

April 2012

Brockport's Entangled Town – Gown Ties, 1965 - 1990

Chris Wilbur
The College at Brockport

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/spectrum>

 Part of the [History Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Wilbur, Chris (2012) "Brockport's Entangled Town – Gown Ties, 1965 - 1990," *The Spectrum: A Scholars Day Journal*: Vol. 1 , Article 10.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/spectrum/vol1/iss1/10>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @Brockport. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Spectrum: A Scholars Day Journal by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @Brockport. For more information, please contact kmyers@brockport.edu.

The Entangled Ties Between Town and Gown

1965-1990

Chris Wilbur

There is no edict, no list of laws, or even punishment that circumvents the relationship between the town and gown. Fortunately there are no longer any violent eruptions that coincide with incidents such as the St. Scholastica's Day Massacre, which nearly left 100 people dead. There is no doubt that the town riots at Oxford University were the results of town versus gown aggression, where there was "not a single yard of ground....which has not at one time or other, been stained with blood."¹ Today's college communities no longer stain the ground with blood, but they still have disagreements that define their relationship. Higher taxes, off campus housing, and student affairs are only a few of the problems that bombard community meetings. As most American colleges expanded in the late sixties and seventies so did the town and gown relationships, and leadership of universities had to transition to a more community involved administration because of the rampant population explosion of new students. Most American college towns transitioned through similar phases, but town and gown aggression still persists today over a struggle to coexist.

The relationship between the university and the surrounding communities is a complicated one that creates numerous challenges to coexisting peacefully. Do the constant problems of off-campus housing, intoxication, and late night traffic really fit well with a community that has priorities such as raising a family? Does the community really have that much to gain from the College? With the expansion of the College at Brockport's enrollment as well as the campus in the Sixties and Seventies, these questions persisted. Along with these new problems came a search for solutions during the presidencies of Albert W. Brown and John Van De Wetering.

¹ Gumprecht, Blake. *The American College Town*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 2008. 297.

The period of Brown's leadership was characterized by rebellion and expansion. During his presidency, Brockport's community relations expanded as much as every other part of the college. The Syracuse graduate oversaw community reactions to off-campus housing, a massive political rebellion, and new construction expanding the college, as well as interactions with surrounding communities with the cooperation of the village.

Van de Wetering's years are best defined as crisis. The constant low budgets of the Eighties did not assist in building community relations, but did not stop them either. Van de Wetering oversaw expansion of Brockport's college involvement with its surrounding community, through construction of Route 531. Van de Wetering may not have been as involved in the community as Brown was, but did not stop student affairs from gallivanting over the community. Both administrations had their own unique way of dealing with the community of Brockport, and with the current problems that plagued most American college towns.

The relationship of the town and gown in Brockport evolved over the course of several years. The years between 1965 and 1990 were turbulent years of town and gown interaction. The transitions that the college community experienced, such as becoming part of SUNY, made locals ask the question, is the college now only an extension of state government's control over local communities? Would the College and community still have cooperation with events, such as sports, Spring-in and several other events? Brockport Teachers College was involved in most aspects of the community, but now with the college being transformed into a state run institution, town gown relations would change from the local community, to a more diverse society. Issues such as "in loco parentis", i.e., should the college behave similar to a parent, and the enormous expansion of the institution quickly put more of an emphasis on having good communications between the two.

Albert W. Brown arrived on the Brockport campus in 1965, and immediately began making several changes to the college's outlook on the surrounding communities, specifically the involvement of the village of Brockport.

"No student can be adequately prepared for a useful life in society if the formative years of his education are spent entirely within the somewhat artificial

society of a college. The college, too, must be more outward looking. It has an obligation of public service to society just as the individual does.”²

Brown's obligation to the college and the town expanded from the beginning of his tenure on campus. Sometime between late 1966 and 1967, Brown assisted in the establishment of the College Community Coordinating Committee. The Committee was one the first established groups to work specifically with the village on college town issues, with the new mayor of Brockport, Frank Sacheli, serving as the committee's first chairman.³ The committee had several responsibilities that revolved around doing business with the board of trustees and the town board. From looking at the minutes of the committee meetings, the major issues plaguing the board were issues such as street repair, sidewalks, tree removal, off-campus housing, sewers, fire inspection, parking, and traffic volume controls.⁴ With the help of this committee, the town and gown relationship was headed in the right direction, but with the Brockport mayoral election in the offing, this relationship would not last.

