Civil Rights and Race Relations at UNCG and Greensboro: An Archival Research Guide

“The movement began Monday when Negro college students began protesting the fact that they can buy all they want standing up in the store but are refused food service when they sit down at the lunch counter. The students maintain they will continue to sit daily at the counter until served.”

Greensboro Daily News, February 5, 1960

OVERVIEW

The Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and University Archives at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) contain a multitude of resources documenting the history of civil rights and race relations on the campus from the 1940s until the present. Firsthand accounts from letters and oral histories provide valuable information about the period. Some of the major topics covered include: the Greensboro Sit-ins of 1960 (also referred to as the Woolworth Sit-ins); the desegregation of Tate Street in 1962/1963; the UNCG Cafeteria Workers’ Strike of 1969; and the Neo-Black Society Protest of 1973. The following resources document the struggle for racial equality at the University by providing a selected list of resources available to researchers about civil rights and race relations.

ARCHIVAL RESOURCES

University Archives Collections

Chancellors Papers: Blackwell, Gordon Williams
University Archives, 1957-1960
UA 2.6

The records of Chancellor Gordon Williams Blackwell (1911-2004) contain several references to the Civil Rights Movement and race relations on the campus. This includes correspondence related to the Greensboro Sit-ins of February 1960 which Chancellor Blackwell called the “Dime-Store Crisis” (Box 19). The records also contain correspondence from Chancellor Blackwell about Ann Dearsley (Box 19) and Genie Seaman (Box 21), two white Woman’s College students (now UNCG) who participated in the Woolworth Sit-ins.

Vice Chancellors Office of Student Affair: Dean of Students Services
University Archives, 1946-1971
UA 27.1

This record group contains letters and petitions from UNCG students to the campus administration about a variety of topics including integration of races, racial equality, racial unrest, and desegregation. Protests at the Corner, a variety store located at the corner of Tate Street and Walker Avenue, are mentioned. (Correspondence-Miscellaneous, 1954-1967) [Mss 6a-4]
Chancellors Papers: Ferguson, James Sharbrough
University Archives, 1965-1979
UA 2.8

These records contain materials related to the UNCG Cafeteria Workers’ Strike of 1969 and the Neo-Black Society Protest of 1973. Included is correspondence from the Student Government Association (SGA), UNCG students, parents, and other organizations to Chancellor Ferguson related to the Cafeteria Workers’ Strike of 1969 (Box 22). The records also contain an extensive amount of correspondence and other materials related to the Neo-Black Society Protests of 1973 (Box 46).

Records of the Student Government Association
University Archives, 1941-1981
UA 42

These records contain correspondence related to race relations at UNCG. Included are letters from students to Student Government Association (SGA) president Carol Furey, in March 1962, suggesting the use of an economic boycott to help force the Cinema Theatre and other Tate Street establishments to desegregate. There is also a letter from a local business man urging the SGA not to become involved with boycotts on Tate Street.

The Carolinian - December 9, 1955
University Archives
(Microfilm Only)

In December 1955, the Woman’s College newspaper, the Carolinian, covered the Student Legislative body’s decision to support the integration of the school for the following year. It also chronicled students’ and faculty members’ reactions to the decision.

Manuscript Collections

Edward F. Burrows Papers 1948-1982
Manuscripts
Mss 091

The Edward F. Burrows (1917-1998) Papers include correspondence, committee minutes, flyers, broadsides, publications, and newspaper clippings relating to his work as a member of many civil rights organizations in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Clarence Lee Harris Papers 1916-1997
Manuscripts
Mss 141

The Clarence “Curly” Lee Harris (1905-1999) Papers include correspondence, clippings, scrapbooks, memorabilia, manuscripts, and printed materials related to his experiences of and opinions about the 1960 Greensboro Sit-ins and his close tracking of civil rights and race-related topics in the United States for the next three decades.
Oral History Interviews

Ann Dearsley-Vernon
May 21, 2007
UNCG Institutional Memory Collection
OH002

This interview was conducted by University Archivist Betty Carter as part of the UNCG Institutional Memory Collection Oral History Project. Ann Dearsley-Vernon was one of several white Woman’s College (now UNCG) female students who participated in the 1960 Woolworth Sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina. Topics include: her early childhood, campus life at UNCG, and the Sit-in Movement.

