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Brewing bachelors: the history of the University of Newark

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Locating denominational colleges and state and land grant universities away from major American cities created a growing need for urban higher education institutions in the early twentieth century. Religious denominations, municipal authorities, and entrepreneurs opened colleges and professional schools in many US cities to meet the demand. The proprietary New Jersey Law School – opened in 1908 – added other divisions, shifted to non-profit status, relocated to a former brewery, and merged with competing local institutions to form the University of Newark in 1936. This “streetcar college” served thousands of working-class and immigrant students during its 37-year history. But, unlike other streetcar colleges, its politically left-of-centre administration and faculty took on local and regional power centres – a stance that harmed its economic viability. The University of Newark survived the Great Depression, but merged with Rutgers University, the state university of New Jersey, in 1945. Today’s Rutgers-Newark inherited its predecessor’s focus on promoting the aspirations of non-traditional student populations.

Keywords: Currier; Dana; Kingdon; legal education; Newark; Rutgers University; Newark Institute; New York University; University of Newark; Winsor

No large community is complete without its university, both as a source of opportunities for individuals and as a radiating centre for the subtle but powerful interplay of the intellect upon its activities. I envision Newark University with a strong faculty of free and inspiring spirits at its heart. . . . The name of Newark shall have a new luster in the minds of men, and for those who bear its degrees, a new content of affection, making them loyal to it though they travel to the ends of the earth. (Frank Kingdon, President, University of Newark, 1934¹)

At the turn of the twentieth century, the city of Newark, New Jersey was on an upward swing, having based its economy on manufacturing high-demand products such as beer, leather, chemicals and drugs and on services such as banking, legal counsel, and insurance. Newark’s boosters thought the combination invincible: the city catered to consumer needs the night before and the morning after.

A growing population provided a labour force while broadening the tax base. Newark’s 347,469 residents in 1910 made it the 14th largest city in the United States.² By 1931, observers claimed the intersection at Broad and Market Streets was the

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¹“New University in Newark Urged,” *New York Times*, June 14, 1934, 17.

²Campbell Gibson, “Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 To 1990,” US Bureau of the Census, Population Division Working Paper No. 27 (June 1998), <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027.html>.

world's busiest.³ European immigrants and their children made up about half the city's diverse population. The proportion of African-Americans grew rapidly after the US Congress restricted immigration in the early 1920s.

With prosperity came cultural institutions. But, unlike other cities, Newark's ornaments did not separate rich from poor. The city's library and museum, directors John Cotton Dana and Beatrice Winsor believed, were not to be admired for their architecture and opulence. No, their treasures were available to all neighbourhoods and economic classes via branches; Dana also offered books to teachers and school libraries.⁴ Both directors focused attention on the community's need for advanced education while serving on boards of the city's nascent colleges.

Newark possessed no colleges or universities at the turn of the twentieth century. A few miles away, Columbia University built a magnificent campus near the Hudson River, while New York University responded with an uptown campus by the Harlem River. Newark, claimed boosters, deserved a university alongside the Passaic River, its eastern boundary. But inadequate finances and the political strength of Princeton and Rutgers thwarted their aspirations. Newark therefore created a piecemeal higher education infrastructure during the early twentieth century.

Entrepreneur Richard D. Currier (1877–1947) viewed legal education as an attractive opportunity since New Jersey had no law school. He opened the for-profit New Jersey Law School (NJLS) in 1908, a time when many law schools had proprietary status. A graduate of Yale (1900) and of New York Law School (1902), a practising lawyer in New York and the author of legal textbooks, Currier expressed optimism about the promise of higher education. Education may not rectify every social evil, he wrote in 1901. But it is “a most potent factor in the progress of human development toward the ideal in the individual and the state”.⁵

NJLS – the state's only law school for almost two decades – grew from 30 students in its first year to 2335 students in 1926–1927. In 1927, Currier purchased its permanent home at 40 Rector Street, about a half-mile from Broad and Market Streets. The building housed the Ballantine Brewery, one of the area's largest businesses, until US law prohibited the consumption of alcoholic beverages. “What now holds the John Cotton Dana Library”, a professor recalled in 1965, “was once the malt room with sloping floors for better drainage”.⁶

NJLS had no dormitories; most students commuted by public transit, bicycle, car, or foot. Students completed a two-year course until 1913, when the school moved to

³Kenneth T. Jackson, “Gentlemen's Agreement: Discrimination in Metropolitan America,” in *Reflections on Regionalism*, ed. Bruce Katz (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2000), 197–98.

⁴“Every branch aims to be a complete teaching museum,” wrote Beatrice Winsor, Dana's successor and a future Dana College trustee, “and is as far as possible fitted to the character of the neighborhood and to the degree of education and the occupation of its residents” (Beatrice Winsor, “Branch Museums,” letter to the editor, *New York Times*, May 18, 1931, 15).

⁵Richard D. Currier, “Meaning of the Gifts to Education,” *New York Times*, December 15, 1901, 7.

⁶Herbert P. Woodward, “Forty Rector Street, Newark, New Jersey,” *Rutgers Alumni Monthly* (May 1965), 3.

a three-year curriculum.⁷ NJLS required three years of high school work for admission. But – believing the school’s future lay in accreditation, and responding to Bar Association and state edicts – NJLS first raised entrance requirements to a high school diploma (1914), then to a year and two years of college (1927 and 1929, respectively). Law school enrolments levelled off as entrance requirements increased, but a pre-legal department, opened in 1926, offered the needed college-level courses.

NJLS faced another hurdle. The Association of American Law Schools, the accreditor, did not accredit proprietary institutions. In 1930, Currier converted the pre-legal department into the non-profit, and therefore accreditable, Dana College – a legally separate college with an independent board of trustees. He named the college for the by-then legendary John Cotton Dana, who died just before its opening. Dana College offered two (later three) years of college education required for admission to law school. But the college soon enrolled students who wished to study in Newark, but aspired to careers other than law.

In 1929, Currier opened the Seth Boyden School of Business. Named after the nineteenth-century Newark inventor of patent leather and malleable iron, the school provided an alternative path into NJLS. New Jersey then required two years of college attendance – not necessarily a liberal arts course – before law school entry.⁸

Dana College did not monopolise liberal education in Newark. As early as 1906, the Newark city school district imported faculty from New York University and Columbia University to offer courses needed for pre-service teacher certification. In 1910, the school district merged its college courses into a separate programme that offered education and business courses to working youth. It renamed the combined unit the Newark Institute of Arts and Sciences.⁹

Offering business and liberal arts courses, the unaccredited Institute completed articulation agreements permitting NYU faculty members to teach at Newark. Bachelor’s degree aspirants completing two years of Institute courses could transfer their credits to NYU’s Arts and Sciences or Commerce colleges at Washington Square. The two entities split financial gains and losses, but authorities sometimes engaged in testy negotiations over other agreement provisions. NYU officials, for example, expressed concern over the Institute’s lenient admissions policies and the qualifications of locally appointed instructors. By 1930, NYU had assumed control over course offerings and faculty appointments. The Institute had faced only sporadic competition from universities offering local extension work until the opening of Dana College.¹⁰

The demand for legal education intensified in the 1920s, despite the rapid expansion of NJLS: 53.6% of the state’s law students still enrolled at out-of-state schools. The NJLS monopoly in Newark ended when non-profit Mercer Beasley Law School opened in 1926. Named for the former Chief Justice of New Jersey (1864–1897),

⁷The state allowed 18 months of legal education to substitute for half of the three-year clerkship requirement for admission to the bar. A longer law course would have discouraged potential students. In 1913, the state permitted law courses to count for up to three-quarters of a 36-month clerkship, and NJLS moved to a three-year curriculum. Hugh F. Bennett, “An Abstract of a History of the University of Newark, 1908–1946” (PhD thesis, New York University, 1956), 34–35, 42, 46–47, 51.

⁸Many students entered contemporary law schools from undergraduate business schools.

⁹Institute trustees headed each of the Institute’s five original departments. Robert C. Jaeger, “A History of the Newark Institute of Arts and Sciences,” unpublished manuscript, Rutgers University Archives (hereafter RUA), 1940.

¹⁰“Large Unit of Rutgers Here Is Proposed,” *Newark Evening News*, January 11, 1933.

