

The Journey

from the **Office of Minority Affairs**
of the University of West Georgia

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Black History Month Special Edition Spotlights Education in Carroll County

This special edition of The Journey is devoted to Black History Month. In this issue you will find a relatively brief article by Minority Affairs Programs coordinator Deirdre Rouse about the life of Carter G. Woodson, and three articles devoted to some local history. One is about Mr. Charles Wilson, the first black academic administrator at West Georgia College. Two articles, by local diversity communications consultant Carolyn Gray and educator James Wyatt, provide information on the education of African Americans in Carroll County. Enjoy.

Carter G. Woodson, founder of Black History Month, accomplished author, possessed unending quest to learn

By *Deirdre Rouse*
Minority Affairs Program Coordinator

Often in the course of history there have been individuals who have dared to make bold, innovative, yet sometimes controversial strides for a just cause. Carter Godwin Woodson, often referred to as the "father of Negro history," is one such trendsetter. Born on December 19, 1875 in New Canton, Virginia to former slaves, James and Eliza (Riddle) Woodson, he worked in the coal mines of Kentucky. Although he was not able to enroll in high school until his late teens, he possessed an unending quest to learn. After graduating from high school, Woodson attended Berea College, earning a BL degree in 1903. He later received a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Chicago in 1907 and 1908, respectively. In 1912, Woodson continued to be a trailblazer by becoming only the second black to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University (W. E. B. Dubois was the first) in history. Dr. Woodson, in 1926, started Negro History Week (later Black History Month). He also developed the Journal of

Negro History (1916), and the Negro History Bulletin (1937) used in primary and secondary education. Also being an accomplished author, some of Dr. Woodson's works include, The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861 (1915), The History of the Negro Church (1921), The African Background Outlined (1936), The Negro in Our History (1922). He is probably best known for his book, The Mis-Education of the Negro, published in 1933. This work tackled the issues such as the psychological effects of slavery on blacks as well as the educational system. Many may not know the reasoning behind Dr. Woodson's selection of the month of February as Negro History Week. Dr. Woodson chose February because although the 13th amendment (abolished slavery) to the Constitution was signed in January 1865, numerous slaves were not made aware of this information until February 1865. The contributions, efforts and historical documentation of Dr. Carter G. Woodson still resonate today in telling the story of numerous unsung African American history makers.

Source: www.answers.com/topic/carter-g-woodson

How We Got Over

Reflections On The Quest for Basic Education By African Americans In Carroll County, Georgia Between Emancipation and Integration



*My soul looks back and wonders
How I got over.*

- From 'How I Got Over,' a gospel song by Clara Ward

By Carolyn Gray, President/CEO,
The Carver High Museum & Archives of West
Georgia Inc.

For African Americans living in Carroll County, Georgia during the years between the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation (1863) and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, getting a basic education was a challenging and ongoing self-help quest.

BACKGROUND

Although freed from their bondage as human chattel and the codes that made it a crime to teach them to read and write, Georgia's 400,000 former slaves started their long journey to freedom with little more than the clothes on their back. According to the New Georgia Encyclopedia, 'from the first day of their emancipation, the newly freed people demanded a formal education.'

Schools opened in Georgia by the Freedman's Bureau went from 7,000 students (adults and children) in the first year, to over 20,000 in the second year. Even with the promise of free public education for all of Georgia's children as noted in the new state Constitution of 1877, from the 1890s to the 1960s Georgia's governors and state legislatures regularly made sweeping decisions that enshrined into state law the prejudices and practices of racial oppression characteristic of the old antebellum period.

Immediately following Emancipation, until the Great Migration of 1916-1940 [when 500,000 African Americans left the Southern States], African Americans outnumbered whites in several Southern states and many of the former slaves had more merchantable skills than the average white citizens. So white fears of losing their status to freed blacks would have been a real possibility had it not been for the 1896 Supreme Court decision in Plessy v. Ferguson which made racial segregation the law of the land.

Under the rubric of 'separate-but-equal,' the socio-economic order was set with blacks locked out of mainstream society until Plessy was overturned by the 1954 Brown decision. The near universal acceptance of this cruel and unjust system by white Americans probably had less to do with an irrational prejudice against people with darker skin color than with preserving their status at the top of that socio-economic system. The chances

of African Americans breaking out of their pre-ordained 'place' in this unyielding socio-economic caste system were slim and none. Until the Civil Right Act of 1964, there was no black middle class to speak of. Even the few trained professionals and celebrities were subject to the color bar and were allowed to perform their skills within strict boundaries.

