

East Carolina University

Oral History Project: East Carolina University Alumni

General topic of interview: The African-American experience during integration at East Carolina University.

NARRATOR: DANELE' WILLIAMS

INTERVIEWER: GREG CARTER

DATE: November 8, 2001

PLACE: Allstate Insurance Companies
Charles St., Greenville, N.C.

PERSONAL DATA

Birth Date: 1952

Spouse: Married

Occupation: Allstate Insurance Agent

When I finished my first interview with Mr. James Mitchell, I asked him if he knew anyone from his class that I could interview. He gave me the name of Mr. Greg Carter. Mr. Mitchell told me Mr. Carter worked for Allstate and was personable. On Tuesday, November 6, I called Mr. Carter's office. I told him about the project and asked him if he was willing to give an interview. He immediately said yes and we set a date and time for the interview.

Tuesday, November 8, 2001, at 4:00 in the afternoon, I traveled down Charles Boulevard looking for the office. In a small complex, there stood a small blue house. The house was converted into office space; the building had a square Allstate sign hanging in the front of the building. As I walked through the door, I was immediately struck by the small size of the front room. In the room was a secretary with an elderly man sitting across from her desk. The secretary asked if she could help me, I told her I had an appointment with Mr. Carter. Her eye's glanced towards an office, I followed her gaze and saw a partially opened door. I could see two people in the small office having a

conversation. The secretary directed me towards an empty seat, assuring me she would tell Mr. Carter I was there.

A woman left the office I had identified as Mr. Carter's and the secretary directed me to walk in the office. Mr. Carter sat at his desk with a small computer and mounds of paperwork. I introduced myself and he seemed excited to see me. I told him how pleased I was that he agreed to the interview and the great contribution to oral history. I placed the recorder on a stack of papers in front of him and took a seat in the chair across from his desk. I then began my interview with Mr. Carter.

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PLACE: Allstate Insurance Companies No. of tapes 1
Charles St., Greenville, N.C.

DATE: November 8, 2001

Initials, Side, Counter No.	TOPIC OF DISCUSSION
GC 1 001	Introduction
GC 1 003	Place of Birth Born in Stedman, NC., eight miles from Fayetteville
GC 1 004	Type of Community Growing up in Stedman, it was an agrarian community. The primary occupation was people working on farms. The many products included tobacco, soybeans, and corn.
GC 1 006	Surrounding City Fayetteville was the closest magnet city. It drew people from Cumberland County, Harnett County, Hoke County, Southern Pines, and Sanford.
GC 1 010	Carter's Childhood He was raised around tobacco fields. He picked tobacco as a child and drove a tractor when he was nine years old. Wanted to go to college so he could stay off a tractor.
GC 1 012	He was born 1952
GC 1 013	Parents Occupations His mother was a schoolteacher. His father farmed and repaired air-conditioners.

- GC 1 015 Parents Education
His mother graduated from Fayetteville State College. His father had a fourth grade education.
- GC 1 017 The area was segregated
- GC 1 018 High School integration
Carter's high school was integrated in 1968 and consolidated in 1970 of his last year of high school.
- GC 1 020 He attended a predominately black school through the ninth grade. He voluntarily went to an integrated high school in tenth grade.
- GC 1 022 What is a Consolidated School
Consolidated school were composed of all the school from the area turned into one large school.
- GC 1 024 The biggest changes between the integrated and segregated school was the number of people he did not know.
- GC 1 027 He played football, which helped him make friends.
- GC 1 028 Ten to fifteen male athletes transferred over to the integrated school.
- GC 1 029 Influences in High School
A chemistry teacher encouraged him to come to East Carolina. The teacher taught him about chemistry and about life.
- GC 1 035 His parents wanted him to go to college, as long as it was affordable.
- GC 1 038 Why Carter Didn't Go to an Historically Black College
The reason he did not go to a historically black college because he was not familiar with the black schools. Fayetteville State was the closest school, but he did not want to stay so close to home.
- GC 1 043 His Early Experiences at ECU
There were only fifty-two blacks when he got to ECU. There was closeness, but there was also the black elite. Some blacks felt that they were very smart to be able to attend ECU, and were arrogant. The freshman class he was in was not like that, and were considered thugs, because they were rowdy.

- GC 1 050 Tensions Between Early Black Students and the Second Wave
There was tension between the elite older black and the young Freshman's because they did not honor their eliteness. The younger students did not follow the pattern the older students set and went their own way.
- GC 1 058 Early Influence in College
There were influential blacks that became the early integrators and they paid their dues. The good influences included Ernie Minor, Caroline Holliway, Johnny Williams, they showed intelligence but did not come off as elite. They guided the freshmen, more then the elite crowd.
- GC 1 066 Problems with a Professor
As a freshman he was in control of his day, he was forced to take care of himself. The biggest problem he ever had with an English professor was his freshman year. The professor was on probation for failing to many students. Carter turned in a good paper to the professor, she marked it down to a C-, and she told him it was A information. Carter felt he should have been given the opportunity to fix it.
- GC 1 082 ECU was on the three-quarters systems back then.
- GC 1 085 The Technology Teachers Accepted African- Americans
He majored in industrial technology with a lot of blue collar teachers who did not wear suits and ties. The teachers worked with heads and their hand. Carter felt the teachers might have been open to African-Americans, than there intellectual counterparts.
- GC 1 095 Carter's Major in College and Transition into College
Majored in industrial technology and minored in history. History came easy to him and he got good grades. He was accustom to the small classes and not the big lecture classes. He found the lectures very intimidating.
- GC 1 106 Leo Jenkins meant nothing to his day-to-day life at ECU
- GC 1 110 He lived on the Hill, in Jones dormitory, most of the men lived on the Hill.
- GC 1 120 Most of the campus was on the circle, of Wright student union.