Mercer Beasley competed with NJLS until their 1936 merger. Needing a liberal arts feeder to meet state and bar association rules, Mercer Beasley established a relationship with the Newark Institute.¹¹

Neither the Dana College nor the Newark Institute faculty viewed Rutgers as direct competition, though the university irregularly provided evening lectures and courses in Newark. Its location, noted a Dana faculty report (circa 1930), “makes it impossible ... for it to serve the needs of the many students in the Metropolitan area who cannot afford to become resident students”.¹² Though designated the state university, Rutgers more resembled a private institution. Its 988 students constituted only 7.4% of all New Jersey students attending college in 1923; the corresponding figure for the University of Wisconsin was 43.8%. “New Jersey is not offering an educational program sufficiently varied to meet the needs of its diversified social and business life and of its large population”, wrote one critic. “It would seem that in New Jersey the need for a well-developed state university is obvious”.¹³

Students desiring an accredited specialised programme, graduate or professional education or a residential liberal arts college often travelled to colleges in New York or Philadelphia. Dana College and the Newark Institute might eventually reduce the outflow of liberal arts students.¹⁴ But, many residents believed, Newark needed a university.

Manoeuvres and mergers

Here is this great metropolitan area – virgin territory so far as an urban college is concerned, and Dana College, unhampered by tradition, can do practically anything under the sun. It is a staggering responsibility, but two things stand out: We cannot shirk it and we must succeed. And it is true, I am sure, that if we succeed it will not be through the efforts of any one person. Success will only come through the development of a spirit of cooperation on the part of all those interested in collegiate education in Newark. (Richard D. Currier¹⁵)

“There is no city anywhere in the United States with a population equal to that of Newark”, Richard Currier noted, “which does not have and has not had for many years at least one university and in some cases several”. “It cannot be”, he continued, “that

¹¹“The problem of making the dominant tone of the practice of law in the State that of an honored profession rather than that of a money-making vocation presents difficulties”, wrote a US Bureau of Education official. “Cultural training in an atmosphere of scholarly interest must accompany training in the strictly legal subjects if the bar is to maintain in its membership a considerable body of leaders of intellectual and professional refinement.” Arthur J. Klein, *Survey of Rutgers University* (New Brunswick, NJ: United States Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior, 1927), 217, 218.

¹²“Complete Report of the Committee on Scope Including Reports of Sub-committees on the Need and on the Demand for Extension of the Course,” n.d., p. 14, RUA, Record Group (hereafter RG) N2/N0/2, Newark College of Arts and Sciences (hereafter NCAS): University of Newark: Office Records (hereafter UNOR), 1934–1946, Group II, Box 2: “Faculty Committee Reports 1928–32” file.

¹³Klein, *Survey of Rutgers University*, 21.

¹⁴Seventy per cent of New Jersey students seeking arts and sciences programmes left the state in 1923–1924 (Klein, *Survey of Rutgers University*, 126).

¹⁵Currier, “First Dana College Educational Meeting,” February 5, 1931, RUA, RG N2/K0/02, NCAS: Dana College: Records (hereafter DCR) 1930–1938, “Dana College-Board of Trustees Minutes, 1930–1931” file.

Newark is so entirely different from all the other cities with a similar population that it does not need and cannot support at least one university". Attempts to create a university in Newark began in the early 1930s. Merger talks occurred within the Currier school family, and among these schools, the Newark Institute and Mercer Beasley.

Preferring the continued independence and local leadership of a combined institution, Currier proposed a Dana–Newark Institute merger. He also suggested that Seth Boyden merge into the Institute's business programme, and proposed that NJLS convert to non-profit status as a step towards accreditation. But discussions with the Institute board reached an impasse over the price of the Rector Street property, owned by Currier.¹⁶

Currier also negotiated with Rutgers after Robert C. Clothier assumed its presidency in 1932. The New Jersey legislature reluctantly funded some divisions of Rutgers, but its trustees refused to trade the university's independent status for additional aid. A merger, some Rutgers officials believed, might right a power imbalance: dependence on even limited state funding gave legislators considerable power over the university. The state-wide Board of Regents, Rutgers officials also believed, preempted the trustees' control over expenditures. Lacking a law school, Rutgers trustees eyed NJLS – larger and more established than Mercer Beasley. Local legislators, including growing numbers of NJLS alumni, might support Rutgers over the Regents if the university maintained colleges in Newark.¹⁷ Precisely this reasoning, some observers speculated, might explain the opposition of some state officials to a merger.¹⁸

Competition from Dana College did not upset Rutgers authorities. True competition, Rutgers officials believed, required Dana to mount a four-year programme – still some years away. Conversely, some Rutgers trustees viewed Dana as a salutary complement that might "relieve New Brunswick of one of its most troublesome educational problems", whether by amalgamation or competition, by reducing the Jewish presence on the main campus.¹⁹ Others at Rutgers challenged this sentiment. "Rutgers being an educational institution should always try for the best minds in the State irrespective of race or creed", wrote Vreeland Tompkins, a Rutgers trustee. "I do not think that these institutions in Newark would keep boys from going to New Brunswick", he added. "With the new and rapid means of transportation", he noted, "New Brunswick is not as far from Newark today as it was years ago, which means that the commutation problem will increase rather than decrease".²⁰

¹⁶Jaeger, "Newark Institute," section 3, p. 3.

¹⁷By 1933, NJLS had 3100 graduates, including one governor, one judge of the Court of Errors and Appeals, one secretary of state, two circuit court judges, four common pleas judges, 17 district court judges, 14 assistant attorney generals, 16 assistant prosecutors, one secretary of the Port of New York Authority, 40 corporation counsels, 26 board of education members, 11 college professors, five bar association presidents, and two bank presidents. Currier, "President's Report," May 14, 1934, p. 7, RUA, RG N2/N0/1, NCAS: UNOR, 1934–1946, Group 1: "Trustees: Executive Committee, 1934–September, 1938".

¹⁸"May Bar Dana in Merger Plan," *Newark Evening News*, February 3, 1933.

¹⁹Michael Greenberg and Seymour Zenchelsky, "Private Bias and Public Responsibility: Anti-Semitism at Rutgers in the 1920s and 1930s," *History of Education Quarterly*, 33, no. 3 (1993), 295–319, and Ruth Marcus Patt, *The Jewish Experience at Rutgers* (East Brunswick, NJ: Jewish Historical Society of Central New Jersey, 1987).

²⁰Vreeland Tompkins to Robert C. Clothier, September 17, 1932, RUA, RG 04/A14, Office of the President (Robert C. Clothier), Series II, Subject files 1933–1952, Box 49, file 3: "Newark Project, 1932–1933".

Discussions among Rutgers trustees intensified when NJLS applied for non-profit status. Opinions about a merger ranged from “morally wrong” through “instrumentally and economically wrong” to “fine if it works”. Amalgamation, many trustees concluded, made more sense than unilateral expansion, which would further divide the city’s college clientele at a time of declining enrolments.²¹ Most Dana College students opposed a Rutgers merger as reducing academic freedom and liberalism, lowering academic standards and increasing state regulation without a corresponding growth in state aid. The college would become “the tail end of the Rutgers kite”.²²

Essex County legislators, some Dana College trustees and Newark Institute and Mercer-Beasley officials joined the Newark-based opposition to a Rutgers merger.²³ Institute opponents included president Franklin Conklin, the eventual chair of the University of Newark board, and trustee Spalding Frazier, then dean of Mercer Beasley, and future dean of the University of Newark Law School.²⁴ Frazier called for “co-ordination” of Newark educational institutions “free of the taint of commercialism”, leading to “the establishment of a pure eleemosynary institution whose only aim was the raising of the standards of education”.²⁵ Clothier and Currier suspended discussions when news of the contemplated merger became public. Confronted with the need for capital improvements to the New Brunswick campus and tight Depression-era budgets, Clothier proposed to do “nothing in the matter other than to ‘let it simmer’”.²⁶ The simmering continued until the last days of the Second World War.