Eugenia Seaman Marks
June 17, 2007
UNCG Institutional Memory Collection
OH002

This interview was conducted by Assistant University Archivist Hermann Trojanowski as part of the UNCG Institutional Memory Collection Oral History Project. Eugenia Seaman Marks was one of several white Woman’s College (now UNCG) students who participated in the 1960 Woolworth Sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina. Topics include: her early childhood, college life on the Woman’s College campus during the 1960s, her involvement in the Greensboro Sit-ins, and her thoughts on the larger Civil Rights Movement.

JoAnne Smart Drane
June 5, 2008
UNCG Institutional Memory Collection
OH002

This interview was conducted by Assistant University Archivist Hermann Trojanowski as part of the UNCG Institutional Memory Collection Oral History Project. JoAnne Smart Drane was one of the first two African-Americans admitted to Woman’s College (now UNCG) in 1956. Topics include: her early background, her decision to attend college, her experience on the Woman’s College campus, and her life after graduating.

Chancellor James Ferguson
September 24, 1969
UNCG Institutional Memory Collection
OH002

In this oral history, Chancellor James Ferguson gives his own person recollection of the events that occurred on the Woman’s College (now UNCG) campus in the late 1960’s, including the Cafeteria Workers’ Strike of 1969. It is part of a larger collection of “Institutional Memory” interviews.
Claudette Graves Burroughs-White (Class 1961)  
February 25, 1991  
UNCG Centennial Oral History Collection  
OH003

Claudette Graves Burroughs-White primarily discusses her experiences as one of the first African-Americans to attend Woman's College (now UNCG) including: her decision to participate, as part of a class project, in integrating North Carolina colleges; her experience as a day student; and her acceptance and inclusion by students and faculty. She also briefly discusses her participation in the Woolworth’s Sit-ins, traditions at Woman’s College, career choices in children's services, and awards she has received.

Charles Cole (Class of 1969)  
February 5, 1991  
UNCG Centennial Oral History Collection  
OH003

This interview is part of the UNCG Centennial Oral history project. Charles Cole discusses being one of the first male student on campus, living off campus because there were no men’s dormitories, the atmosphere he encountered on campus as a male and a minority student, breaking into the “old girl” network, joining the Black Student Union, and the Cafeteria Workers’ Strike.

Janet Harper Gordon (Class of 1964)  
March 28, 1991  
UNCG Centennial Oral History Collection  
OH003

This interview is part of the UNCG Centennial Oral history project. Janet Gordon discusses attending an all-black high school, choosing Woman’s College (now UNCG) rather than North Carolina Agricultural and Technology State College because she wanted to go into medical technology, taking the entrance exam, the black girls being segregated in Coit Residence Hall, feeling isolated on campus, reactions from white girls to her and other black students, and the social and political events of the 1960s.

Doris McKinney (Faculty 1960-1987)  
November 30, 1989  
UNCG Centennial Oral History Collection  
OH003

This interview is part of the UNCG Centennial Oral history project. Doris McKinney talks about being a minority faculty member, minority students, racism at UNCG in the 1980s, and showing Birth of a Nation on campus.

Robert Miller (Faculty, 1968-present)  
January 23, 1990  
UNCG Centennial Oral History Collection  
OH003

This interview is part of the UNCG Centennial Oral history project. Robert Miller discusses the Woolworth’s Sit-ins, Warren Ashby, and minority issues.
Franklin Parker (Faculty, 1951-1983)
February 21, 1990
UNCG Centennial Oral History Collection
OH003

This interview is part of the UNCG Centennial Oral history project. Franklin Parker discusses students in the 1950s and 1960s, co-education, integration, and Woman’s College (now UNCG) students being “campused” for taking part in the Greensboro Sit-ins.

Carol Bryden Passmore (Class of 1965)
February 2, 1991
UNCG Centennial Oral History Collection
OH003

This interview is part of the UNCG Centennial Oral history project. Carol Passmore talks about black students on campus, the “against-men group,” the first male students on campus, Congress of Racial Equality meetings, Operation Crossroads Africa, Jesse Jackson, sit-ins, and Tate Street.

