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OHNR: OH-1999-52 **DOI: 16 June 1999**
TRSID: [redacted] **DTR: 25 October 2011**
QCSID: [redacted] **Text Review: 18 Nov 2011**
INAME: CARR, Iris **Text w/Tape:**
IPLACE: Home of Mrs. Carr, Dallas, Texas
IVIEWER: [redacted]

[redacted] (Today) is 16 June 1999. Ah, [redacted].I am in the home of Mrs. Iris Carr in Dallas, Texas, and Mrs. Carr has graciously consented to talk with us on the Black History Project. Iris was one of the early African Americans in the Agency, having come in about 1950. And so with that, I'm going to get started and ask Iris to tell us about her early schooling and her college years and just her background prior to coming to the Agency. ((Stop and restart.)) Okay, Iris, we talked a little bit about this before ((Mrs. Carr clears her throat)) we turned on the recorder and I find it fascinating. So let's talk about...Your parents were teachers, you said?

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] And, yeah, so let's talk about that.

Carr: Well, my father was the principal of a school; my mother taught in the same school with him. And when I graduated from Prairie View in 1932...

[redacted] And this was in Prairie View, Texas, right?

Carr: Prairie View, Texas.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: I received a Bachelor-of-Science degree and I worked at a small town in Wharton, Texas, for two years. (TR NOTE: This sounds like Wharton, not Horton as reported in the CCH Monograph. Both are valid places but Wharton is more likely correct because of the size of the towns.)

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: Then I moved to Austin, Texas, where I worked...

[redacted] When you worked in the small town, in Wharton, were you teaching, or...?

Carr: Yes, I was teaching school there. I was teaching the third grade until noon time, and then I went across the way to the high school in the evenings and taught math in the high school.

[redacted] And what was your major?

Carr: My major was English and math. I had a double major in college. I had as many hours in English as I had in math.

[redacted] Hmm. Okay. So you were teaching. ((Mrs. Carr clears her throat.))

Carr: So when I left Austin I went to Washington during the war, and the reason I left was because they would not allow us to pay into teacher retirement

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at that time.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And my father was President of the State Teachers' Association and he was working on it, and he finally got it through at the state with the help of a man named Mr. Worley, who was head of…the state leader there, whose office was in Austin. And I had an opportunity to meet him at one time.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And ((Mrs. Carr again clears her throat))…But that was one of the reasons why I left: I was looking toward the future.

[redacted] Hmm.

Carr: Also I wanted to do something to help out in the war.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: I got my first job there with the Recorder of Deeds and ((sound of paper being shuffled or other movement))…

[redacted] When was that, Iris? Do you remember, like a year? Was '44?

Carr: Forty-four. I think I was in the Recorder's office from '44 until 1950.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And I was working with the…After the war, ((snap)) there were schools that came on for the veterans and there was an electronics school that was on U Street.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: And they needed people to teach there and work there. And I graded the math papers and taught business English in this school for radiomen and electricians.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And Larinda Gresham was the principal of that school. And while I was working there I met Bernice Mills and Beulah (B% Giles), and they were working…Bernice was working at the National Security Agency.

[redacted] Right!

Carr: And she said, "You should be working at the Agency where I'm working."

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And I said, "Well, I don't know, I haven't even heard of it." She said, "No, not many people have heard of it but I'll take your application in." She took my application in and shortly after that I was called for an interview.

[redacted] Right. Now, but Iris, you skipped over one thing. While you were still in Texas—and we're going to get to your NSA activity—while you were still in Texas, you said that you would travel to Columbia University in the summers in New York…drive from Texas to New York to take courses at

Columbia, working on your Master's ((degree))?

Carr: Yes. Yes; because in Texas at that time, the highest level of education you could get was a BS degree or a BA degree. For...Because there were no other provisions for...for us.

[redacted] Um hmm. There were no...

Carr: For minorities. No other provision for you. And you could not go to the University of Texas. We could not go to any of the other colleges, any that were basically white. So the State of Texas would pay your transportation to go to another school because you were required to go to school every three years, but I went every year because I wanted to get another degree. ((Ms [redacted] utters agreement.)) But when we would go to...See, we'd just get to go in the summer because we had to work...