In regard to the free public schools that were promised in Georgia's 1877 Constitution, one would think that the 'separate-but-equal' rule should have applied to school funding. But it did not. According to a paper entitled "Between Plessy and Brown: Georgia's School Finance in 1910," by Susan Williams McElroy Ph. D. and doctoral student Kruti Dholakia of the University of Texas at Dallas, "separate-but-equal was not equal in terms of expenditures for black and white schools in Georgia in 1910." To summarize their findings: "The higher the percent blacks of school-age population in a county, the smaller the percentage of total expenditures on black schools." Apparently the same conditions still existed in Georgia circa 1930. According to the New Georgia Encyclopedia, "Despite spending about \$43 per white student in 1930, Georgia spent only about \$10 on each black student in the state."

Funds to assist with the education of African Americans in the rural south were made available through Northern philanthropic foundations of prominent families such as the Rockefellers, Rosenwalds and Jeanes. Of Georgia's 242 Rosenwald schools built between 1917-1932, two were built in Carroll County: Carroll County Training School and the Springer School in Clem area.

In 1904, Philadelphia Quaker philanthropist Anna T. Jeanes donated \$1 million to hire black teachers as supervisors in African American schools to improve black communities. Mrs. Lillian Price served as Jeanes Supervisor for Carroll County during the 1950s and 1960s. On the adult education front, Professor Cornelius, who taught high school by day, provided vocational and agricultural training to WWII veterans at night. From time to time adult education certificate literacy programs were offered for African American adults.

IMPACT OF THE BROWN DECISIONS

In response to the Brown decision, Georgia Governor Earnest Vandiver, Jr. pronounced the high court's decision 'null and void' in the state of Georgia. In 1956, Senator

Strom Thurmond penned the Southern Manifesto that was revised by Georgia Senator Richard Russell and signed by the entire congressional delegations of Georgia and most of the Southern States. The Manifesto's signatories promised to use 'all lawful means to bring about a reversal of this decision which is contrary to the Constitution and to prevent the use of force in its implementation.' In 1957 the state's education code was changed to include a new law that prohibited public funds from being used on non-segregated schools.

The 'all deliberate speed' clause of Brown II (1955), which ordered public schools desegregated, allowed the states to drag their feet in implementing desegregation. Meanwhile the Civil Rights Movement was heating up and those nightly news broadcasts of Martin Luther King and the Freedom Riders being beaten and jailed made us feel proud and scared. We literally lived at the mercy of the white population. It was not wise to appear to be pulling for freedom. All of us hoped that the Brown decision would be the irreparable crack in the dike that would one day allow the flood of change to sweep away the past restrictions. We prayed a lot as we went about our business as if nothing was happening.

It was not until 1961, when District Court Judge Frank Hooper presented Governor Vandiver with the Hobson choice of integrating the much beloved University of Georgia (along with the rest of the state's public schools) or closing it, did the Governor and the State Legislature cease official resistance to compliance with the Brown decision and withdrew laws that had prohibited school boards from developing plans to integrate their local public schools. (One of the two black students tapped to put the University of Georgia into play was my cousin, Charlayne Hunter.) Even at that rate, it would be the fall of 1965 before desegregation would begin in Carroll County.

THE HISTORIC BLACK SCHOOLS OF CARROLL COUNTY

While the aforementioned activities were unfolding, black Carroll Countians were forced to adopt a self-help and mutual aid survival strategy which gave rise to the further evolution of a separate Afro-American society with its own practices, traditions, and institutions. Black-owned businesses such as beauty and barbershops, corner stores, cafes and social clubs became places of refuge that provided a semblance of protection and forums for freer expression.

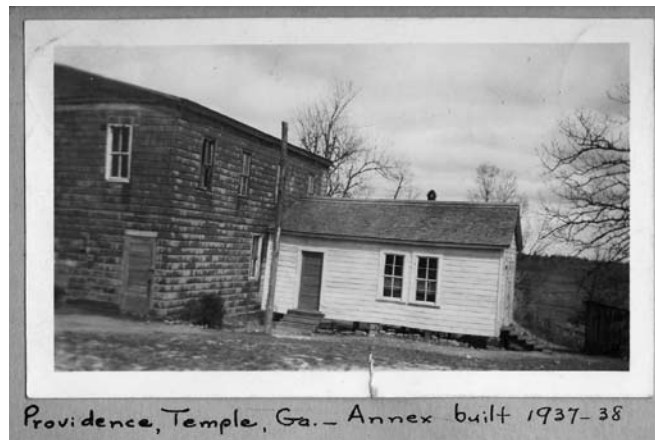
As with the rest of the nation, black society in Carroll County was built on the foundation of the black churches that had been formed by the thousands during and after Reconstruction (1865–1871). In Temple, New Canaan Baptist Church (my family's church) was founded in 1881 by members of a black community that was only one generation out of slavery and barely literate. Yet they joined

with like-minded members of Griffin Chapel Methodist Church next door and members of Prince Hall Masons to build the Corinthian Lodge No. 16 in 1896. Education was at the heart of the master plan for building the Lodge.