Currier resented interference by the Institute. “The whole educational problem in Newark”, he stated, “is too important to be solved on the basis of personalities or on the theory that one institution, located in New Jersey and but a few miles from Newark, should be barred from discussing the entire educational problem, when the protests originate from another institution [the Institute] which, while located in Newark, is in reality merely an extension department of a university in another state”.²⁷

With negotiations in abeyance, Currier and the Dana trustees moved on their own. They marked the 25th anniversary of NJLS in spring 1933 by converting the law school and Seth Boyden into a single non-profit institution. Currier believed his sale terms for the law school and the Rector Street building to be “reasonable”. The trustees envisioned merging the new unit into the non-profit Dana College, with any surplus from the professional schools earmarked towards balancing the Dana budget. Currier proposed the name of Dana University, though some Dana faculty favoured the University of Newark.²⁸

²¹“Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Trustees of Rutgers College, 15 December 1931,” copy in RUA, RG 03/A0/03, Rutgers University, Board of Trustees, Minutes and Enclosures, October 1931–1932, Box 20, file 1: “Board of Trustees, Rough Minutes and Enclosures: 1931, Oct.–Dec.”

²²“Students Protest Rutgers Merger,” *Newark Evening News*, January 12, 1933.

²³“Currier Spikes Dana Sale Talk,” *Newark Evening News*, February 2, 1933.

²⁴“Group to Meet to Keep College Control in City,” *Newark Evening News*, January 31, 1933.

²⁵“Rutgers Committee Studies Merger,” *Newark Evening News*, January 14, 1933.

²⁶Clothier to D. Frederick Burnett, February 7, 1933, RUA, RG 04/A14, Office of the President (Robert C. Clothier) Series II, Subject files, 1933–1952, Box 9, file 4: “Burnett, Frederick (attorney) re: Newark Schools Merger, 1933.”

²⁷“Currier Spikes Dana Sale Talk.”

²⁸Currier, “President’s Report,” 5.

Mercer-Beasley and the Newark Institute responded with their own merger. Each unit retained its identity, but the joint enterprise pre-empted the University of Newark name. In 1934, the Institute filed for the right to offer baccalaureate degrees in the areas previously offered through NYU. The state granted the right to offer the BA, BCS and BS degrees during 1935, the same year that George H. Black became the Institute's leader.

Currier's response: add more trustees – including Frank Kingdon, who soon replaced Currier – to ensure the stability of the Dana group. Kingdon advocated merger with the University of Newark. "Firm establishment of a centre of learning here", he stated, was "more important than any other step we can take for the reconstruction of Newark".²⁹ The Institute's intent to offer a four-year bachelor's degree precipitated final merger negotiations. In 1936, the five divisions making up the two groups of colleges became one University of Newark. The university had three divisions: the College of Arts and Sciences, including Dana and Institute faculty, the Law School, including Mercer-Beasley and NJLS faculty, and the School of Business, including Seth Boyden and Institute faculty. Kingdon headed the merged enterprise; Black became vice-president, and Conklin chaired the combined board of trustees.

Currier yielded the Dana group presidency to become president of Stoneleigh College, a two-year college for women in Rye, New Hampshire. He resigned from the university's board of trustees in 1936 to protest continuation of the former Institute's teaching agreement with NYU. Instruction by commuting NYU professors, students correctly believed, facilitated acceptance of University of Newark credentials for transfer to the accredited Washington Square campus. The practice, they added, spurred enrolments while according recognition to the university. But such "recognition", Currier responded, threatened chances for Middle States Association accreditation. The bilateral arrangement terminated when Dana College obtained this accreditation in 1940.

The university under Frank Kingdon

The low registration reflects the poor economic condition of the Newark area. Most of our students barely manage to pay their tuition fees. A large proportion of them hold down jobs while they study. Most are surrounded by discouraging financial conditions at home. It is a tribute to the reputation of our faculty and to the judgment of the students that the cheaper competing institutions do not enroll most of the young people who come to us.³⁰

Frank Kingdon migrated from the UK to the US in 1912, becoming minister of a small Methodist congregation in Maine at age 18. Formative experiences helped him identify with Dana College students: He commuted between two churches on Sunday – an 18-mile round trip – just as Newark students commuted to the converted downtown brewery.³¹ Moving to a Boston suburb, he commuted to Methodist-controlled Boston

²⁹Currier remained a board member and treasurer. Beatrice Winser secured Kingdon's appointment while a trustee of Dana College and of the Newark Institute. Frank Kingdon, *The Librarian: Beatrice Winser* (Newark, NJ: n.p., 1940).

³⁰"The Present Status of the College of Arts and Sciences," n.d., RUA, R.G. N2/N0/1, NCAS: UNOR, 1934–1946, Group I, Box 1: "Trustees – Committee Meetings, 1938–1941" file.

³¹Frank Kingdon, *Jacob's Ladder: The Days of My Youth* (New York: L.B. Fisher, 1943), 278–79, and Kingdon, "Admitted as a Citizen," *Common Ground* 2 (Summer, 1942): 10–14.

University. College, he later wrote, “gave me an altogether new vantage point from which to see the American panorama”.³² He became a Dana College trustee after assuming a prominent New Jersey Methodist church pulpit. Critics claimed Kingdon, often mentioned for political office, sacrificed sound academic and financial administration to immersing himself and his institution in current affairs. His experience in educational administration consisted of a brief tenure as head of an emergency junior college in a neighbouring suburb. Casting the institution as a servant of Newark’s poor, Kingdon asked potential supporters whether democracy could survive as long as the American electorate averaged a sixth-grade education. “In an age when the media of propaganda have attained unprecedented scope and power”, he warned, “America presents fertile soil for the same kind of demagogue who has utilized these media with such success abroad”.³³

Success required defining a unique role in Newark’s educational community. “We are threatened on every side by competition and by hostile circumstances”, wrote a Dana College faculty member. New junior colleges posed a special threat since Dana largely educated first- and second-year students – an especially uncertain pool of potential students during the Depression.³⁴ The university strived to keep costs low. Tuition (US\$10.00 per credit) was lower than at NYU (US\$11.00 per credit), but higher than at neighbouring Seton Hall and Upsala (both US\$7.00 per credit). The faculty considered petitioning the state for scholarship funds. “The largest City in the State”, the faculty noted, “receives the least amount of money from the State”. But Kingdon rejected the idea as throwing the institution on the state’s mercy.³⁵ The university remained highly tuition-dependent until its merger with Rutgers in 1945.

The students

A 20-year old Newarker.... At the head of his high school class but from a family which needs every penny he can earn.... Entered on the urgent plea of his high school principal.... Holds a full-time job in bookkeeping and accounting while majoring in that subject at the University.... Has been granted loans (payable after graduation) up to capacity. His brilliant work has also led to a scholarship.... Will graduate in June.

She wanted to be a doctor; now holds a full-time job in a bakery.... An out-of-town girl, raised on a farm with eight others.... First in her high school class.... Lives and boards with relatives in Newark.... Wouldn’t take a loan she had no prospects of repaying; got her job instead.... University now emphasizing difficulty of going through pre-medical training on her meagre financial resources.... If guidance is successful, she will be happier and some Newark firm will gain a first-rate laboratory technician. (University of Newark promotional material³⁶)

³²Kingdon, *Jacob’s Ladder*, 307.

³³University of Newark Development Committee, *A Closed Door Swings Open in North Jersey* (Newark, NJ: University of Newark, 1938), 5–6.

³⁴L.H. Buckingham, to Professor Herbert P. Woodward, April 27, 1934, p. 4, RUA, RG N2/N0/2, NCAS: UNOR, 1934–1946, Group 2, Box 2: “Faculty Committee Reports and Plans, 1933–34” file.

³⁵“Draft: Minutes of the Committee on Instruction and Equipment of the University of Newark,” 20 October 1938, p. 4, RUA, RG N2/N0/2, NCAS: UNOR, 1934–1946, Group I, Box 2: “Trustees – Instruction and Equipment Committee, 1938” file.

³⁶University of Newark Development Committee, *A Closed Door*, 28, 29.