In December of 1969, the committee suddenly ended, after several members including Brown and Town Supervisor Nat Lester voted to disband it. There was no readily apparent reason for the sudden end to the board, but with the absence of Frank Sacheli as the committee's chairperson, the committee seemed to lose its power. The election of the new mayor, Donald Rogers, and town supervisor Nat Lester produced an unclear relationship between the college and village. Neither Rogers nor Lester attended the meetings regularly; Mr. Lester recalls the meetings started too early and states that he didn't feel that the meetings accomplished much.⁵ There seems no reason why these two members remained elusive, Klafehn states, "A December proposal that the committee's chairperson meet with the college president, mayor, and supervisor once a month is not known to have ever materialized."⁶ With the upcoming events that would plague campuses around the nation, the village may have fared better if the committee was still maintained, but without it the college and village remained handicapped in communicating their problems.

² Klafehn, Todd L. *Brockport's Affair with a College: College and Community Relations in Sweden and Brockport, New York, 1960-1975* (2003), 37.

³ Klafehn, 38.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Klafehn, 39.

During Brown's presidency a political rebellion that erupted not just over the campus, but the nation, resulted in several problems that plagued both the college and the community of Brockport. On May 6, 1970 around five hundred students protested for the college to shutdown to observe a moratorium on Vietnam and the death of four students that were shot at Kent State by National Guardsmen. The drastic increase in students at SUNY Brockport from 1966 to 1970, from 2,300 to 9,000 students, which considerably outnumbered the citizens of Brockport, along with several other factors, enabled the demonstrations made by students to affect the community.⁷ The typical college student witnessed the assassination of John. F. Kennedy in middle school, the Vietnam War, and by the time they were in college, they witnessed the assassinations of both Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. Incidents such as these are components that led to an eventual take over at Hartwell Hall by students, and the concluding citizen rally headed afterwards by Paul Hanks Jr.

"I personally abhor and regret the escalation in the Cambodian situation. The college campus ought to be a place where questions of the day can be objectively discussed. I am happy the students are taking an objective look at the issues of the day. The school supports this as long as the rights and the freedoms of the individuals are upheld." -SUNY President Albert Brown⁸

The actions organized by students in May of 1970 fostered a turbulent town-gown relationship. Paul Hanks Jr., a district attorney of Brockport, described the reaction by citizens of the student's demonstrations: "It was a feeling of most of the community"... "that the people have been imposed upon and have been ignored."⁹ The *Republic-Democrat* of Brockport describes a few of the obscenities and rallies put on by students.

"Several incidents between town's people and the Brockport State students were reported by the community representatives. Some of these stemmed from the Wednesday March through the town by striking students. Disruption of local business, vocal and written obscenities and disruption of classes at the Brockport High School were reported incidents discussed."¹⁰

In the college's student community, individuals such as J.J. McGuire and Walter Stewart played a key role in the public protest in the village. J.J. McGuire, a former marine had been

⁷ Thom Jennings, *The Takeover of Hartwell Hall* (2000), 4.

⁸ Jennings, 25.