PROVIDENCE ELEMENTARY & HIGH SCHOOL, Temple

The Lodge or the 'Old Mason Hall's' two-story design was planned from the beginning to provide space for a school on its ground floor and a meeting space for the Masonic Order on the second floor. The school's name, 'Providence,' was provided by Mr. L. D. Spear, the school's first principal and Temple's first black college-educated teacher. Over the next years, many generations of local black children were provided a basic education up to 8th grade level at the "Old Mason Hall."

After World War II, the school expanded to become Providence Elementary and High School (grades 1-10) and was relocated to surplus military barracks [retrieved from Ft. Oglethorpe] installed on Otis Street near the current site of Temple Elementary School on land donated (?) by Mr. L.C. "Luke" Powell. About this



Providence, Temple, Ga. - Annex built 1937-38



"SCENES FROM PROVIDENCE:
Top (L) The Mason Hall school as it appeared in 1935; (R) The structure as it appears now is registered as a Georgia endangered historic structure and is listed on Georgia's Black Heritage Trail. PHOTO CREDITS: TOP (L) OLD MASON HALL: 1937 is from historian Jack Dorsey's collection. (R) Photo by C. Gray. BOTTOM: Grad Freddie Johnson Jr. at Providence barracks school. Compliments of his nephew, Rev. James Burr.



time, Providence's trustee went on a fundraising mission to build a proper school. However, they were informed by the County Board of Education that private citizens could not own and operate a public school. I am not sure about funding provided by the state or the county to Providence or the other black schools, up to that point.

Thus the Providence barracks property and assets were purchased by the County Board of Education from Providence's Trustees: Mr. Earl C. Luke (father of Dorothy Burton Callaway), Mr. L.C. Powell and Mr. Leonard Gray (my dad). Funds from the sale were disbursed in equal shares to the two churches with a third portion set aside to build a black community center adjacent to New Canaan. The barracks building continued in use as an elementary school until the new brick school was built in 1958.

The black trustees, reporting to the County Superintendent, continued overseeing the operation of the school until Providence was integrated in the late 1960s, at which time the school's name was changed to Temple Elementary School. School records were stored under the control of the County Board of Education. I was told that Providence's trophies and school memorabilia were discarded.

In addition to New Canaan and Griffin Chapel, Providence traces its legacy to Sharp's Creek school near Center Point, Shiloh Baptist Church, and several churches in nearby Haralson County. In 1958 new brick schools were built in Temple, Villa Rica, Bowdon and Carrollton. Regardless of the stated purpose, the new structures added credence to the state's 'separate-but-equal' resistance to the Brown decision. Given the condition of the previous black schools in Carroll County, it strained credulity to think that anyone would try to make an 'equal' comparisons between our barracks school and the white's brick school. Providence's principal from the late 50s until the schools were integrated in the late 1960s, was Mr. Walter S. Strickland.

The Providence story is not entirely unique. Similar stories can be told about all of the county's Historic Black Schools: George Washington Carver High (formerly Carroll County Training School), HUDSON Elementary now Bowdon Elementary, SPRINGVIEW Elementary now Central Elementary, and GLANTON-HINDSMAN now Glanton-Hindsman Elementary but formerly known as Villa Rica Elementary and Villa Rica Colored Elementary and High School.

GLANTON-HINDSMAN ELEMENTARY, Villa Rica

Glanton-Hindsman was named after two of Villa Rica's pioneering black educators: Mrs. Jennie Glanton and Mr. Corrie Hindsman whose careers as educators had spanned from the church schools at Flat Rock Baptist Church (est. 1874) and Mt. Prospect Baptist Church (est. 1887) respectively, to the newly constructed brick school that open in 1958.

Glanton-Hindsman's educational legacy can be traced from the late 1800s through the 1940s, to church schools at Flat Rock, Macedonia, Mr. Prospect, Pleasant Hills, Bright Star (Hulett) and to the Villa Rica Colored Elementary & High School (grades 1-10) on Cleghorn Street which came into being after WWII and used a recycled military barracks as classroom space.

