit is because by this year, almost everything about Camden had changed since 1960. The population had dropped significantly, and the ethnic makeup of the city had shifted. While though the sixties and seventies some features of the former glory of Camden remained, by 1980 the city was no longer best described as a declining postindustrial city, but as a city of urban decay. The detrimental conditions within Camden continued to affect the increasingly poor residents of the neighborhoods and the city continued to affect the county, however, the majority of the change had concluded. The causation of Camden's troubles had occurred, leaving only the effects of the three decades of 1960, 1970, and 1980.

The Environmental Impact on Camden: Attitude, Enforcement, and Abatement

Much of what this analysis has considered is the social and economic forces that caused Camden to become what it is today. Another important aspect is the effect of the postindustrial changes within the city. After the disinvestment in the city on multiple fronts, Camden experienced many of the urban decay problems associated with America's inner cities. These issues are best seen as cause and effect. For instance, to secure cheaper labor, industries relocate outside of Camden, therefore the city gains unemployed residents and loses tax base, creating an economic situation. Minorities, unhappy with being treated as second-class citizens within their own home city, protest in the streets, which leads some to riot and destroy property. This action causes disinvestment for homeowners who value safety and relocation for businesses who no longer see Camden as a viable option. These issues, while equivocal, are rather direct in their effect on the city. A vital issue that arose as a more distinctly indirect effect of Camden's deindustrialization was environmental.

During the industrial era, environmentalism was not a mainstream issue. From the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, laissez faire capitalism reigned the business and political spectrums, with little thought for anything else, most notably the rights of laborers and the independence of government from business dealings. Though environmental quality was not an issue at the time, because of the treatment of similar issues by laissez faire capitalists, the assumption can be made that the issue would have been ignored. Regardless of this speculation, environmentalism was not an issue prior to 1960 because there was no science to prove polluted environments was detrimental to human health. Before the modernization of the health sciences in the twentieth century, little was known about the effects of many human activities, including industrial activity. Though the 1950s and even into the 1960s, the American

ideal was environmental domination. In many ways, the environment was seen as a force that needed to be conquered. Civilizations that could conquer the environment for the betterment of society were seen in a very positive light, and this is something that the United States attempted to do for many decades. The typical American city through the early half of the twentieth century was characterized by unrestricted development of homes, factories, and railroad and highway infrastructure. Little room was dedicated in these cities to nature; many lacked parks and other green spaces.¹² Natural bodies of water were also seen as a force to be conquered and altered to fit the industrial needs of a city. Rivers winding through cities were dammed and rerouted for the improvement of trade (McLamb 1). This national attitude affected Camden through the industrial era with the modifications made to the Delaware River and Cooper Creek banks to allow for the business needs of the New York Shipbuilding shipyard and dry docks (“New York Shipbuilding Collection”). The Industrial Revolution and ongoing industrial years in urban environments in most northeastern cities had a massive effect on the environment, and this is clearly seen in Camden.

It would not be until 1962 that the average working class American would become aware of the detrimental effects that industry had on the environment. This awareness came primarily through the publication of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, which discussed critically mankind’s effect on the environment. The book specifically addressed chemical pesticides effect on nature, particularly animals other than the intended “pests.” *Silent Spring* initially gained momentum as a pre-publication manuscript from the grassroots green movement that had begun around 1960.

The awareness soon spread to the scientific community, who confirmed much of Carson’s work

¹² There were certain exceptions to this statement. Philadelphia, originally planned by William Penn as a green city based on a collection of farms on large parcels of land, did leave space for the development of Fairmount Park (Weigley 3-5). New York City developed Central Park, but only after the bedrock was deemed too difficult to remove (“Hot Rocks”). Smaller and medium sized cities such as Camden did not fare as well as their larger counterparts.

as truth. After the mass publication of the work in 1962, many Americans, now aware of the dangers of pesticides, worked to stop the spraying of pesticides in their own communities (McLamb 2). Local awareness and action gave way to national legislation through the formation of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970. Originally proposed and instituted via executive order by Richard Nixon, the EPA would soon be ratified by Congress as the governing body for environmental regulation in the United States (“EPA History”). The Clean Air Act was signed into law in 1970 to regulate air pollution caused by factories, called stationary sources, and automobiles, called mobile forces. It was the first piece of legislation in the United States to comprehensively address air pollution, and was enforced by the newly formed EPA (“Clean Air Act”). The Clean Water Amendment of 1972 reinforced and updated the previous Clean Water Act of 1948. The amendment set the regulatory structure for pollution emissions into water supplies, and also placed the regulation under the jurisdiction of the EPA (“Clean Water Act”).