- GC 1 125 He enrolled at ECU in 1970.
- GC 1 128 What He did in His Spare Time
He played cards and pool during his spare time. He also liked Mae West and Bogart.
- GC 1 135 The Party Life at ECU
He became a party animal his sophomore and junior years. His nickname in school was "Jay". Everyone knew to ask "Jay" about the parties. The start of a new quarter everyone had money, and he could raise \$250 for the party. They would party at the bottom of Belk dorm. Fridays and Saturday, the white kids knew the black students were having a party. They would start at 8:30pm, until the police or a dorm manager said it was time to end. He would bring a stereo and music and everybody had a good time.
- GC 1 148 The Wright Building Student Center
The card room was on the second floor of the Wright building. They also had a pool table and a snack bar, close to the bookstore.
- GC 1 154 Fraternities on Campus
He was a charter member of Alpha Phi Alpha, the first black fraternity. They were the first blacks from ECU not to appear on television for something bad. They had a going over [ceremony welcoming them to the frat] party and they participated in the home coming activities. Other Black frats came; they included the Delta, the AKA's, and the Omegas, the main four.
- GC 1 165 Activities with SOULS
He was a member of SOULS. It was the first activist group, but it was a fledgling group without advisors. The group needed to be kept on track and they lacked discipline.
- GC 1 174 The Confederate Flag and Souls
SOULS did keep a resistance. The White students at the time liked to wave Confederate flags, and SOULS made them disappear.
- GC 1 182 Physical Altercations between White and Black Students
Karen Holliway's boyfriend was at a homecoming football game, and the white student president of the SGA was waving the Confederate flag. Karen's boyfriend took it from the white student; there was a scuffle, and the school made the boyfriend sit out a week. As time passed there were fewer Confederate flags.

- GC 1 155 The Clubs Downtown
The clubs downtown did not play a lot of black music.
- GC 1 200 Blacks Student's interaction with the Community
He participated in voter registration drives and attended church in the black community. The black community would bring issues to them and they would try to help, but it was hard to get transportation.
- GC 1 211 Carter's Experiences With Black Clubs
He did go to the clubs in the black community occasionally, but often it would get territorial.
- GC 1 216 Dating on Campus
Dates were hard to get if you were a freshman. The freshman girls would bring their little sisters or cousins for the guys to date.
- GC 1 223 He would take his dates to a campus movies or go downtown to movies.
- GC 1 229 Carter's feeling about ECU
ECU treatment of Blacks was summed up like this: Life is what you make it. If you believe you are somebody and you will not be oppressed then you will not. You can overcome anything. The group he was with knew they were on a mission to succeed.
- GC 1 249 The Differences Between 1970 Blacks and 2000 Blacks
African-Americans were more together when he was in school, today's blacks are not together. Today's students need to keep in mind that they are in the minority, and they need support beyond the house.
- GC 1 267 Why the Alpha's were Important to the Campus
The Alpha was important because it was one of the main social outlets.
- GC 1 279 Carter's Experiences with Athletes
There was a good mix of guys on sports teams and the regular student body. They did not separate themselves from everyone else. The most separated person was Carl Lester, because he was married. Carl Lester was the black voice of the Pirates on the radio.
- GC 1 304 How Carter Spent his Weekend
On weekends, he would visit the predominately black schools, such as, Central, Shaw and St. Augustine.

- GC 1 318 There was a different culture at Black school then at ECU. However, they were looking for girls for the most part.
- GC 1 321 He would not wish that anything were different about his experience.
- GC 1 325 ECU was the Right Fit for Him
His wife went to a predominately black school and he does not feel her experience was any better then his. He found his niche here and made the best out of it. He made true friends that made him a better person. He does not like to hang on to regrets.
- GC 1 349 Keeping Friends For Life
He still keeps in touch with old classmates, and sees them at Homecoming.
- GC 1 352 He goes back three or four times a year for sporting events.
- GC 1 352 He is not in any alumni chapters but does support the Industrial Art School
- GC 1 357 Carter's Path After Graduation
When he graduated the economy was bad and there were not jobs in industry. He then worked as a credit adjuster, in Richmond VA. He came back to NC in 1981 and worked for Allstate.

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Dear Mr. Carter,

Thank you for sharing your wonderful story, I have gained valuable insight into what life was like for you at East Carolina University. Your story will be placed in the Joyner Library in the East Carolina Manuscript Collections, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, 27858. This transcription will serve as a learning tool for students for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Danele' Willimas

Graduate Student, East Carolina University