When the county's elementary schools were integrated, Glanton-Hindsman was renamed Villa Rica Primary School. However, in 2004, prompted by County School Board Member Mrs. Bernice

Bailey Brooks, the name was changed back to Glanton-Hindsman Elementary. The school's Principal was: Mr. Y. D. McCleary and it's Trustees were: Rev. C. B. Bailey (father of Bernice Bailey Brooks), Mr. J. C. Brown and Mr. Harry Hindsman.

HUDSON ELEMENTARY, Bowdon

Hudson was named in honor of a former slave, Mr. Fed Hudson, who organized Bowdon's first school for African Americans in 1880 and donated the land for it. Mr. Hudson's original school was located on Highway 100 adjacent to New Hope Methodist Church.

The school's history and its educational legacy can be traced from Mr. Hudson's school to New Hope church school (grade 1-7) and Bowdon Junior High School (grades 7-9) that was constructed on New Hope's grounds in 1943. In 1950 the Junior High merged with Hillside School and became Hudson Elementary. In 1958 when the new brick school opened on Kent Road in Bowdon, it carried the name of Mr. Hudson.

Hudson's Principal was Mr. Asa Chambliss. The Trustees were: Mr. Prather Cooley, Mr. Preston Crowe, Mr. Harvey Morgan, and Mr. Jack Thurman. When the county's elementary schools were integrated, Hudson's name was changed to Bowdon Elementary.

SPRINGVIEW ELEMENTARY, Carrollton

The new brick school that took the name of Springview Elementary opened in 1958 as a consolidated elementary school to serve African American students in unincorporated Carrollton, Whitesburg, Clem and Roopville.

The school traced its educational roots to: Antioch Baptist Church school in Clem, Rose Hill School at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Roopville and Pineview School at Piney Grove Baptist Church in Carrollton.

Upon integration of the county's elementary schools, Springview was renamed Central Elementary. Its records and memorabilia were handled in the same manner as the other black elementary schools. Springview's Principal was Mr. Sandford Holloway. Its Trustees were Mr. Raymond Byrd, Mr. Abner Stallings and Mr. Square Williams.

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER HIGH SCHOOL, Carrollton

Carver High opened in the fall of 1954 as a consolidated high school serving Carroll County's African American students, grades 8 – 12. It's first year enrollment of about 600 high school students remained fairly steady

until the beginning of integration of the county high schools in fall of 1965. The majority of students attending Carver High were from the



rural communities.

Carver High's legacy can be traced back to Carroll County Training School, which was constructed in 1932 with Rosenwald Foundation funds that required the citizens of Carrollton to approve matching funds in the



Yellow Jacket's Football Heroes:
Johnny Brown, Sam Roberts, Willie Crowder.

form of a bond issue. CCTS was the county's first certified high school for blacks and the first school in the county to win state championships.

CCTS/Carver High was the first local school to win a state title. In the 1950s the Yellow Jackets won two state championships and three district titles. From 1953-1956 the Jackets went with one loss and one tie. CCTS was also the alma mater of 1952 Olympics Gold



Olympian Catherine "Cat" Hardy

Medalist, Catherine Hardy whose 4x4 Women's Relay team placed first at the Helsinki, Finland Olympics. Hardy was a 1946 graduate of CCTS.

Beyond CCTS, Carver High's roots in the Carrollton community went back to the first school for black students built in 1913 on Pearl Street, across from First Baptist Church whose name is unknown. Also, Moore's Chapel United Methodist Church, First Baptist, St. Paul and Mt. Zion churches were sites for graduations and special school events. Neighborhood businesses and city merchants provided support, as did the King Street Branch



Library and Book Mobile operated by Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Childs.

Carver High was closed after the spring semester of 1969. It reopened as Alabama Street School with an integrated student body.



Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Childs

Eventually Alabama Street and Westside Elementary schools were absorbed into the Carrollton City Schools complex. In 1993, the main building became home to the Burwell Center, a school for students with behavioral and emotional disabilities. In 2001, the upper level became home to New Horizons, an alternative school serving grades 6-12.

In its 14-year history, Carver High had two principals: Mr. L.



Mr. L. S. Molette

S. Molette served as principal at CCTS (1943 -1954) and became principal of Carver High when it opened in the fall of 1954. He retired in 1967. Mr. Charles Wilson served as principal from 1967 until the school closed in 1969. He and his wife, Mrs. Mattie Hogg Wilson, joined the staff of Carver High in the early 1960s. She served as Librarian and student advisor. He taught health and coached sports teams.