“Unlike most colleges”, stated an article in the student newspaper, “Dana College is primarily a workers’ institution”.³⁷ Frank Kingdon built upon John Cotton Dana’s vision of educating local youth from modest backgrounds. A 1935 survey of 10,000 Essex County youth, analysed by sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld who directed the university’s research institute, found a rapid decline in high school attendance for white students between ages 16 and 18. “Study in the sense of pursuing courses of higher education, scarcely ever stirs the imagination of the majority of these young people”.³⁸ Socioeconomic self-selection propelled only a small proportion of Essex County students to college.³⁹ The University of Newark was a viable option for this minority. A fall 1937 survey of freshmen in two divisions of the university, also conducted by Lazarsfeld, found that first- and second-generation Americans comprised well over half the student body.⁴⁰ The breakdown by religion was 43.5% Jewish; 28.2% Protestant; and 25.2% Catholic.⁴¹ Competition from nearby Seton Hall College helped to explain the relatively low Catholic enrolment.⁴²

Virtually all surveyed freshmen came from northern New Jersey – about half from Newark.⁴³ Some 20% had attended another college; 12% had attended a vocational school.⁴⁴ Nearly 87% of the university’s students were male, and all but seven were

³⁷“Student Activities,” *Dana College Chronicle* 1, no. 1 (November, 1930): 4.

³⁸“Jean Anyon has recently shown”, noted historian Kenneth Jackson, “that contrary to popular belief, public education in Newark was of poor quality long before African Americans came to power in the 1970s. Instead, most of the schools in Newark were declining by the mid-1930s, even as those in nearby New York City were famed for excellence.” Jackson, “Gentlemen’s Agreement,” 203, citing Jean Anyon, *Ghetto Schooling: A Political Economy of Urban Educational Reform* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997).

³⁹Paul F. Lazarsfeld et al., *Coming of Age in Essex County [New Jersey]: An Analysis of 10,000 Interviews with Persons 16–24 Years of Age* (Newark, NJ: Essex County Superintendent of Schools and University of Newark Research Center, 1937), 38, 39, 42, 67, and 72 (source of quotation), and Lazarsfeld, *Social Trends in Essex County, Bulletins 1–3* (Newark, NJ: Essex County Superintendent of Schools, Newark, NJ and Research Center at the University of Newark, 1938). The survey found virtually no African-American males in college, and lower professional aspirations for African-American than for white youth. But among 16- to 18-year-old women, a greater proportion of African-Americans attended college (5.8 vs. 3.1%). Lazarsfeld et al., *Coming of Age in Essex County*, 104, 107.

⁴⁰Paul Lazarsfeld and Edward Suchman, “A Report on the Freshmen Students of the University of Newark for the Year 1937–1938,” p. 6, RUA, RG N2/N0/1, NCAS: UNOR, 1934–46, Group 1, Box 13: “Research Center 1936–38” file.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 5.

⁴²George L.A. Reilly, “Thomas J. Walsh and Seton Hall College, 1928–1952,” *New Jersey History* 98, nos. 1–2 (1980), 37–48. Some administrators used this study to counter “exaggerated statements” about the presence of Jewish students. “The percentage of Catholic students has increased (in spite of the oft-mentioned competition of Seton Hall’s offerings)”, wrote Carolyn L. McGowan, Newark’s director of student relations. “Then again the percentage of Jewish students has decreased (unless, by chance, more of that group have the tenacity to stay on and secure their degrees).” As for Jews in the School of Business Administration – 43% of freshmen; 47% overall – McGowan wrote, “When one considers religious affiliation, it would appear that the percentage of Catholics is increasing, while the percentage of Jewish students is lowest in the freshman class” (Carolyn L. McGowan, “Analysis of Student Enrollment,” November 1937, pp. 6, 7, RUA, RG N2/N0/03, NCAS: University of Newark: Records 1923–1959, Box 3: “University of Newark – Student Relations Report 1936–1937” file).

⁴³Lazarsfeld and Suchman, “Freshmen Students,” 5.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 6.

white.⁴⁵ About half the fathers of Newark's students were in sales (22.2%) and skilled work (25.2%) combined. Another 14.8% were proprietors or managers – mostly of small shops. Only 10.3% of the fathers were professionals.⁴⁶

The poorest students discerned economic differences from their peers. "Within days of beginning [Dana] College", recalled Seymour Sarason, "it was apparent to me that the blacks and I came from the most economically impoverished homes". How did he know? Other students ate at a nearby luncheonette, and a "fair amount" commuted by car or train. Sarason, in contrast, brought his lunch, and patronised the eatery only to buy Cokes, using his trolley fare. He noted a lack of abject poverty. Most students had money in their pockets – an allowance "proof positive to me that they came from another world".⁴⁷

Sarason may have been wrong. The source of student funds was more likely a job than an allowance: 65% of Dana College freshmen and 70% of business school freshmen worked in 1937 – most over 30 hours per week.⁴⁸ About 60% of Newark's students – one-third of the day students and almost 80% of the evening students – were at least partially self-supporting.⁴⁹ Job demands kept day-session enrolments – the university kept day and evening sessions on an academic par – relatively low: 37% of Dana students and 25% of business students.⁵⁰ Students whose offices or factories closed at 5:00 had just enough time to gulp dinner in time for a 6:10 class. Few students received financial aid, though members of Newark's Greek and Italian communities established scholarships.⁵¹ The university could only afford to parcel out small loans, but it deferred the tuition of a few refugees from fascism among its students – "though not entirely destitute" – until they obtained employment.⁵²

Job commitments and related financial issues, Lazarsfeld noted, led most of Newark's freshmen to choose among local institutions.⁵³ The "progressive" Dana faculty had wished to retain the college's more liberal admissions requirements as providing a competitive advantage. But the school's academic and financial health

⁴⁵Lazarsfeld's 1935 study of Newark youth showed how discrimination affected African-American aspirations, especially in medicine and the arts. See also Marion Thompson Wright, *The Education of Negroes in New Jersey* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1941).

⁴⁶University of Newark, "Extending Democracy's Frontiers: A Confidential Statement of the Present Services of the University of Newark to Northern New Jersey, and of the University's Plans for the Future," p. 22, n.d., c.1938, RUA, RUA, RGN2/N0/01, NCAS: UNOR, 1934–1946, Box 33: "Key Statement – Copy" file. This document provided much of the text for *A Closed Door*.

⁴⁷Seymour B. Sarason, *The Making of an American Psychologist: An Autobiography* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1988), 80–81.

⁴⁸Carolyn McGowan, "Analysis of Student Enrollment, 1937," in RUA, RGN2/N0/03, NCAS: University of Newark: Records 1923–1959, Box 3: "University of Newark – Student Relations Report 1936–1937" file.

⁴⁹Lazarsfeld and Suchman, "Freshmen Students," 27.

⁵⁰But 52% of Newark's freshmen attending during the day were Dana College students; while 67% of night students enrolled in the College of Business.

⁵¹In 1936–1937, the university awarded \$891.50 in scholarships (\$625.00 in arts and \$266.50 in business) and \$6755.00 in loans (\$4050.50 in the college, \$1769.00 in business, and \$985.50 in law).

⁵²Black to Harry D. Gideonse, April 14, 1943, RUA, RGN2/N0/03, NCAS: University of Newark: Records 1923–1959, Box 2: "Scholarships: Prizes" file.

⁵³Only one-quarter of Newark's freshmen applied elsewhere. No surveyed student gave "campus" as a reason for applying. The college had no information on students who applied to Newark but went elsewhere. Lazarsfeld and Suchman, "Freshmen Students," 8, 12.

now depended on maintaining a strong relationship with NYU – especially its School of Commerce. Students cited attractive business school offerings (especially accounting) and faculty quality as enticements. Many liberal arts students intended to transfer to a four-year college – mainly to NYU – since Newark continued to focus on freshman and sophomore coursework after the merger. The NYU connection, Lazarsfeld speculated, explained why potential transfer students attended Newark in the first place.⁵⁴ NYU's Commerce School refused to concur on the old Dana and Seth Boyden entrance requirements, but even so, Newark was more willing to give students a chance than competing colleges that rejected half of dual- or multiple-college applicants.⁵⁵ The university admitted the top three-quarters of high school graduates by rank, and used the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Tests to identify eligible students with grades below this cut – a frequent practice at the time. Accreditation ended disputes over academic preparation since the Middle States Association required termination of the Newark–NYU collaboration.