The enforcement of the new environmental laws gave a second incentive for firms to move out of industrial cities in the northeastern United States. Beginning in the fifties and sixties, labor issues were the primary reason for southern relocation, but by 1970, environmental regulation became equally important in a firm’s decision. Because of the abatement rules set forth by the EPA’s original standards, firms were treated more stringently in the northeast and Midwestern cities because these areas were already highly polluted. Industries that moved south were susceptible to fewer environmental regulations because the air and water quality were cleaner there at the time. EPA regulation through the 1970s was based on a command and control system, where firms were required to abate their pollution by following the EPA standards (Lee 1). Firms, always seeking to make a profit, would always chose to abate pollution for the least cost. In addition to the rules indirectly making southern states more accommodating

of pollution-causing industry, it also offered more open space. Cities on the northeastern seaboard, including Camden, were crowded and antiquated. Many firms discovered it was cheaper to build a new facility in alignment with EPA standards in the South (Lee 2-3). With environmental regulation in place, the United States was able to move away from many of the polluting effects of industry.¹³

The focus of this environmental section is not to highlight the effects of the environmental mistreatments that occurred during the city's industrial past. Though these effects were very pronounced and acted for some residents of Camden as a push factor to the suburbs, they were not inherently different from what was occurring in other American cities. Across many other cities, air and water pollution were the norm until the passage of the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. After the institution of these acts and the enforcement of the EPA, many areas saw improvements in their air and water qualities. Camden differs from other postindustrial cities because while the measures taken in the 1970s to abated the existing pollution experienced in the city, other environmental issues developed. These issues were due to the growing prominence and consumption of resources by the suburban townships (Cammarota 100).

After the environmental movement awakened Americans to the negative effects of pollution, some Americans took action to try to actively abate pollution and pollution-causing actions across the country. Most Americans, however, became aware of pollution's negative qualities and attempted only to personally escape its effects instead of abating the pollution as a nation. For Camden, this meant that instead of actively trying to clean up the pollution harming the city, most residents took it as another reason to move to the suburbs. Through the 1970s and

¹³ See Richard D. Morgenstern's *Economic Analyses at EPA: Assessing Regulatory Impact* for a detailed history of the Environmental Protection Agency and its application across the United States.

into the 1980s, with Camden already rising as a low-income area, the city began to attract a number of environmentally unfriendly business and municipal plants (Dorwart 169). A notable example of this was the Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority, which in 1980 began construction on a wastewater treatment plant in the Waterfront South neighborhood of the city. The plant was the regionalization of the sewer system for Camden County, as prescribed by the Clean Water Act of 1972. Prior to the Clean Water Act, there was no national regulation for the treatment of sewage, which meant that in many cases sewage went untreated back into rivers and streams. By 1985, according to the *Courier Post*, Camden County was operating on the new sewage system. While the arrangement worked well for the suburbs, the direct environmental effects on the southern waterfront of the city were negative (Comegno B1). In this situation, the requirements of the EPA in effect deteriorated conditions in Camden further. In addition to the actions of Camden County, private businesses also took advantage of the low socioeconomic status of Camden's waterfront neighborhoods by putting their most pollution-causing firms in the area. While these firms adhered to EPA standards, the concentration of them in the area created poor air quality for city residents beginning in the seventies (Sicotte 106-107). In addition to air quality concerns, groundwater pollution was also a very big problem in Camden through the 1970s and 1980s, unbeknownst to many residents or the local government. The most prominent example was the operations associated with Martin Aaron, Inc. starting in the 1970s created a toxic ground pollution situation. When the Clean Water Act violations were discovered in 1995, the land involved became a Superfund site, denoting it as a very dangerous health area and prioritizing it for government abatement funding ("Martin Aaron Inc.").