POSTSCRIPTS
Integration Arrived – At Last

In 1965, ten years after the second Brown decision, Carroll County rolled out its integration plan in the form of "School Choice" in which individual students were allowed to register to attend their hometown (formerly all white) high schools or continue attending Carver High.

Putting the onus of integration on the shoulders of individual black students and families had an intimidating effect but probably prevented the violent scenes that had appeared on TV screens elsewhere with mass integration. My youngest sister, Janice, who had attended Carver High only one year, became the first black student to opt out of continuing at Carver High and into attending Temple High. Over the summer of 1965 she, and Phillip, my youngest

brother and my parents succeeded in getting a handful of other black families to agree to allow their high schoolers to sign up to attend Temple High.

It was a rough year for them. But the verbal abuse and harassment eventually subsided. In the spring of 1966, Glenda Ware Washington (owner of Praises Restaurant in Carrollton) became the first black graduate of Temple High. Villa Rica High also had its first black grads in 1966. Not sure about the rest. Over the next few years, Carver High students filtered into the county and city high schools. Carver High graduated its last class in 1968 and closed in the spring of 1969. My brother Phillip graduated from Temple High in 1968, my sister Janice graduated in 1969, and teaches at Temple Middle School. She and her husband, Charles, are the proud parents of an attorney, a journalist and a Dean's List Spellman sophomore.

Dedication Of Carroll County's Historic Black Schools' Commemorative Plaques, 2008

In 2007, I went to a Carroll County School Board meeting and asked them to 'give us back our history' in the form of installing historic markers at the county's schools that had previously been black schools. They agreed. Once the project was underway with the county, Carrollton City school board was contacted and agreed to do the same for

Carver High. Over the next year, I worked with Carver High alumni, teachers and community members to uncover the names of key players and the stories that comprise the educational legacy of African Americans in Carroll County.

The school boards commissioned, approved and paid for bronze plaques in the colors of the schools (see below). In February 2008, dedication programs were held at each of the contemporary schools of Bowdon Elementary, Central Elementary, Glanton-Hindsman Elementary, Temple Elementary, Burwell School and New Horizons as part of a county-wide commemoration of the History and Legacy of Carroll County's Historic Black Schools. Naturally for me, the most touching was the ceremony at Temple Elementary. I nearly lost it when the school's chorus, comprised of a rainbow of ethnicities, sweetly sang the words of "We Shall Overcome." Their singing awakened in me memories of a poor little black sixth-grader who had been so awe-struck and proud of our new brick school when it opened in 1958, that I cried.

The plaques were designed to reflect the uniqueness of each school's story, but also show their common history and very strong links to each. The background reflects the schools' primary colors; the frames reflect the accent colors. Glanton-Hindsman's colors were purple and gold, Hudson's were green and white, Springview's were burgundy and gold, Providence's were royal blue and white, and Carver High's were royal blue and gold.

Headers begin the same: 'This is the former site of (name of historic black school). The text also follows the same pattern "(Current school name) was originally known as (name of historic black school)." Then it goes on to trace the roots of the schools inevitably back to post-slavery churches in the local black communities. Each plaque then lists the other four historic black schools and their common history and links: the elementary schools grads continued their education at Carver High. The plaques list the names of the principals, trustees, and school superintendents contemporaneous with the opening of the black schools in 1958. And lastly, the plaques list the names of the current authorizing school superintendents and boards of education.

Carver High's 50th Anniversary Celebration, 2005

On Labor Day weekend 2005, 400+ alumni, former teachers and friends of Carver High gathered at UWGA and other locations in Carrollton for a three-day celebration of Carver High's 50th Anniversary and Grand Reunion. At the Welcome Reception at the



Old City Gym, UWGA President Dr. Behuruz N. Sethna (who bent over backwards to make our on-campus events successful) offered a heartfelt apology to the class of 1955 whose applications for admission to West Georgia College in 1955 had been summarily rejected due to their race. At the Farewell Reception, Mr. Tom Wilson, Superintendent of

Carrollton City Schools, announced that the School Board had agreed to donate the old Carver High cafeteria to our group to use for The Carver High Museum & Archives - which we hope will have its grand opening over Labor Day weekend 2010. For more information visit us online at carverhighmuseum.com



HISTORIC BLACK SCHOOLS' (1935-38) PHOTOS (below)

The vintage images below and throughout the article, featuring some of Carroll County's black schools, circa 1935-37, and Book Mobile image (page 5) are from the personal collection of Mt. Zion historian Mr. Jack Dorsey and are used with his permission. Line drawing of Carver High School, photos of Mr. L.S. Molette, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Wilson, and 'Yellow Jacket's Football Heroes' (pages 4, 5) are from various Carver High School yearbooks. Image of Catherine Hardy is from the Fort Valley College *Flame* yearbook, 1953(?).