⁹ "Stylus Writer Relates Meeting Between Strikers and Townspeople," *Brockport's Republic- Democrat*, 05/14/1970, 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

editor of the *Stylus* newspaper on campus. Former classmates described him as a pacifist and an easy person to get along with.¹¹ J.J. is also described as behaving much more “older” than other students, but several former classmates put his age in his late twenties. J.J. McGuire was instrumental in calming the protest down, to be as nonviolent as possible, and his talks with President Brown assisted in helping calm tension between the town and gown. McGuire’s assistance in the Faculty Senate meeting on Thursday, May 7 1970, which commenced in President Brown’s office in Hartwell helped smooth tensions between the student body and the administration. At the meeting, Brown was outraged at the student demands, which involved issues such as grading, moratorium days, teach ins, and the issue of social and racial injustice.¹² Tempers flared between students and authority officials, and in response President Brown himself called for a ten minute “moratorium”. When the conference reconvened McGuire pleaded to Brown, and reminded him that they had both been Marines and had seen combat. From there on the meeting went smoothly, which resulted in the reschedule of finals that were scheduled Friday and Monday, May 8 and 11, 1970 to be postponed until Tuesday the 12th. This deal also dealt with missed work, and students that did not take their finals. The eventual proposal essentially made finals optional to their students. Other issues that involved social and racial injustice had a far less practical impact on the student body.

Walter Stewart, an African American, was a prominent student leader during the protest at SUNY Brockport. He would become BSG President, and leader of the Black Student Liberation Front (BSLF). He had been involved in several civil rights movements and on occasion was compared to Martin Luther King Jr. because of his charisma and style of nonviolence.

“He (Stewart) was not what you think of as a bomb throwing crazy of the late sixties but a natural leader.” Dr. Owen S. Ireland¹³

At some point in the protest, the BSLF became very radical in their operations, even though Stewart preached for nonviolence. The BSLF were housed in a state owned house located at 268 Holley Street on the north side of Campus, known as the Wari Katarra Cultural Center.¹⁴ In the wake of the sit-in protest at Hartwell Hall, smoke appeared down the road from

¹¹ Jennings, 10.

¹² Jennings, 29.

¹³ Jennings, 5.

¹⁴ Tom O’Neill, “Black Cultural Center.” *The Stylus*, 10/22/1969, 1.

the cultural center. The fire was quickly put out, and officers began to quickly apprehend those who were responsible for the fire. The evidence pointed to BSLF members that had the stench of kerosene on them.¹⁵ This was a radical display by BSLF members that did not coincide with the sit-ins at Hartwell, and many students involved in the sit-in concur that it was unproductive. At the Faculty Senate meeting the BSLF demanded an addition of an African American studies program, but the BSLF only managed to get lip service from Brown.¹⁶

The town and gown's relations following these incidents seemed to be unraveling, but students were becoming more visible to local citizens. The march on Brockport High School where protestors were said to have scattered filthy, obscene signs and papers over the school lawn led to several citizens' critical attitudes towards students.¹⁷

The student protest ended on May 7, 1970 at 2 pm, but the village soon counter protested the student movement. Paul Hanks Jr., attorney at Brockport, planned a citizen rally in order to demonstrate to students a peaceful movement and the feelings of the local citizens of Brockport. The rally was set to take place on Tuesday, May 12, which would include a march only through the town, and would end at the post office, where Hanks and even student leaders would make speeches on the protest. The march was filled with pro Nixon administration posters, but also streets were lined with college students with peace signs.¹⁸ The official end of the semester was May 15, 1970, which marked the end to one of the most drastic examples of student protest in SUNY Brockport history, as well as providing an example of a town gown struggle that President Brown faced during his administration.

Student protest was not the only factor that contributed to citizens being more aware of the college. The huge influx of students during Brown's presidency made citizens more keenly aware of the college presence. The increase in traffic, off-campus housing, and construction of the campus all assisted in fueling a town and gown conflict.

*"The influx of 3,000 students ...the clatter and noise of a \$46 million construction project ...professors and professional people moving in unprecedented numbers. These are some of the situations that the growth of the College at Brockport has created for the village of Brockport."*¹⁹ -Rochester Democrat and Chronicle

¹⁵ Jennings, 16.

¹⁶ Jennings, 30.

¹⁷ Klafehn, 46.

¹⁸ *Brockport Stylus*, 05/13/1970, 1.

¹⁹ "Town-College Ties Close," *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, 05/21/1967.