[redacted] Right!

Carr: In the fall.

[redacted] Right, hmm. So, you were working on that degree but then you made the decision to leave teaching because of the retirement system...

Carr: Because...Yeah.

[redacted] Problem.

Carr: Because of that and because...

[redacted] You wanted...

Carr: I could not pay into teacher retirement, there was...I knew...I could just see myself a little old lady with no income and not able to work, you know, when I got to be sixty or seventy years old, that's what I had envisioned.

[redacted] But you...

Carr: And I said I better get somewhere where I can get a retirement benefit.

[redacted] You were so smart ((Mrs. Carr chuckles)) to think about that at an early...you know, early in your career!

Carr: Well, during the time that I was in Austin they...They made me supervisor of some of the schools there in the county, and they really hated to see me go. And my daddy said, "I wish you wouldn't go, baby. Your people need you."

[redacted] Umm. ((Drawn out.))

Carr: And I said, "Well, daddy, I've got to feather my nest."

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: "It's time for me to feather my nest." My husband was in the Army.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And he wasn't there.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: So I said, "I need to be doing something to help him and help myself."

[redacted] And you…And you felt strongly about helping the country during the war.

Carr: Oh, of course I did. When I walked into the Agency, and my supervisor was so inefficient, I was shocked. Really! And, well, my sister got a job there, too, and she was at the Pentagon, and she couldn't take it. She just couldn't take it because her supervisor was what she called ignorant…(B% what) she was… ((Mrs. Carr is laughing.)) You know, she…Her language was not anything like what it should have been.

[redacted] You had a vi…You had a vision of people in Washington being professionals. Ah…

Carr: That's right.

[redacted] Educated, a certain caliber of people.

Carr: ((Speaking at same time.)) At least know how to write a letter or how to talk to someone and all. You know how my supervisor greeted me?

[redacted] No.

Carr: He said, "Well, looky here, I got a college graduate working for me."

[redacted] Oh.

Carr: "Come on; let me see how you look with your hands dirty. I will give you a job so you can get your hands dirty." And he put me on some kind of ink-stamping machine. And he says, "Oh, you don't mind that?" I said, "I think I know how to get them clean if they get dirty."

[redacted] Iris, this is fascinating. So Bernice Mills took your application in and you were called…Were you called for an interview?

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] Did you have to take any kind of written test or anything?

Carr: Not at that time.

[redacted] Okay. So you went for an interview. and after the interview did you get a letter saying they were…they hired you, or what?

Carr: I got a letter saying that they…that…it…my application had been accepted, but I would have to go through a period of clearance.

[redacted] Right! Okay.

Carr: And that they would have me working at another place…

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: Until the clearance period was over.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And Mr. [redacted] was my supervisor when I was…

[redacted] In the interim clearance status? [redacted] was you supervisor.

Carr: He was my supervisor.

[redacted] Were you at the school or…?

Carr: I was…No. I was at a building on Arlington Hall Station.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And that was when they gave us all these tests.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: We took all kinds of tests. And I don't know what would have happened if I hadn't passed the tests, but they were very easy to me: they were all mathematically based.

[redacted] And you had math as a major.

Carr: Yes, and I had math at my fingertips at that time. I…I'd probably fail all those tests now.

[redacted] ((Laughing.)) That's okay. You don't have to take them now. ((Mrs. Carr is laughing.)) That's alright. So, Iris, here comes somebody. Oh, is that the mailman?

Carr: It may be.

[redacted] Okay. Yeah, that's the mail man. So, Iris, you took the test and you stayed at the training…or stayed at this building while your clearance was being processed.

Carr: Being processed.

[redacted] What did you do? Did you…Other than take courses, did they have you doing any work?

Carr: We were compiling a Russian dictionary at the time.

[redacted] There you go. Um hmm!

Carr: And we worked on that, and [redacted] had everything (B% outlined). He had enough material to keep us busy all the time. And he was…He was a real good supervisor, he really was.