During the mid-1930s, Carroll County had more than 100 one-room schools sponsored by black and white churches, private families and other interested parties. Often the structures used were spare buildings donated by property owners or churches. There were so many small schools because in those days there was no public transportation and few privately owned autos or trucks. Rural people had use of farm wagons and mules, others may have had use of horse and buggies – but mostly the populace, at large, got around on foot. Therefore, schools had to be located within walking distance of families with school-aged children.



**Carroll County Training School
Rosenwald Fund School**



CCTS Trustees Council



Macedonia School



Mt. Prospect, Villa Rica



Pineview, Carrollton



Pinetucky School

REFERENCES

Sources for background information are either captioned within the text or are found in The New Georgia Encyclopedia.com

About the author

Carolyn Gray was born and raised in a sharecropping family in Temple Georgia. She was the Salutatorian and Homecoming Queen of the Carver High graduating Class of 1965. After graduation she moved to southern California, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Mass Communications from

California State University, Fullerton in 1976. She enjoyed a 30+ year career in advertising and marketing communications with ad agencies in southern California and south Florida, serving such clients as Lockheed, Kaiser Permanente, Apple Computer and The Walt Disney Company. She relocated back to Carroll County in 2001 to become caregiver to her mother who has Alzheimer's. She spearheaded the 2005 55th Anniversary Celebration and Grand Reunion of Carver High School, and is leading the development committee for The Carver High Museum and Archives of West Georgia, Inc., scheduled to open Labor Day Weekend 2010.

Carver High School

A Brief History

By James Ira Wyatt

In 1956, a sleepy little community, located on the west side of North Park Street in Carrollton, Georgia (known to its inhabitants as Stick Town) was preparing for a major change. Not only would the change affect the way its children would be educated, but given the history of education for Blacks in Carroll County, the change was also a major life changing experience for African Americans living in Carroll County. You see, a new school for the education of black citizens in Carroll County was being constructed.

Quite frankly, those in the local black community in Carrollton were somewhat perplexed and filled with questions. You see a new school was being constructed but there were many unanswered questions. In our churches, barber shops and beauty salons, among our leaders, our parents, and the community as whole, black people had questions. For well over a year, the local black community had observed that a new comprehensive high school was under construction, essentially right in their back yards. With no town meetings, or phone calls from their local representatives to solicit their opinion, these land owners had no way of expressing their desires. However, those in the African American community began to ask many questions. What's going to happen to the old school (the Carroll County Training School for blacks)? Was building the new school for blacks consistent with the "Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas ruling by the Supreme Court? (i.e., the doctrine of "separate but equal" had been declared unlawful by the U.S. Supreme Court; how could they now build a separate school for blacks)?

Another practical concern was how much more citizens would have to pay in new taxes for the school?

There was also a suspicion among some African American citizens that there was a desire to locate all blacks to the Westside of Carrollton.

In any case, the harsh reality was that even though the Supreme Court had declared the doctrine of separate but equal null and void here in the south, for blacks in Carroll County and other parts of the state, there was continued enforcement of keeping blacks from attending school with whites. It was as if the



James Ira Wyatt, educator and one of 1,200 students attending Carver High School in the '60s, returned to his alma mater to teach history in 1969, the last year that the school was in operation.

white establishment said, "Let's build the Negro a better school and perhaps we can continue to forestall integration."

What I most recall as an eleven year old, was the anticipation of going into the new school with its modern designs. Carroll County Training School (CCTS) was located in Carrollton alongside a cemetery and consisted of three buildings. First, there was an old Army barracks. This was one of many made available by the military at the end of the Second World War.

After requests for barracks were granted, they were moved to locations where schools and others wanted/needed them. In the old barracks building at CCTS, there were three classes for eighth graders.

A second building housed classes for elementary students and a third, horseshoe shaped building had two classes each on opposite sides of the prongs of the horseshoe. An auditorium was in the middle.

Education for African Americans in the county consisted of small, church/community supported schools that only went as far as the 7th grade. These schools were poorly funded. If students and/or their parents wanted more in terms of schooling, they would go to CCTS. For students who completed the 7th grade there would be an elementary school graduation. These graduation ceremonies were held for many years at Moores Chapel Methodist Church and other churches. Graduation ceremonies were well attended by African Americans, which showed the value that blacks placed on their children getting an education.