Astrid Terry (Class of 1988)
May 20, 1991
UNCG Centennial Oral History Collection
OH003

This interview is part of the UNCG Centennial Oral history project. Astrid Terry discusses the Tate Street atmosphere, fraternities and sororities, and race relations on campus.

Edith Wiggins (Class of 1962)
May 8, 1991
UNCG Centennial Oral History Collection
OH003

This interview is part of the UNCG Centennial Oral history project. Edith Wiggins was one of the five black students admitted to Woman’s College (now UNCG) in the Fall of 1958. She discusses the early years of campus integration including living arrangements and general treatment on campus as well as the Woolworth’s Sit-ins.

Video Recordings

“To Be Rather Than to Seem”
1990
Video Cassette 90-2 c.1

This DVD was produced as part of a class project developed by UNCG faculty member Dr. Emily Edwards. It gives an account of the participation of four Woman’s College (now UNCG) students at the 1960 Sit-in at the Woolworth’s lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. The events are detailed through interviews with three former students, voiceovers, WFMY-TV file footage, still photographs, and reenactments of the events. Subjects include Ann Dearsley-Vernon, Joanne Drane, Claudia Burroughs-White, Marilyn Lott, Eugenia Seaman Marks, and Woman’s College Chancellor Gordon Williams Blackwell.
Vertical Files

“African American Students”

This file contains a large amount of information about the history of black students on the UNCG campus. It contains reports, newspaper clippings, memorandums, articles, pamphlets, and correspondence.

“Black Power Forum”

This file contains information about the Black Power Forum that was held on the UNCG campus in November 1967 as a way to discuss racism. It contains newspaper clippings, schedules, and articles.

“Political Activities and Protests”

This file contains material related to political protest. It includes items related to the 1963 The Corner Protest and the Cafeteria Workers’ Strike of 1969. Materials include letters, memorandums, pamphlets, newspaper clippings, and various articles.

“Sit-ins”

This file contains a variety of material related to the Greensboro Sit-ins. It includes newspaper clippings, correspondence, memorandums, articles, reports, and pamphlets.

Articles

“Letters of Intent”
*UNCG Magazine*
Spring 2010

This article, written by JoAnne Smart Drane, is an excerpt from the book she is writing about her experience as one of the first African American students at Woman’s College (now UNCG) in 1956. It contains letters written by various people expressing their support or distain for the integration of black students.

“The WC Three”
*UNCG Magazine*
Summer 2000

This article provides a history of the three white female Woman’s College (now UNCG) students who participated in the Woolworth Sit-ins in February 1960. It also provides a summary of the Greensboro Sit-ins and its continuing legacy.

“Reactivism”
*UNCG Magazine*
Summer 2003

This article, written by staff writer Dan Nonte, discusses the current trend of protest on the UNCG campus. It also follows the history of protests on campus and mentions such events as the Woolworth’s Sit-ins in 1960.
This is an article written by Yvonne Cheek, who was one of ten black women in the 1963 freshman class at Woman’s College (now UNCG). It reflects her time and experience on the campus during the 1960s.

Books


This book provides an extensive history of UNCG from its founding in 1891 through 1994. It covers topics such as the 1960 Woolworth’s Sit-ins and the 1969 Cafeteria Workers’ Strike.

Photographs

The UNCG University Archives does not contain photographs related to the Greensboro Sit-ins or other related racial protests.

For photographs, please contact the *News and Record*, a local Greensboro area newspaper.

Online Exhibits and Resources

Civil Rights Greensboro Digital Project
<http://library.uncg.edu/dp/crg/about.aspx>

The Civil Rights Greensboro Digital Project was developed and produced as a collaborative effort between Guilford College, Greensboro College, Duke University, and UNCG, each of which has provided materials for this online resource. It provides access to archival resources documenting the modern civil rights era in Greensboro, North Carolina, from the 1940s to the early 1980s. The website also contains oral histories held at Greensboro Public Library that were transcribed, digitized, and posted to a website for the Greensboro VOICES project, sponsored by the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro.

Sean Mulligan
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