[redacted] Uh huh. Uh huh. ((Paper shuffling.)) Okay, so then you got your clearance. Now we're going to bet back to the man who said, "Looky here, I have a college graduate, working for me."

Carr: That's what he said. (2B)

[redacted] Do you remember who that was, and do you remember the designator or what organization, or anything like that?

Carr: I can't remember. I was trying to remember. Now, I'd…If you hadn't said that I might have been able to recall his name, but…

[redacted] You may…It may come to you.

Carr: Alright!

[redacted] It may come to you. So, this person…This was a White person, I presume.

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Carr: No.

[redacted] He was Black.

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] Okay. So…

Carr: Yes, and I felt sorry for him.

[redacted] And he didn't have…He wasn't educated?

Carr: I don't know how much education he had, but he wasn't…

[redacted] He didn't have a college degree.

Carr: Intelligent. ((Laughs.))

[redacted] Regardless of whether he was educated, he wasn't intelligent.

Carr: No.

[redacted] Who else worked in this organization?

Carr: Ah, Mr. Tancil worked in the same area with him, and he was having problems with his report, and I asked him if I could do the report for him.

[redacted] This was Jeff Tancil was having problems?

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: He said he'd never been able to get his report in on time and it bothered him. I said, "Well, let me help you with your report." So I stayed on my lunch hour and off time, you know, and for the first month that I was there, he got his report in on time. And he was…He said, "Well, we have never done that before." So he recommended to the chief of the office, who was then…I believe it was Captain Johnston…

[redacted] Jenkins John…No, not Jenkins Johnson.

Carr: Johnston…Captain Johnston, with, ah…

[redacted] Captain Johnston.

Carr: J-o-h-n-s-t-o-n ((spelled)).

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And he said that he would like for me to be a statistical clerk in his department and then I could quit working on the tapes and the other material that they worked in that prop…place where I was at that time. So they moved me from this first place that I went to Mr. Tancil's place.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: Then…And ((verbal pause)) Beulah Giles and I worked all the reports because we could operate the adding machine and, well, the machines that they had at the time. And I think I got a promotion on…to statistical clerk.

[redacted] Yes! I think you did.

Carr: From the communications clerk, I think I went to a statistical clerk. ([redacted] talking at the same time.))

[redacted] Yes…became a GS-4 statistical clerk.

Carr: Yeah, GS-4. Isn't that something!

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And all this time I should have been a GS-7. But my…Mr. Tancil was just a seven.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And he was…And they felt that was terrific that he was a seven.

[redacted] ((Interrupting at first.)) Now, you worked for Jeff Tancil, and how big a organization did Jeff Tancil have? And who else was working for Jeff Tancil?

Carr: Miss Hansboro. And ((pause))…

[redacted] And was Beulah Giles?

Carr: Beulah Giles. I can't think of this man's name.

[redacted] Miss (B% Hansberry)?

Carr: Miss Hansboro, b-o-r-o.

[redacted] Okay. Was Jim Pride in there at that time, or…?

Carr: No.

[redacted] Dave Bryant?

Carr: I think he was in the mailroom. I think he was in the mailroom.

[redacted] Um hmm. Was Jim…Dave Bryant in there at that time? Dave Bryant?

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] In the same…?

Carr: But he…He worked…Mr. Tancil had part of this unit, and Mr [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]?

Carr: [redacted] was his counterpart. And I think Dave Bryant worked out there with [redacted] See, some of these people worked out there with [redacted] like Dorothea Smith and…

[redacted] Okay. I'm just trying to get the organization pictured in my mind.

Carr: Um hmm. Well, he had a big room…a bigger room.

[redacted] Jeff Tancil did?

Carr: No.

[redacted] Oh, [redacted]

Carr: [redacted] He had a bigger and then you passed through his

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room into a hall and then you get to a smaller area, and that was Jim…ah, Mr. Tancil's, um…

[redacted] Area where…

Carr: Territory.

[redacted] Okay. So he had a smaller area.

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] But I'm trying to figure out…Now, this first place that you worked, you said it was a ink stamping or…?