In any case, I and my fellow "inspectors" kept a constant eye on the progress being made with the new buildings. We marveled at the impressive construction, identified the purpose of each structure and asked a thousand questions. We were amazed with the cafeteria. We wrongly thought it was to be the gymnasium. However, the school was not built on enough land for a gymnasium. It is rumored that the school was originally to be built where the current Carrollton Ingles store resides (this was of course, many years ago), but ended up being built on basically the same location as CCTS.

What I had not given much thought to, because of my preoccupation with the buildings, were the new

students who would now be coming to Carrollton from throughout the county. These students from smaller cities in the county would have many new and different experiences. Many or most had never been to a movie theater or a café and, even though Carrollton was a small city, they thought of it as a big city. However, most gratifying were the new friendships that would be formed. I've often wondered if Brown vs. Board of Education had been enforced immediately within the state of Georgia as it should have been, would the new friendships I formed have been as profound.

Deeply ingrained in my memory is the very first day Carver High School opened. The most fascinating sight for me was to see school buses for the first time. As the buses arrived, the sheer number was surprising. I was mesmerized by the volume of students who would now become a part of my high school experience. Carver High School at this point in time was accepting students starting in the eighth grade as part of the high school experience. For reasons that now elude me, the seventh grade coming from Carroll County Training School was given two classrooms in the new building. As I remember, there was some concern that there would be conflict between the city's and the county's male students, but there were no problems at all. There was more curiosity than animosity.

The curriculum at Carver High was greatly improved from that which existed at the old school. Two occupational labs were added, one in Agriculture

and the other in Industrial Arts. All male students from the city took industrial arts and all males from the county took agriculture. This decision was made by our principal. It was questioned by students and teachers alike.

There was always an interesting relationship between Carver and Carrollton High School. We shared the city football field and city gymnasium, and rooted for each other at our separate games. To a large degree we lived in separate worlds, but there were always these points of intersection.

Upon completion of high school, it was my ambition to one day return and teach history at Carver. I entered college and completed a degree in social studies with an emphasis in history at Ft. Valley State University in 1966. In 1967, the Vietnam War was raging and I entered the U.S Army. Upon being discharged in 1969, I happened to be in an airport in Oakland, California awaiting my flight to Atlanta when I ran into Mr. Charles Wilson. Mr. Wilson was my former high school health teacher but had risen to be principal of Carver. Mr. Wilson happened to be in the airport after attending a workshop related to high schools in Oakland. As luck would have it, we were booked on the same flight. During our flight home, Mr. Wilson informed me that this would be the last year that Carver High School would be in existence (Carver High School was opened in 1954 and closed in 1969). Once Carver High closed

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Office of Minority Affairs

Upcoming Events

❖ **Why I had to go to Africa?**

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

7:00-8:30p.m.

Campus Center Ballroom, 108.4

Presenter: Quencina Gardner-Hyde
Student, University of West Georgia

❖ **Growing Up Mixed in America**

Tuesday, March 24, 2009

7:00-8:30 p.m.

Campus Center Ballroom, 108.1

Presenters: Biracial panel

❖ **Making It Count: A Money Management Workshop for College Students**

(Co-sponsored with UWG Office of Career Services)

Tuesday, April 7, 2009

6:30pm

Campus Center Ballroom, 108.1

Presenter: Al Duncan – Making It Count

❖ **Psychology Lecture**

Thursday, April 16, 2009

7:00-8:30pm

Richards College of Business Lecture Hall

Presenter: Dr. Edward Castaneda (Psychology Chair)
University of Texas-El Paso

For up-to-date information on campus events for Black History Month please go to the Minority Affairs web page at www.westga.edu/minority and click on "Activities and Events."

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there would be no more schools built exclusively for blacks in Carroll County. My meeting with Mr. Wilson, however, was fortuitous. Mr. Wilson opened for me the possibility of employment at Carver High. He said that once I returned to Carrollton, to contact him after a week or so, and if I felt up to it, he needed a history teacher to finish the year. My wish to work with students I loved, in an educational setting I loved, had come true. This only proved, as my mother, my church and my war experiences had taught me, God does answer prayer.