Early in Brown's administration the College Community Coordinating Committee assisted in indentifying problems that existed between the town and gown, but with its dissolution the relationship was in trouble. The student population jumped from 1,954 in 1960 to 11,696 in 1975.²⁰ The village population averaged a much smaller number during the same time. With issues such as unsupervised off-campus housing coming into play there would be an increase in student gallivanting overnight, which the *Stylus* and *Brockport Republic Democratic* covered over and over again. The College Community Coordinating Committee identified housing as a primary issue between the town and gown before their abrupt end, which is noted by letters they mailed out to members of the board.

*"The College Community Coordinating Committee of Brockport is concerned with many problems relating to off-campus housing of college students."*²¹

The enrollment increase was the result of several different factors. Baby Boomer generations were now entering the higher education scene all over the nation. Brown's decision to encourage the acceptance of transfer students from community colleges, which according to Klafehn, was one of the largest in SUNY would reach 29% by 1971.²² Housing this number of students frequently became a problem under the Brown administration. This resulted in several further issues as the responsibility of the college to act "in loco parentis" shifted over to the town.

Should the college be responsible for the student's well being, similar to a parent? In a *Stylus* article titled "You can't have your cake and eat it too!" President Brown addresses the issue of in loco parentis: "Is the School a parental replacement or is the student responsible for his own actions?"²³ The article was written in response to students that were unhappy with the conditions of off-campus housing, and the cost. The college constantly found itself playing "catch up", constructing new dorms and acquiring supervised off-campus housing. In light of the dramatic increase of enrollment from 1966-1975, housing students became a continual problem for Brown, and supervision became even a greater concern for the citizens. In the years between 1966 and 1970, college supervision of students living off campus became less strict, and

²⁰ Klafehn.

²¹ College Community Coordinating Committee minutes, 05/14/1969.

²² Klafehn, 12.

²³ Klafehn, 49.

it was not until 1971 and 1972 that The State University of New York formally removed all off-campus housing responsibilities from its colleges.²⁴

Public relations involved in acquiring housing became another worry during Brown's presidency for the college as well as the villagers. The expansion of the college during the late Fifties and early Sixties consisted of acquiring more property for the college. There were thirty-three addresses that disappeared from the village tax rolls between 1960 and 1965, a result of the school's development.²⁵ When President Brown arrived in 1965, construction was almost complete, with another 25 houses disappearing from the tax roll along Holley Street, between 1965 and 1975.²⁶ Not all the villagers applauded college expansion. One citizen, Mr. Louis Smith, a distinguished clerk/treasurer of Brockport, and a resident of Holley Street declared "that not everyone was happy with the deal they got from the state, through he could recall no lingering animosity."²⁷ At the end of the day, a majority of the residents moved towards the end of Holley Street. The early projections of Brockport's housing market became influential in providing supervised off campus housing property for students, but by 1966 the college began to realize that the projected number of students in the coming years would quickly out grow the number of buildings that the college had.

In 1966, Brockport students were allowed to live in off campus apartments. According to the *Stylus*, "applicants must be at least 21 years of age, and there are an expected number of 50 women and 30 men to live off campus."²⁸ The college made it clear that students were responsible for their own actions:

*"Since the college will impose no regulations upon students living in apartments, it will be expected that the students themselves will possess the maturity and responsibility to conduct themselves properly."*²⁹ *Stylus* April 22, 1966

The conditions of the housing also became a concern for students, and a controversy with the college. Since in *loco parentis* was no longer the college's policy, there was a shift in the responsibility to the village. Mayor Knapp of Brockport in 1975 states "that Brockport was virtually forced to institute a building inspection office to insure the safety and well-being of

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Klafehn, 11.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "Students to live in apartments," *Stylus*, 04/22/1966, 1.

²⁹ Ibid.

students of Brockport who rented off-campus houses and apartments.”³⁰ The *Stylus* also highlights the point that at this time the village could only afford a part-time building inspector.