The typical Dana College student, noted a faculty sketch, is “born in Newark, living in Newark, and likely to spend most of his [sic] days in Newark”. Such “city conditioned” students, the description continued, “must be prepared for membership in a city community”. The portrayal noted an intellectual hunger, even keenness, “for he is making some effort of his own to go forward with his education”. Awareness of social problems – “particularly of their pressure upon under-privileged groups” – accompanied intellectual vigour. “He is promising educational and social material”, the account concluded, “but rough in exterior and manner”.⁵⁶

Student life

Our students work in the kind of place where they will live their adult lives, and ... have the resources of the city with which to shape and enrich their learning.... Our campus is the city crowded with experience. What a campus it is! There is no moment day or night when it is still, and in its restless life move the forces making the civilization of tomorrow. (Frank Kingdon⁵⁷)

Richard Currier nudged Dana College towards academic progressivism. “Unhampered by tradition”, Currier stated, Dana College “can do practically anything under the sun”.⁵⁸ Though a graduate of Yale, Currier wanted Dana College to find its own way rather than follow established traditions. But three years of merger talks hindered curriculum development, and Currier – spurred by the announced opening of low-tuition junior colleges in Newark and surrounding suburbs in 1934 – resumed the conversation during the last months of his presidency. His goal: a curriculum that “answers the needs of the present social order of Newark and Essex County”.

Currier and the Dana faculty explored many options, including an increase in vocational courses – he noted a one thousand per cent increase in US collegiate business school enrolments since the First World War – length of degree, a formal division

⁵⁴Ibid., 2–3.

⁵⁵Ibid., 7.

⁵⁶“Treasurer’s Comments on Dana College, 1935–1936 Fiscal Year,” n.d., p. 5, RUA, RGN2/N0/1, NCAS: UNOR, 1934–1946, Group I, Box 2: “Trustees – Executive Committee, 1934–1938” file.

⁵⁷University of Newark, “Extending Democracy’s Frontiers,” 17.

⁵⁸Currier, “First Dana College Educational Meeting.”

into junior and senior colleges, and the use of freshman orientation courses.⁵⁹ He was intrigued by the University of Minnesota's new General College, targeted at freshmen and sophomores, and aimed at creating an intelligent "followership" via survey courses.⁶⁰ Dana College offered these courses in 1935, but Currier's departure, the merger with the Newark Institute and the quest for accreditation relegated innovation to the back burner.

A 1936 Dana College faculty resolution reiterated the primacy of the academic mission, though challenged by the lure of athletics. "Higher education can and must stand on its own feet", resolved the faculty, "and cannot afford to depend on circuses for its support". The faculty would tolerate inter-collegiate athletics when conducted on "a truly amateur basis and designed to represent a natural and healthy culmination of a sound physical education program within the college". But, it concluded, few colleges could justify their athletic programmes on this basis, though more officials "are coming to conceive of athletics from the standpoint of true sportsmanship". The University of Newark, the faculty concluded, "must be with the leaders and not with the laggards".⁶¹

The faculty was not indifferent or hostile to extracurricular participation, but a university in a brewery little resembled a country college. There were no studies or lounges – the building lobby housed the dances – and a cafeteria opened only in 1949, well after the Rutgers merger.⁶² Commuting and working left Newark's students with less time for extracurricular activities, and students claimed to prefer interaction with faculty outside the classroom in their few free moments. "We thoroughly believe in the adage that 'lectures pass from the professor's note to the student's notes without passing through the brains of either'", wrote the 1938 sophomore class scribe. Therefore, "it has been found wise to become intimate with our professors, as far as they will allow us, and discover lights of knowledge in a more personal manner".⁶³

The university mounted a basketball team, liberal, history and debating clubs, and eight fraternities and sororities. A Girls' Association was designed to unite the relatively small number of women.⁶⁴ Students published *the Dana College Chronicle*, a student newspaper, and *The Encore*, a yearbook. Like other colleges with diverse

⁵⁹Currier to Herbert Hunsaker, February 1, 1934, RUA, RG N2/K0/02, NCAS: DCR, 1930–1938, Box 1: "Dana College: Educational Plans Committee, Minutes, February–May, 1934" file.

⁶⁰Currier to the Members of the Faculty of Dana College, October 14, 1932, RUA, RGN2/K0/02, NCAS: DCR, 1930–1938, Box I: "Dana College: Board of Trustees Minutes, 1932, 1933" file. Currier cited Ernest Hatch Wilkins (president of Oberlin College), *The College and Society: Proposals for Changes in the American Plan of Higher Education* (New York: Century Company, 1932).

⁶¹"Resolutions of the Dana College Faculty," January 15, 1936, p. 2, RUA, RGN2/N0/2, NCAS: UNOR 1934–1946, Group 2, Box 2: "Faculty Committee Reports and Plans 1935–40" file.

⁶²Edwin M. Durand to Clothier, October 27, 1947, RUA, RG 04/A14, Office of the President (Robert C. Clothier), Series IV, Faculty Files (1925–1952), Box 87, file 17: "Durand, Edwin M., Dean of Students, The Newark Colleges, 1945–1950."

⁶³"Sophomores," *The Encore: Class of 1938* (Newark, NJ: Senior Class of the University of Newark, 1938), 36. For a student view of campus life, see "History of the Class of '39," *The Encore: Class of '39* (Newark, NJ: Students of the University of Newark, 1939), 14–15.

⁶⁴Kingdon did not see Newark's many leftist students as *problems*. He even supported some strikes by Dana College students. Expelled from City College at 18, Morris Milgram enrolled in Dana College. "President Frank Kingdon said it was an honor to be expelled from City", Milgram recalled (Lawrence Van Gelder, "Morris Milgram, 81, Who Built Interracial Housing," *New York Times*, June 26, 1997, B8).

ethnic representation, Dana sanctioned clubs for racial and national groups, including a Dante Society for Italian-Americans, a Newman Club for Catholics, and a Cardozo Club for Jews. Pegasus, the student literary society, published two issues of *First Flight*. The journal included standard essays on the end of adolescence and young love, but also contained stories of fading memories of the old country, shoplifting a dress for a prom, the contradictions confronted by a debt collection worker, and a poem, entitled “De Highway Robber”, containing four “Kentos” in Yiddish-ised English.⁶⁵

Recognising academic primacy, Caroline McGowan, Newark’s director of student relations, advocated coordinating – even integrating – the academic and the extra-curricular. Her recommendation – transforming Newark’s academic clubs into credit-bearing workshops with limited and selective admission – went nowhere. But it reflected a belief in allowing the university to influence and guide Dana’s unsophisticated, immature undergraduates. University–student relationships, McGowan argued, were “intricate and unpredictable”. Intricate, “because there exists considerable confusion in the minds of the students as to the extent of their own abilities, authorities, and values”. Unpredictable, “since we do not adequately appreciate the various influences brought to bear upon their lives outside the realm of the University’s influence resulting in reactions which are not always those expected, desired, or desirable”.

“By offering adequate guidance in their social relationships, attitudes, and behavior”, McGowan wrote, “we are fulfilling an obligation, beyond the purely academic, which society expects of us when we assume the responsibility of producing a college-trained individual”. At Newark, this guidance began “with those more elementary concepts [of social relations] with which students of the more privileged backgrounds are already equipped upon their entrance into college”. Take each student “as we find him and help him progress in his own way and at his own speed”.⁶⁶

As for career aspirations, students still had difficulty getting jobs 10 years into the Great Depression. Jewish students, for example, could obtain teaching jobs in several New Jersey cities, but were barred from most suburban positions.⁶⁷ The university, McGowan believed, *had* to guide talented students. “Why try to be an engineer when you will make a better draughtsman?” she asked. “Why be a mediocre lawyer when you could be a good accountant? And if you are well qualified for work as a secretary, why not capitalize on the fact?”. The personnel department, McGowan concluded, “must constantly study the needs of the city and the state, and, where possible, to fit the individual student into those needs in terms of his capabilities”.⁶⁸

Carolyn McGowan preferred to inform students about economic realities and about racial, gender, and ethnic discrimination rather than challenge those conditions.

⁶⁵*First Flight* 1–2 (Newark, NJ: Easterwood Press, 1939–1940). Many clubs in limbo during the Second World War were reconstituted after the war’s end. “Organizations That Are in the Process of Being Revived,” *The Encore: University of Newark, 1946* (Newark, NJ: n.p., 1946), 47.