I was a product of an environment where all my life I was educated in segregated schools; elementary, "junior high," high school and college. I did not know

enough about resources given to white and black schools to fully contrast how many more resources white school children had that the black school children did not have. Nevertheless, there was discrimination and this did not help the education of black children. In the end I spent all but one year of my teaching career teaching in integrated schools. However, as I look back on the education I received at Carver and look at what students receive now in integrated schools, I can state unequivocally that the integrated schools in which I have taught had far better physical facilities with far more financial resources from which to draw (and more staff to work with students), than with the one I attended.

Charles Wilson, University of West Georgia's first African American academic administrator

Mr. Charles Wilson, former Director of Developmental Studies and Testing and Affirmative Action, was the first African American academic administrator at the University of West Georgia (then West Georgia College). After an interview with Dr. Tracy Stallings, then Dean of Students at the College, and President James Boyd, Mr. Wilson was hired as a counselor in student services and as an admissions counselor.

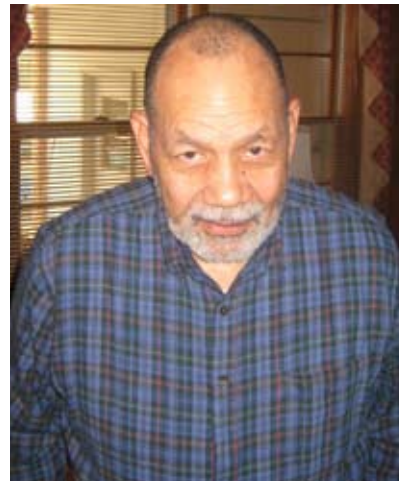
Mr. Wilson has high praise for Dr. Boyd and his wife, Ms. Lillian Williams, the first African American student, was admitted during Dr. Boyd's tenure. Mrs. Boyd was apparently not shy about interacting with African Americans and once held a birthday party for Mr. and Mrs. Wilson's oldest son. Mrs. Boyd was also active in the Georgia Counsel on Human Relations.

Charles Wilson was born in Cordele, GA. However, his family moved to Vienna, GA. He remembered that George Busbee, an individual who would later become governor of Georgia, was his family's paper boy. His family moved to Ft. Valley, GA in 1947. There he completed elementary and high

school. After high school he attended Morehouse College where he graduated with an A.B. degree in Health and Physical Education in 1959. Mr. Wilson later went to Tuskegee University where he obtained his master's degree in Administration and Supervision, Secondary Schools Emphasis, and also completed work towards an ED.D. in Educational Administration at Auburn University.

Mr. Wilson came to Carrollton in 1960 to serve as a teacher in Health and Physical Education and assistant football coach at all black Carver High School. The next year, in addition to his teaching and assistant football coach duties, he became head girls basketball coach. In 1967 Mr. Wilson became principal of Carver. Carver's last graduating class was in 1968 and the school was closed in 1969.

From 1969-1970 Mr. Wilson



Mr. Charles Wilson

served as assistant principal of Carrollton High School. He left Carrollton High School in 1970 to assume his initial duties at West Georgia College. Mr. Wilson became director of Developmental Studies on July 1, 1970. He later became Affirmative Action Officer for the University as well.

Mr. Wilson was still working at Carver High School when Ms. Lillian Williams became the first African American student at West Georgia College in 1963. He stated that Dr. Boyd picked Ms. Williams up from home on more than one occasion to take her to school and it is said that Mr. Carl Sims, an African American maintenance supervisor, helped Ms. Williams in various ways as well once she was on the campus.

When Mr. Wilson began to recruit he was an anomaly in two ways. First, he was a black recruiter

for a traditionally white institution going to black high schools to recruit students. Second, he was a black recruiter for a traditionally white institution going to predominantly white institutions to recruit white (and black) students to come to West Georgia.

Mr. Wilson was successful in recruiting students to come to West Georgia. He stated that when he started going into predominantly black schools, mainly in the Atlanta area, to talk with seniors, they had never heard of West Georgia. At many of the predominantly white schools he visited, his audience was 90-95% white. He stated, "Not only did I have that exposure, but they had exposure to me as a black recruiter and I don't think my involvement hurt the recruitment of white students."

Mr. Wilson stated that when he came to campus he already knew a number of persons at West Georgia, so it was not a difficult transition. He stated that he would have lunch in the student center with people who were already employed here before he came.

When asked about other early African American administrators at West Georgia College, Mr. Wilson remembered Mr. Charles Beasley who was in Continuing Education, Dr. Harry Morgan who became chair of Early Childhood Education in 1985, and Dr. Price Michael, who became chair of Educational Leadership in 1986. Moses J. Holmes became Director of Financial Aid in 1978.

Mr. Wilson is married to Mattie Hogg Wilson. They have two sons.

The Journey

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