*“Dan Rogers stated that the village does not now have the funds for a full-time inspector.”*³¹
-Brockport Republic Democrat Feb.4, 1970

In the same article, villagers pointed out the sub-standard housing that was taking place, and argued for the better regulation of student housing. Since at that time there were already over seven hundred students residing off-campus, and another three hundred on their way next semester, this was an urgent matter.³²

*“It seems that when the college pulled out of the off-campus housing situation, landlords exploited their tenants and violated many New York State Building statutes. Brockport was virtually forced to instate a building inspection office to ensure the safety and well being of the students of S.U.C. Brockport who rented off-campus houses and apartments.”*³³ *Stylus Dec. 7, 1971*

At this meeting, sixty villagers attended in hope of resolving the matter. In response Mayor Donald Rogers promised to look over the next budget, and see if the village would have the money needed to hire a full time inspector, but there was even a more significant factor that took place at this meeting. Rogers, as Klafehn put it “drew first blood” by apparently declaring it the college’s fault, because they never gave notice that they were no longer supervising off-campus students.³⁴ True or not, it is significant in the town and gown relations, for the first fifteen years of the college’s expansion, the community and the college both benefited, but now that situation had changed. It seemed that the college was now expanding into the town, without taking full responsibility of their actions and with complete disregard to the community. The housing crisis would still persist with more students moving off-campus, until the sudden drop in enrollment after 1975. The overall interaction between the town and gown in the incidents of expansion, and issues such as off-campus housing were putting more pressure and responsibility on the college to provide their community with a safe environment. Factors such as growth not only in the college’s size but in the enrollment put further tension on the college to take more responsibility for its students.

³⁰ Joanne Eiorillo, “Inspection a village responsibility,” *Stylus*, 12/7/1971, 15.

³¹ “Residents upset by off-campus units,” *Brockport Republic-Democrat*, 02/05/1970, 1.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Joanne Eiorillo, “Inspection a village responsibility,” *Stylus*, 12/7/1971, 15.

³⁴ Klafehn, 53.

The college's expansion in the late Sixties and early Seventies was not only associated within the village of Brockport, but also with the greater metropolitan area. In the late 1960s village and college officials cooperated together in a construction of an expressway that would extend from Rochester westward to Niagara Falls. The original plan started in 1964, but then was placed on hold until the plans were brought back in 1967 and 1968. In 1968, a "Western Expressway Committee" was formed in Brockport, with members such as Mayor Frank Sacheli, Town Supervisor Nat Lester, President Brown, and other local developers. The expansion took place at the corner of Route 31 and 19, but as state funding began to evaporate so did the construction of the highway.³⁵ It was not until later, in 1973, that local residents and politicians got involved to attain the necessary funds to complete the highway.

The overall cooperation between town, and gown under Brown's guidance, was well defined, considering the constant problems that faced his administration. Problems such as expansion both in the physical college and in enrollment, problems in off-campus housing, and the political rebellion that caused tremendous issues with the community are only a few highlighted events. Brown's assistance in establishing the CCCC, which was one of the first legitimate town gown committees, was a major push for advancement in committee relations. The dissolution of the committee resulted in Brown not reaching out to the community later in his presidency. President Brown wanted to firmly establish a relationship between the village and the college, but because of this incident, in my own personal opinion, Brown did not become too involved with the community, at least not as a leader. He would always attend community events, but Brown taking a similar role as he had when he first came was out of the question. In the interview between Ken O'Brien and Brown, he never mentions the relationship with the village, only the larger "metropolitan area", such as Rochester.³⁶ It seems Brown got a bad taste of the village, and just did not want to be involved as he was earlier. Later in Brown's years though, after 1975, Brown was in a constant state of crisis, with the state in a recession and enrollment decreasing. It is safe to say, Brown had a lot on his plate. His successor, Van de Wetering had big issues to conquer in addition to how to define the town and gown's relationship.

³⁵ "Hope given for more action on new expressway," *Brockport Republic-Democrat*, 04/04/1968, 1.

³⁶ "O'Brien's interview with Brown", Brockport Archives, July 2000.