⁶⁶McGowan, “Report of the Director of Student Relations for the Year 1937–1938,” December 1938, pp. 1, 18, RUA, RG N2/N0/03, NCAS: University of Newark: Records 1923–1959, Box 3: “University of Newark – Student Relations Report 1936–1937” file. The quotation is from Harold C. Hand, ed., *Campus Activities* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1938), 9.

⁶⁷William B. Helmreich, *The Enduring Community: The Jews of Newark and Metrowest* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 115.

⁶⁸University of Newark, “Extending Democracy’s Frontiers,” 19–20.

But this “realism” might not have satisfied Newark students whose teachers encouraged high aspirations, much less those questioning the fundamentals of the economic system. Perhaps more students would have accepted her message if social justice campaigns had not characterised the university’s “community service”. But Newark’s president – and its students – often took on the system.

College and community

The university itself must be an active and sharing agent in the community life.... It must lay its heart against the teeming tides of life that ebb and flow about it and tune its utterances to the rhythm of their beating.... I see the university as an instrument fitted to the community’s use and accepted by all kinds of enterprises, political, commercial, social, and cultural, as committed to their service. (Frank Kingdon⁶⁹)

University of Newark trustees, faculty, and administrators contributed much to the city’s economic, political, and social life. Kingdon chaired several community chest drives, led the New Jersey Conference of Social Work, and mediated labour disputes and strikes. The university worked with the Institute of American Banking and faculty members served on and advised citizens’ committees. The sociology department coordinated student research for the local welfare federation.⁷⁰ The university also sponsored a city-oriented research centre, and planned for a “human relations” centre to “correlate academic studies with the actual problems of living”. Such externally funded activities offered high visibility at relatively low cost.

Paul Lazarsfeld ran the research centre for two years.⁷¹ Now that the centre is a “recognized institution of social research and learning”, he noted, it “has to become the center of social intelligence for the city of Newark and its area”.⁷² Lazarsfeld used National Youth Administration funds to enable many Newark students to continue their studies.⁷³ But lacking permanent funding for the centre, he left Newark in 1938.

The university hoped for communal contributions to support its service activities. But the former association of the Dana group with proprietary education hindered fundraising, and tuition remained the only consistent source of revenue. At its peak, the university’s tuition dependence reached 96% of its budget, possibly the highest

⁶⁹John Price Jones Corporation, “Survey, Analysis, and Plan of Fund Raising for the University of Newark,” p. 30, RUA, RG N2/N0/1, NCAS: UNOR, 1934–46, Group I, Box 9: “John Price Jones Corporation” file.

⁷⁰Ibid., 36–39.

⁷¹Allen H. Barton, “Paul Lazarsfeld as Institutional Inventor,” *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 13 (2001): 245–69.

⁷²“The Research Center ... organizes field studies which aim to develop new methods of research, to give research training to students, to help the city of Newark to a better understanding of its social and economic problems, to give students the opportunity for gainful employment, to accumulate funds for the perpetuation and enlargement of the Center’s activities, to publish finished research, to act as a consulting service for other agencies in the city, and in this way to make the University, as a whole, better known locally and nationally.” “The University of Newark Research Center: Summary of the main facts of the operations during 1936,” n.d., c. May 1937, RUA, RG N2/N0/2, NCAS: The UNOR, 1934–1946, Group II, Box 3: “Research Center, Dr. Lazarsfeld, University of Newark” file.

⁷³Ibid.

percentage in the nation.⁷⁴ Only a few trustees provided financial sustenance. Largely composed of lawyers – not surprising given the university’s focus on legal education – the board lacked significant business representation, capable of greater largesse.⁷⁵ One exception was department store magnate Louis Bamberger, who erased the annual deficit during his tenure on the board, and who bequeathed \$50,000 to the university on his death in 1944.⁷⁶

Faced with a mortgage on the brewery bought from Currier, a disappointed faculty – the university, still facing a deficit, cut faculty salaries in 1937, despite peak enrolments – and accreditor demands for an endowment, Kingdon and the trustees embarked on an ill-fated million-dollar capital drive in 1938. The theme: educational opportunity to overcome poverty. Urban universities admitting many minority students usually emphasised assimilation as a bulwark against radicalism. But lack of education, said University of Newark officials, was the true threat to democracy.

“There can be no educational buck-passing with students like these”, stated a campaign brochure, “They are North Jersey’s own responsibility”. Some students, the pamphlet noted, “will fight their way up, as others have done, to be successful financiers, labor leaders, captains of industry, and politicians”. “But the mental horizons of many will be limited”, the booklet added, “and perhaps that fact supplies the key to some of our current social conflicts”. “If a man has the benefit of disciplined training in a variety of subjects; if he knows other fields than those of roller bearings or pipe lines or blast furnaces; if his areas of interest and enthusiasm are wide”, the publication concluded, “he not only lives a fuller life but approaches problems with a broader perspective and greater tolerance”.⁷⁷ The campaign’s ominous message: “If proper educational opportunities are not provided, improper ones will be”. Other agencies, the campaign warned, would “absorb the energies of idle, and even of ambitious young people, and give them plenty of training”. The choice: turn Newark’s youth into “social assets” or “social liabilities”.⁷⁸

Three weeks before the capital campaign was to go public, Father Matthew J. Toohey of St James Catholic Church in Newark charged the university with radicalism.⁷⁹ “Appeals are made to promote education and culture in our universities and colleges whose staffs are filled with radicals”, he stated. “There is no need to search the record afar; in Newark University the faculty and administration is honeycombed with radicals of the most extreme type”.⁸⁰ The political views of Kingdon and some

⁷⁴University of Newark Development Committee, *A Closed Door*, 23. NYU reported 90% tuition dependence a few years earlier.

⁷⁵In 1938, the board was still an “unwieldy” amalgam of trustees from former constituent divisions. It took several years to adjust the membership to the needs of the merged institution.

⁷⁶A local brewery contributed \$25,000 to underwrite the costs of the 1938 capital campaign.

⁷⁷University of Newark Development Committee, *A Closed Door*, 12–13.

⁷⁸University of Newark, “Extending Democracy’s Frontiers,” 14–15.

⁷⁹Trustee Frank Harris suggested that the campaign literature pre-empt the belief “among business and professional men in Newark ... that we are a ‘Red’ institution” by including “a guarded statement designed to explode this growing apprehension in the community” (Harris to Conklin, February 11, 1938, RUA, RG N2/N0/01, NCAS: UNOR, 1933–1946, Box 33: “Key Statement: Publicity” file).

⁸⁰“Priest Declares University Here ‘Radical’ Hotbed,” *Newark Sunday Call*, March 27, 1938.

faculty members made the University of Newark intolerable to Father Toohey, especially when Seton Hall College offered a local alternative.⁸¹

Kingdon was no shrinking violet. “The University of Newark is exactly as radical as the Constitution of the United States, which guarantees freedom of speech to all its citizens”, he replied. The university’s students included all shades of opinion, coming as they did from all sections of the population, he added. “But there is no organized presentation of any particular point of view in the teaching at the university”.⁸² Kingdon sparred with much of Newark’s power structure during his tenure. “If the educator does not enter public life”, he said in 1937, the community “will be restricted to the limited resources of the business man, the politician and the demagogue”.⁸³ His rejoinders to Father Toohey made him few friends among the area’s Catholics; his denunciations of Nazis – in Germany and in Newark – did not sit well with many German-Americans.⁸⁴ And his enmity towards Frank Hague – powerful political boss of nearby Jersey City and a devout Catholic – cost him local political support.⁸⁵

Kingdon’s support of Socialist Party candidate Norman Thomas for president in the 1930s earned Hague’s enmity.⁸⁶ Said Hague: “We hear about constitutional rights, free speech and free press. But every time I hear these words, I say to myself ‘that man is a Red, that man is a Communist’”. “The Hague political organisation survived by ‘dispensing bread, circuses, and punishment’ – relief, outings, and police”, Thomas replied. “Mayor Hague would not put it in that way; he recognizes the necessity for his huge police force, but he states the reason on moral grounds: ‘Jersey City,’ he said in a radio speech, ‘is the most moralest city in America’”.⁸⁷