The disinvestment in Camden had major effects on the social norms and economic position of the city. Clearly the disinvestment did not end there – but spread to include

environmental neglect. After Camden had lost many of its original working class residents, those who remained were households and individuals who could afford to live no where else. Without the economic leverage to follow the demand of new houses, Camden residents from the mid-seventies saw their city's environment deteriorating. New plant facilities that caused pollution moved into the city after more respectable industries moved away. To facilitate easy access to the suburbs from the city, and to direct bridge traffic immediately out of the disinvested Camden, new highways were built directly through established neighborhoods. Because of the low socioeconomic status of these neighborhoods, many had no choice but to allow these unfavorable environmental decisions made at the county level (Sicotte 203-204).

Conclusion

Camden in 1980 was vastly different than the city at the beginning of the twentieth century, and even differed considerably from Camden in 1960. While the changes occurred for a number of reasons, the primary factors were economic and social. With the basis for the economy and for society being disrupted in Camden, the urban landscape of the city changed dramatically over the twenty-year period between 1960 and 1980. Most notably, the issue of economic disinvestment, first from businesses and then from the local and county governments, allowed the social instability of the late 1960s and early 1970s to occur. These urban factors, coupled with the growing demand for middle class families to live in the suburbs, led to a nearly complete reshaping of Camden. Considering these events in the bigger picture, it is clear that the deterioration of Camden occurred due to disinvestment on multiple fronts. Industrial, social, and governmental disinvestment alike aided in the downfall of what was once the thriving center of South Jersey life and commerce, instead placing suburbs like Cherry Hill at the forefront of county life. The history of the corporations once located in Camden and their eventual bankruptcy or relocation, the demographic shifts shown in the census data, and the facts surrounding the area's many environmental issues paints a picture of the city's transition in a way that rudimentary explanations cannot. The economic and social disinvestment in Camden during this postindustrial timeframe led to a high concentration of low socioeconomic households in Camden by 1980. This situation led to an exploiting of Camden's neighborhoods by placing environmentally detrimental sites throughout the area, including waste plants, industrial facilities, and intrusive highway systems.

The decline of Camden was the result of many issues arising concurrently, and burgeoning together. Walt Whitman indeed described Camden as "a city invincible to the attacks

of the rest of the world.” Considering the status of the city in 1980, these words seem far from the truth. In fact, many of the problems that began to plague Camden through its transition to a postindustrial economy still affect the city today. Whitman’s words, however, hold a glimmer of hope. The deterioration of Camden occurred only over the course of one generation. With this in mind, it is reasonable to assume that it may only take one generation to improve the conditions in Camden once again.

Recommendations for Further Research

This essay examines the demographic shifts that occurred in Camden between 1960 and 1980 and attempts to provide sound reasoning for these changes. While in many ways the essay specifically pinpoints events that transpired within the city and the overarching sentiment of residents, on some topics this work only scratches the surface. For being a comparatively small city with a relatively short history, Camden has a great deal of intricate history in its past. A good deal of research exists in the forms of general narratives about the city and county of Camden. This work provides a synthesis of these narratives proven with demographic data, but does not fully investigate every event within the city. Further research could include an analysis of the education system within Camden City. My research briefly discussed education in Camden as it was affected by government disinvestment, but an essay detailing the intricacies of the education system and how it may have been a cause for further disinvestment in the city. A comparison of Camden's education system with the school districts of the surrounding suburban townships and Catholic schools in the area, both in a historical and contemporary context, would be very beneficial to those who wish to study the ongoing issues affecting the city. Further research may also be conducted with regard to the environmental activism that has developed within Camden. While environmental activism did not specifically manifest itself in Camden prior to 1980, this essay does not discuss it. In the decades since, however, environmentalism has grown, and organizations such as the Center for Environmental Transformation have been formed to combat legislation that might negatively affect the environment of Camden. Research could be conducted on environmental activism in the United States and the comparison to Camden. In addition to these research topics, further information could be collected and presented related to the history of the city. This essay presents a brief history of Camden, and there are various non-

academic sources that have wide knowledge of the city, but there are few academic sources about life in Camden during the nineteenth century.

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