Van de Wetering's initial goals as he was appointed to the President's office at SUNY Brockport are clearly stated in the front page of the Stylus article, "New President Plans Changes for Brockport State."³⁷

*"One way Van De Wetering wants to find out the communities views on the college is to set up a community advisory board... He said that he will ask the College Council to meet with the community groups more."*³⁸ -Stylus Sept. 23 1981

Van de Wetering's initial community relations' intentions were well rounded; recommending that the college council meet more often is enough evidence to say that he was interested in the town-gown relationship, but unfortunately the community was not as forthcoming. Mayor Jim Stull, the eventual twelve year village mayor, made the mistake of pronouncing John Van de Wetering's name on three occasions, as "John Van de Watering".³⁹ This may have been a factor as to why Van de Wetering was not as involved in the community as Brown was, but that's not to say that he did not contribute anything to the relationship. President Van de Wetering had several other important issues on his plate especially the constant budget crisis. The College Council Meetings overstated this issue on several occasions, "SUNY's financial plan includes savings in the amount of 30 million from energy savings, space closings, and restricting some construction."⁴⁰ Laying off faculty was a constant issue, and meeting with political officials from Albany, for instance Governor Cuomo, took up a majority of his time.

*"A destructive process and exhausting one, the energy of those that work for the state of New York are better used in other ways."*⁴¹ Talk Show 1/7/92

For President Van de Wetering dealing with the state budget took a majority of his time, but also during his presidency, it is noted several times in College Council meetings that his administration was looking for a vice president of community relations.

*"Vice president for community relations search has a closing date for applications is November 26; hope to have searched completed by January 1."*⁴²

–College Council

³⁷ "New President plans changes for Brockport State," Stylus, 09/23/1981, 1.

³⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰ "College Council Meetings 1981-88," SUNY Brockport Archives RG 2/1, 03/15/1983.

⁴¹ "Talk show," SUNY Brockport Archives RG 11/3/14, 1/7/92.

Eventually, James H. Stoller was selected to be the cabinet member of community relations for President Van Wetering. Throughout Mr. Stoller's career in Brockport, he became the voice of the community while Van Wetering was involved in other matters. He oversaw several important town and gown incidents, illustrating both problems and cooperation between them.

The planning, construction, and the money need for the construction of the extension of Route 531, was an effort of cooperation between the college, and surrounding communities. Both Van De Wetering and James Stull assisted in collecting the necessary funds for the project as well as speaking to politicians at Albany. The local group called W.E.S.T included members that were concerned with the economic development in western Monroe and Orleans countries. Lt. Governor Lundine visited Brockport in 1986, to see the relevance that an extension of the highway would have on Brockport, which Van De Wetering was involved in.

*"We are delighted to have you here to voice our concerns ... We as the State University of New York are eager to find people to give that kind of push we need."*⁴³ -Van De Wetering

The construction of Route 531, and getting the associated funds was a long process; according to *Stylus* and *Brockport Post* articles the twin dilemma facing the college community was getting the necessary funds and the political support to execute the project. The initial plans for the project were ready in 1986, but the actual construction did not start until 1990.

*"New York Gov. Mario Cuomo gave, in his budget, a 1.7 million "go-ahead" to begin construction of Route 531 toward Brockport."*⁴⁴

Cooperation between the town and gown happened occasionally during the Eighties, but the majority was the opposite. Samuel Gould's famous saying, that "this was the worse college he's ever seen" in the early Sixties was an understatement when compared to the conditions of Brockport in the Eighties.⁴⁵ At that point Brockport was known as a party town, which caused deep separation between the town and gown. The *Stylus* is polluted with examples of town and gown conflict. For instance a local citizen, David Paul, described himself as a father, and a local citizen of Brockport, but it was not until students started defecating in his backyard that he really

⁴² "College Council Meetings 1981-88", SUNY Brockport Archives RG 2/1, 11/19/1982.

⁴³ "Lundine visits SUNY Brockport," *Stylus*, 10/29/1986, 1.