Father Toohey defended Hague. “The battle of the century is being fought in Jersey City”, he charged, “to determine whether the brand of Americanism that we know is to prevail or whether the brand of Americanism that is endeavored to be proclaimed by [American Civil Liberties Union leaders] Morris Ernst and Roger Baldwin and his ilk will prevail”.⁸⁸ Here, Father Toohey alluded to another aspect of the University of Newark’s anti-Hague stance. Law school dean Spalding Frazier

⁸¹Frank Harris, a Catholic, summarised a conversation he had with Father Toohey, the day after the public statement. Toohey asked Harris if there were any Communists at Newark. “Do you mean students or faculty?”, asked Harris. Students, answered Toohey. “Of course I don’t deny it”, said Harris. “Can you find a college in the country that does not have a Communist student?” Father Toohey answered, “That’s not what I am interested in. As long as there is one Communist in the University, everything that I said is true and I am going to continue to fight against it. The whole Catholic Church is behind this, from Archbishop Walsh down the line. This is only the beginning.” Harris recalled Toohey saying, “There was very little sense for him to talk with me any longer, and that I was not a very good Catholic. He ended the interview by saying, ‘You can leave and don’t send any Jews down to see me.’” “Record of Conversation Between Frank Harris and Father Toohey, Monday, March 28, at 12 O’Clock Noon,” RUA, RG N2/N0/01, NCAS: UNOR, 1934–1946, Group 1, Box 5: “Academic Freedom” file.

⁸²“‘U’ Open-Minded, Avers Kingdon,” *Newark Evening News*, March 29, 1938.

⁸³“Sees School a Bar to ‘Demagogues’,” *New York Times*, October 18, 1936, N6.

⁸⁴Warren Grover, *Nazis in Newark* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003).

⁸⁵“Educator Clashes With Legion’s Head,” *New York Times*, June 30, 1938, 17.

⁸⁶“Pastors Support Thomas; Jersey Methodist Episcopal Group to Aid Socialist Candidate,” *New York Times*, October 23, 1932, 26.

⁸⁷David Dayton McKean, *The Boss: The Hague Machine in Action* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1940), 202.

⁸⁸“Hague Hailed as Foe of Reds at Service,” *New York Times*, November 15, 1937, 23, and “Finds Hague Fight ‘Battle of Century’,” *New York Times*, June 17, 1938, 13.

joined attorneys for the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO) and the ACLU to oppose the forcible removal of CIO organisers from Jersey City – one of the few serious challenges to Hague’s 28-year reign.⁸⁹ Newark business leaders joined in questioning Frazier’s pro-union activities.

This opposition endangered the capital campaign, but Kingdon’s downfall came from a self-inflicted wound. Kingdon had appointed Jerome Davis, president of the American Federation of Teachers (1936–1939), to lead a new human relations centre. Considered the university’s most important community initiative after Lazarsfeld’s research institute closed, the centre aimed “to apply the findings of the sciences bearing on human behavior to community problems, with the aim of developing a ‘science of living together’”.⁹⁰ Yale University had dismissed Davis in 1937, ostensibly for financial reasons, but in reality, Davis charged, for his left-leaning economic views. Davis called for colleges to be run by experts, “not vested interests that seem determined to suppress open discussion”.⁹¹ Though alerted by vice-president Black to trustee opposition, Kingdon backed Davis to the end, which soon came. The trustees neither opened the institute nor appointed Davis. Instead they granted Kingdon a one-year leave of absence. He resigned six months later to head the Emergency Rescue Committee, which helped refugees from Nazism. Saying that Kingdon was caught between his political commitments and his university duties, Paul Lazarsfeld called his fate at Newark “tragic”.⁹²

Franklin Conklin became the acting president in September 1939, but Black soon assumed that position. Black’s priority: stabilise the academic programmes and the university’s finances to prepare for accreditation for which Kingdon had offered only lukewarm support. Are we, Kingdon had asked, “primarily interested in meeting the academic requirements of established recognizing agencies?”. Or, he continued, “are we primarily interested in developing an institution uniquely set to the work of taking the particular type of student with whom we have to deal and leading him out to a fuller experience which will register both in a richer personal life and a more constructive social one?”. His answer: “There can be but one decision and that to take the second road while progressing as far as possible simultaneously along the first”.

Black reversed these priorities. Initially rejected because of an inadequate library and laboratory space for physics, the College of Arts and Sciences gained Middle States accreditation a year later. Law and business school accreditation, dependent on that decision, came next. Conforming to accreditation standards while remaining unaccredited had made the law school vulnerable to competition from the unaccredited John Marshall Law School in Jersey City. Students at John Marshall, the forerunner of Seton Hall’s law school, needed less time to complete the school’s requirements. But the university could now claim to have the state’s only accredited

⁸⁹“La Follette Gets Data on Hague Ban,” *New York Times*, December 7, 1937, 22. New Jersey courts found in favour of the CIO in 1939. “Jersey City is Mum on Court’s Decision,” *New York Times*, January 27, 1939, 8. The US Supreme Court upheld the right to assemble in *Hague, Mayor, et al. v. Committee for Industrial Organization et al.* 307 U.S. 496, decided June 5, 1939.

⁹⁰University of Newark, “Extending Democracy’s Frontiers,” 27–28.

⁹¹“Yale Condemned for Ousting Davis,” *New York Times*, May 23, 1937, 21, and “Urges Academic Freedom,” *New York Times*, October 25, 1937, 12.

⁹²Paul F. Lazarsfeld, “An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir,” in *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930–1960*, ed. Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 288.

law school. Accreditation, officials hoped, would also make the university more attractive to students who might otherwise enrol in other states. Accredited colleges had to stand on their own, so the faculty exchange programme with NYU ended. Accredited status also increased the university's attractiveness if a merger partner emerged.

Then came the Second World War, which reduced the size of the student body and the faculty. Newark could not participate in the V-12 Navy College Training Program, designed to produce commissioned officers. Lacking dorms, it shared the fate of other urban commuter colleges that suffered financially throughout the war. "Students became soldiers", the Newark student yearbook sombrely recorded, "and a large portion of the male scholars disappeared – soon our halls echoed their emptiness". "The few who were left – engaged in war industries, studying between school and work – still managing to keep school morale on an even keel – dances, sorority, fraternity and club activities; lectures, lab experiments, tuition fees and exams – but still, some feeling of loneliness – those familiar faces and well known voices absent – news of some of them from the battlefields across the seas – occasional furlough reunions of former students. Sometimes the report, 'killed in action'", the account concluded, "brought lumps to our throats. School seemed endless".⁹³

The final merger

Some may urge that such "public service" universities as the University of Newark ought to be run by the government and supported out of tax funds. But a government institution must be run within the letter of the law. Instruction, with every other phase, is continually under the eye of politicians. The institution, in the majority cases, can neither experiment nor pioneer. The teaching and other activities of a privately supported university are technically free from any kind of governmental or political control. It can work out its own destiny in the manner dictated as best by judgment or experience. (University of Newark Development Committee, 1938⁹⁴)

The 496 students enrolled in Newark's College of Arts and Sciences in 1945–1946 – surpassing the pre-war peak of 471 students (1937) – included many veterans. In 1946–1947, 81% of Newark's students were veterans.⁹⁵ But the unstable enrolments of the war years, the shrinkage of the operating budget by half in the late 1930s, a glaring need for capital improvements, a chronic inability to staff science courses, substantial teaching overloads, and formal designation of Rutgers as the State University of New Jersey (1944–1945) led Newark's trustees to reconsider a merger with Rutgers.

This option appeared more attractive now than in 1933. Becoming a state university with increased public representation on its board – it achieved full state funding in 1956 – strengthened Rutgers's claim on the state coffers for long-needed capital projects. Absent a merger, Rutgers might have become a formidable competitor for day students in Newark. State sponsorship, Newark's officials understood, could

⁹³"Organizations That Are in the Process of Being Revived," *The Encore: University of Newark, 1946* (Newark, NJ, n.p., 1946), 48.

⁹⁴University of Newark Development Committee, *A Closed Door*, 21.