Carr: Yeah.

[redacted] What did you do?

Carr: Yeah, I had to stamp things with ink. ((Sound like stamping.)) I stamped papers that had been reviewed.

[redacted] Uh huh.

Carr: And they were finished or something and you had to stamp them. ((Stamping sound.)) And you had to wear an apron and work with that all day.

[redacted] How many people did that, Iris? Was it…?

Carr: Oh, yeah. There were several of us doing it. But every time a new person came in they got it and somebody else was relieved.

[redacted] And then…((Both talking at once.))

Carr: And they'd been on it…It was a job that they didn't like. You know, it...Well, because it soiled your hands and your clothing…

[redacted] Right.

Carr: They tried not to keep them on there too long.

[redacted] So you would move into another area just like you did. ((Mrs. Carr agrees.)) You moved to work with Jeff Tancil.

Carr: But I volunteered to do that work for him even though I didn't know that I was going to be moved at the time. I didn't know that.

[redacted] Right. Right. I got you. Okay. So Jeff Tancil, [redacted] they were like co-bosses.

Carr: Yes. They were…They…

[redacted] They were peers.

Carr: Well, they had to provide the same types of reports to the head person.

[redacted] Um hmm. Okay.

Carr: I was trying to think of the lieutenant's name that was head of it when I got there.

[redacted] Now, the names that I've heard, let me see if you can help you. Truax?

Carr: Truax.

[redacted] That was it?

Carr: That's it.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] And he was…?

Carr: He was over both sections.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: Both sections of what came to be known as the "snake pit."

[redacted] And it was called that because ((paper shuffling))…?

Carr: There were no…There were no Caucasians employed in that area. ((Acknowledgments.)) Only the boss.

[redacted] And what was the designator? Do you remember? Was it 213? Or…

Carr: Two thirteen.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: How'd you know that?

[redacted] I've been doing a lot of research, and so if I can help you… ((Click.))

Carr: Yeah, because, I'll tell you, it's been a long time.

[redacted] I know, I know.

Carr: A long ((stressed)) time.

[redacted] I know. So the employees themselves called it "The Snake Pit."

Carr: Yeah. They called it "The Snake Pit." Everybody knew what the "snake pit" was all over the Agency.

[redacted] So white…Caucasians...

Carr: Yeah, they knew. Yeah, they knew!

[redacted] Knew that's what it was called?

Carr: Sure!

[redacted] Did you hear them refer to it as that?

Carr: No, I…I never did.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: I couldn't swear that I did.

[redacted] Uh huh. But they knew it?

Carr: Of course. Of course. It wasn't any problem. ((Fades out)).

[redacted] Was it…Did you have to stand to do the work? Was it…Were the working conditions…What were the working conditions like?

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Carr: The working conditions?

[redacted] Was it uncomfortable?

Carr: They were not too uncomfortable. No. And we went outside. They had trees. There was a beautiful lawn and all and we'd go outside to eat our lunches. And most of the time we brought lunch from home.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And we'd go outside and eat, sit under the trees and have a little recreation and eat and all. And I rather enjoyed it. It wasn't…It was not as hot there as it was in the city.

[redacted] Um hmm. Even though you didn't have air conditioning, it wasn't as…

Carr: That's right.

[redacted] As miserable?

Carr: It was…It was not nearly as warm as it was in the city when you got over there. And you sort of got used to the heat.

[redacted] Coming from Texas, was the heat and humidity worse in Washington for you than here in Texas?

Carr: Not really. No.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: No. I didn't find it too different, and I still don't. Whatever clothing I wear in Washington and at a certain time of the year I can wear it here.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And when I…Since I've been back I found that to be true. It's not too much difference.

[redacted] Iris, was Jeff Tancil…Did he have a degree, or [redacted] do you know?

Carr: I don't know. I…((paper shuffling))…I think Mr. [redacted] may have, but I don't think Tancil did. ((Paper being crinkled.))

[redacted] ((Multiple acknowledgments.)) Okay. ((Throat clearing.)) Do you want to take a break and get some water? Or can I get you something? Let's take a break.