⁴⁴ "Study ready to begin on Rt. 531 extension," *Stylus*, 3/9/1990,3.

⁴⁵ I've heard this quote several times, I know I saw it either in *Dedmen*, or in an article at the Seymour library that related the crisis in the eighties to the sixties, but I might be wrong.

started seeking action against students gallivanting around town. Paul thought that college students were out of control, and the police non-existent, so he took matters into his own hands. His nightly escapades involved patrolling the roof of his apartments for college students that were unlucky enough to wander into his alley on King's Street. If any students did he would pour either water or bleach onto the trespassers.

“Every person that had water or bleach dumped on them was asked to leave first.”⁴⁶

Paul even got involved with a student that led to the eventual display of a gun in the Lincoln restaurant, which he said was under “extraordinary measures”. Paul’s efforts to take charge of his neighborhood may have been a little too radical, but according to most people he comes off as a hero. Bud Lester, a local attorney respects Paul’s efforts, “David has made a very strenuous effort to clean up the area.”⁴⁷ Paul did not think until afterwards to put up a gate before releasing bleach, but his experience highlights an underlying perception during the Eighties, that the college was out of control. This example reinforced a further need to coexist between the two. Lester adds, “No one is after the college kids either, we’re just asking for a little respect.”⁴⁸ The clash between different lifestyles involving community members and college students are drastic, local citizens understand the contributions of the college, but insist that “Students have to understand they’re living in a family neighborhood.”⁴⁹ This clash between town and gown in Brockport can be related to several other similar transitions throughout the United States.

The University of Delaware located in Newark went through several similar transitions and problems comparable to Brockport. Newark in 1939 had an undergraduate size of only six hundred and two, and then developed to one thousand eight hundred and seventeen students in 1946, similar in size to Brockport at the time.⁵⁰ Then from 1951 to 1977, the University undergraduate body expanded to eleven thousand two hundred and fifty three students.⁵¹ The Baby Boom generation and veterans added population in a phenomenon that familiar to most campuses, including Brockport and Delaware. Similarly, the issue of the college being unable to

⁴⁶ “Some resident seek change in attitude,” *Stylus*, 03/02/1988, 2.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ “Off campus students clash with neighboring families,” *Stylus*, 9/24/1986, 7.

⁵⁰ Gumprecht, 303.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

continue “in loco parentis”, developed in most colleges that experienced a drastic rise in enrollment . Delaware even though it had a similar sized population of students at the time experienced a drastic difference in community relations.

Newark became the official party town, not just for the University of Delaware, but other surrounding colleges. The small community of Newark had only two bars, one traditionally for students, and the other for townies, but beginning in 1972 the Stone Balloon Bar opened on Main Street. The bar became the center for student activity and sold more beer than any other bar in the East.⁵² By 1981 there were fourteen bars located just on Main Street.⁵³ Students’ off campus parties and drinking began to plague the community. On March 7, 1974 an estimated 1,500 streakers were going to run down Main Street. Thousands showed up Main Street that night, and the scene became violent when revelers tried to loot a liquor store. Local police were no match for an estimated crowd of four thousand, and had to receive assistance from surrounding police stations, eventually resorting to tear gas to disperse the crowd. The relations in Newark were far different from that of Brockport, on part of both parties.

Do the benefits outweigh the risk? The University of Delaware employed three thousand six hundred and forty one people, and annually the university spent four hundred and eight million dollars, the majority of it around Newark.⁵⁴ Brockport in a similar way sets itself apart from other neighboring towns such as Holley and Spencerport because of the benefit it receives through the college. The benefits are not only in the business that students bring to the local economy but also the involvement of faculty in community affairs. As of September of 1987, there were seventy-four community organizations that involved faculty members.⁵⁵ Faculty members were involved in almost all aspects of the community, whether religious, recreational activities, service organizations, or others. For example, the First Presbyterian Church currently has six hundred and twenty three members, thirty nine of which are faculty members, and of the six local churches there are ninety-one faculty members that are actively involved.⁵⁶ From one minister’s perspective, “Academics in this organization exhibit superior skills in leadership, organization, problem solving, socialization, communication and knowledge about society.” Most faculty members were thought to have a greater responsibility to the community from the

⁵² Gumprecht, 304.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ James N. Wood, *College town: A study of faculty and community* (UB, Sept. 1987), 60.