⁹⁵"Annual report, Newark College of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers University," May 21, 1947, RUA, RG N2/N0/2, NCAS, UNOR, 1934–1946, Group 2, Box 3: "The Newark–Rutgers Merger" file.

reduce tuition fees for its middle- and working-class students. Remaining independent meant inevitable, substantial tuition increases. The University of Newark was not alone: economic reality led officials at other private urban colleges to contemplate going public.

A merger with the University of Newark, Rutgers officials believed, would help their university negotiate with the governor and the legislature. The votes and influence of the Essex County legislative delegation, in particular, would help to increase per-capita and capital appropriations.⁹⁶ A Newark site would also reduce an expected influx of veterans to New Brunswick; more commuters to Newark meant lower capital outlays for dormitories on the main campus. A merger would also end the potential rivalry of a strong, independent University of Newark that might increase its enrolments under the tuition subsidy provisions of the GI Bill (1944).

A Rutgers trustee committee examining proposals for postwar expansion urged the board to “be constantly alert to the possibility of acquiring the present University of Newark”. Robert Clothier dusted off the plans held in abeyance for a dozen years. Calling relations with Newark trustees and administration “splendid”, he argued that integrating the institutions would eliminate duplication, while strengthening public higher education in Newark.⁹⁷ Noting the quality of the Newark faculty, its balanced budget and its recent success in paying off the mortgage on the Rector Street property, Clothier pressed ahead. Rutgers trustees proposed merging their current Newark work – including University College, which grew out of extension work, and a pharmacy school – with the three University of Newark divisions into a new unit called “The Newark Colleges of Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey”.

Fruitful initial discussions led to implementation talks focusing on administrative relations, faculty salaries and benefits, and capital expansion. Governance of the new entity would resemble the asymmetric arrangement between the Los Angeles branch of the University of California (now UCLA) and the senior institution in Berkeley. New Brunswick officials would review key (and often not-so-key) decisions made in Newark. Assembly Bill 381 incorporated the University of Newark into Rutgers, whose officials hailed the merger as a major step toward raising New Jersey’s “unenviable position of forty-eighth among the states in its provision for public higher education”.⁹⁸

Herbert P. Woodward, a Currier-era member of the Dana faculty, provided continuity by retaining the deanship of Newark’s College of Arts and Sciences until 1965. He noted “the College’s virtual autonomy” at the first meeting of the college faculty. “We can create; we can build; and we can plan”, he added.⁹⁹ But this was not a merger of equals; control soon shifted from Newark to New Brunswick. Rutgers invited only

⁹⁶“President’s Statement,” October 11, 1945, RUA, RG 03/A0/03, Rutgers University Board of Trustees, “Minutes and Enclosures, March 1945–July, 1946,” Box 35, file 3: “Board of Trustees: Rough Minutes and Enclosures, 1945, August–October.”

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸“Mr. Derby stressed the fact that requests for additional funds come about not because Rutgers was made into the State University, but because higher education is a public obligation, must be paid for, is paid for in other states, and is a state investment.” Rutgers University, “Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees, 12 April 1946,” p. 4, RUA, RG 03/A0/03, Rutgers University, Board of Trustees, Minutes and Enclosures Mar. 1945–Jul. 1946, Box 35, file 4: “Board of Trustees: Rough Minutes and Enclosures: 1946, Feb.–April.”

⁹⁹“The Newark Colleges: Rutgers University, Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences, Minutes of the First Meeting,” October 17, 1946, RUA, RG N2/N0/2, NCAS: UNOR, 1934–1946, Group 2, Box 3: “The Newark/Rutgers Merger” file.

two Newark trustees, including Conklin, onto its board after the merger; others complained that Rutgers did not solicit their advice. George Black stayed on as vice-president for only a year after the merger. Accreditation requirements helped to give the institution academic independence from NYU in 1939, but continued financial instability led its trustees to surrender that independence to Rutgers.

Enrolments at Newark increased to 2794 in 1946–1947.¹⁰⁰ Large increases in applications permitted selectivity in admissions, but Rutgers, via the GI Bill and the incorporation of the University of Newark, was becoming a public institution in fact as well as in law.¹⁰¹ The university acquired two buildings in Newark, while expanding the teaching staff and the number of departments. Rutgers, said a diplomatic Clothier, “is proud to have had a part in helping to do these things. But it recognizes, too, that in helping to do them it has been but building on the firm foundation laid by those who established the University of Newark in the first place.” Urban education, University of Newark style, will remain a “vital and desirable” service, he added. Clothier pledged to promote “the further development of the Newark College as the agency by which the State University discharges [its] responsibility to the state’s most important urban center, including development in physical plant, in student enrollment, in educational service, [and] in the adding of men and women of distinction to our faculty.”¹⁰²

Coda

A college in an urban community cannot bring to that community the charm of a college town. Harvard itself has not preserved the old character of Cambridge as Cambridge has been enveloped by Boston. Neither the four city colleges, nor many private colleges and universities, including Columbia, can make New York cease to be a grasping, greedy, pushing city. The Cathedral of Learning cannot shed much light though the smoke of Pittsburgh, and the University of Akron cannot much lessen Akron’s preoccupation with rubber. But whatever their limitations, New York and Pittsburgh and Akron, Detroit and Chicago and Louisville, are better cities because they have in them institutions devoted to “learning and civility.”¹⁰³

The history of the University of Newark offers themes for contemporary urban colleges to consider: the difficulties encountered in deviating from expectations of accreditors, community leaders, and trustees; the perils of public advocacy and action;

¹⁰⁰The religious preferences of students at Rutgers-Newark in 1948 resembled the prewar distribution: about 40% Jews, 25% Protestants, and 27% Catholics. “Summary of Students’ Religious Preferences,” RUA, RG N2/N0/2, NCAS: UNOR, 1934–1946, Box 4: “Student Affairs – University of Newark” file.

¹⁰¹“Opening of College,” n.d., c. October, 1946, in RUA, RG 03/A0/03, Rutgers University, “Board of Trustees, Minutes and Enclosures Mar. 1945–Jul, 1946,” Box 36, file 1: “Board of Trustees: Rough Minutes and Enclosures, 1946, Aug.–Dec.” Incorporation permitted the Newark colleges to accept veterans: 971 in Arts and Sciences, 715 in business administration, and 311 in law. Non-veteran enrolments were 375, 90, and 80, respectively – a total increase of 561 over 1945. Rutgers University, “Enrollment Statistics as of November 1, 1946 (compared with November 1, 1945)”, Ibid.

¹⁰²Clothier, “WAAT – Salute to Newark College,” July 1, 1947, RUA, RG 04/A14, Office of the President (Robert C. Clothier), Series IV, Faculty Files (1925–1952), Box 121, file 18: “Radio Broadcast – WAAT – Salute to Newark College, July 1, 1947.”

¹⁰³John S. Diekhoff, *Democracy’s College: Higher Education in the Local Community* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950), 200.

the problems in sustaining a tuition-dependent, near-destitute, private college catering to a diverse and disadvantaged clientele; and the impact of such colleges on the locality.

Dana, Winsor, Currier, Kingdon, and Black wished to prepare students for successful community life. "There have always been many individuals ready to see higher education as an individual privilege", stated a 1934 Dana College faculty report, "but those responsible for it have consistently regarded it as a force for common good". Social welfare, the faculty report continued, depends on educating an enlightened citizenry "conscious of social responsibility, acquainted with the nature of social problems, and prepared to deal with social relations according to well-considered social values". The process begins, the report added, by liberating the individual "from mental and physical and economic insecurity, from psychic terrors, from social prejudices, from verbal formulas, from philosophic fears, from biases, and from all the other forces which deprive men of freedom". Societies influenced by such individuals provide for future cultural growth that will be "richer and finer because solid and real, not a product of revolt or concealment, but a product of wholesome growth in wholesome soil".

A view of higher education as a private investment producing personal rewards eclipsed this vision. We may now ask if the aspirations of the Dana faculty can inspire urban colleges and universities in America to improve the social life of the community through "endeavors with such individuals as it can reach, in order that they, in turn, may build a better community as a field for ... future labors".¹⁰⁴

Acknowledgments

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¹⁰⁴Committee on Educational Objectives, "Tentative and Preliminary Report," March 9, 1934, RUA, RG N2/K0/02, NCAS: DCR, 1930–1938, Box 1: "Dana College: Educational Plans Committee, Minutes, February–May, 1934" file.