⁵⁶ Wood, 67.

locals' view. A local Boy Scout leader that appreciates the assistance of the faculty states they “should use the expertise they have to serve the community interests because they have many resources available to them.”⁵⁷

In a village of just over eight thousand residents, and a university that had about twelve thousand students at its height needed college and community relations in order to coexist. The issues that plague Brockport not only exist here, but are prevalent throughout American college towns. The difference in SUNY Brockport's enrollment compared to the University of Delaware is dramatic now, but both faced similar transitions and problems. From the sixties to the eighties higher education's image began to transition from an extension of State control over small communities to being an essential part of their town not only economically, but also socially. Despite these issues with the college, the community still goes out to college sports events, takes classes, attend plays, concerts, and lectures and vice versa. The college community assists the town, not only economically, but through service projects, employment, education and several other avenues. Several families from the community even send their children to the college, which positions local families to put more value on the university. The town and gown may have their problems, but through their problems comes a better understanding of one another. The problems that plagued Brown and Van de Wetering's presidency did not supersede the co-operation that the town and gown share, but bought a more defined reason for the bond.

Bibliography

Recorded Interviews

Albert W. Brown, Interviewed by Ken O'Brien, 2000. Tapes 1-3.

Van De Wetering, “The Talk Show,” Interviewed by show, *The Talk Show*, January 7, 1992.

Van De Wetering, “For the Record,” Interviewed by Show, *For the Record*, 1992.

Printed Records

College Community Coordinating Committee Minutes. 1967-69. Brockport Archives.

Dedman, Wayne. *Cherishing this heritage*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969.

Gumprecht, Blake. *The American college town*. Amherst: University of Mass. Press, 2008.

⁵⁷ Wood, 82.

SUNY Brockport. College Council Meetings, 1981-1988, Brockport Archives, RG 2/1.

SUNY Brockport. College Council Meetings, 1990-1996. Brockport Archives, RG2/1.

James N. Wood. *College town: A study of Faculty and community* (UB, Sept. 1997).

Student Papers

Clement, Marilyn. College Street, Brockport NY, Brockport Archives. 2000.

Davenport, James. Albert W. Brown Administration Brockport Archives. 2000.

Jennings, Thom. The Takeover of Hartwell Hall, Brockport Archives, 2000.

Klafehn, Todd L. Brockport's Affair, Brockport Archives,.2000.

Articles

Campus century at Brockport. Rochester: Democrat and Chronicle. May 21, 1967.

Dr. Albert W. Brown, President of Brockport College, receives award as Citizen of Year for 1966, Brockport: Republic- Democrat. April 13, 1967.

Eiorillo, Joann. *Inspection a village responsibility*, Brockport: Stylus. December 7, 1971.

Hope given for more action on new Expressway. Brockport: Republic- Democrat. April 4, 1968.

King Street residents voice concern over late night traffic from town bars. Brockport: Stylus. October 17, 1984.

Lundine visits SUNY Brockport. Brockport: Stylus. October 29, 1986.

New President plans changes for Brockport. Brockport: Stylus. September 23, 1981.

Off campus students clash with neighboring families, Brockport: Stylus. September 24, 1986.

Residents upset by off-campus units, Brockport Republic-Democrat. February 5, 1970.

Route 531 at standstill. Brockport: Stylus. September 30, 1987.

Some residents seek change in attitude. Brockport: Stylus. March 2, 1988.

State approves road expansion. Brockport: Stylus. April 22, 1987.

Students to live in apartments, Brockport: Stylus. April 22 1966.

Town-College ties close, Rochester: Democrat and Chronicle. May 21, 1967.