Carr: No, every once in a while. ((Stop and restart.))

[redacted] We were talking about ((throat clearing))…ah, I forget. ((Chuckle.)) We were talking about AFSA-213 being called "The Snake Pit," because that's where all the Blacks were assigned and worked. Was it boring, Iris? Was the work boring in AFSA-213?

Carr: It was, um…It was…

[redacted] Can you describe it?

Carr: Yes, it…It was rather…I would consider it, because it's the same thing

every day. ((Clears throat.)) But it was interesting in a way because if you knew what you were doing and knew what you were looking for, it made it more interesting. And I couldn't rest until I found out what we were doing and why we were doing it. And anything that would lead...that had any information that would tell you what kind of weapons or what kind of security or anything that another country had was important.

[redacted] Right.

Carr: And where it was located or...And you could get...You could pick it up from the bits of information that we'd get on different tapes and all. If you were able to put it together, then you would have an idea of what was going on.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And if something was completely irrelevant you would know it right away. You see, you learned to read a little Russian and you learned how to do a lot of things if you really put your mind to it. In the short time that I was in there I wasn't satisfied. I got me a Russian-English dictionary and everything to make sure I didn't throw away something that was important and all. And then I tried to explain that to people that were working. They said, "Why are you so..."

[redacted] Diligent?

Carr: "Diligent about this?" and (B% say)...Well, they used...Nothing...I said, "I have to be sure, and we have to be sure," you know, "that we're (B% giving/given) all the information that we possibly can from this," because I know why they gave it to us, because they would rob garbage cans and everything, and this stuff was nasty sometimes and all, but...But if it was worthwhile, I'm going to give it my best, you know.

[redacted] Now, explain this. Now, you were...You went from a statistical clerk and then you became a comms clerk, and that's where you...

Carr: Communications clerk.

[redacted] Communications clerk. ((Carr clears throat.)) And so you were looking at tapes...

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] And it would be plaintext, and it would be in Cyrillic, it would be in Russian.

Carr: Um hmm. Um hmm.

[redacted] And it was perforated tapes with holes?

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] Did you...Were you in the group that would run the tapes through a machine and it would come out hardcopy?

Carr: No way!

[redacted] No! You weren't in that.

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Carr: No.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: That hadn't…That didn't come about until we moved to Fort Meade…after we moved…a long time after we moved to Fort Meade.

[redacted] Okay. So you would look at these tapes; you would scan the tapes…

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] And you were given key words that you were to look for, or addresses or something?

Carr: Yes, yes.

[redacted] And so you would do that.

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] And some of the tapes, you said, were dirty?

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] I mean, they would…

Carr: They had come out of garbage cans.

[redacted] They would come out of garbage cans.

Carr: ((Clearing throat.)) Um hmm.

[redacted] Um hmm. And some of them…When they…The tapes that came out of garbage cans, were they delivered to you in a pouch or something like that?

Carr: In…Yes, in gar…In bags, in black bags. Yes.

[redacted] In black bags.

Carr: Um hmm. Um hmm.

[redacted] But some of the tapes weren't dirty? They were…

Carr: No, some of them weren't. No. That's right.

[redacted] So…

Carr: Some of them were not, so, ah…

[redacted] Um hmm. Um hmm.

Carr: But…But that was why they called it "The Snake Pit," I guess. ((Laughs.))

[redacted] So after you…Now, after you looked at…through these tapes and you decided, well, this tape needs to be processed or delivered to an analyst, or something, what happened to the tape? You would roll it up?

Carr: The tape was…No…Yeah, the tape was destroyed. You'd take the information off by hand.

[redacted] Oh! ((Drawn out.))

Carr: And then the tapes were destroyed. ((Clears throat.))

[redacted] You would…

Carr: We had…Yeah, we had this trash, and our trash was classified. You know, we had classified…they still have classified trash-bags and all.

[redacted] Yes. Right! Um hmm.

Carr: So the tapes then go to the classified trash and they are shredded and destroyed.

[redacted] You would copy all of the information that was on the tape by hand?

Carr: On the…On the ones that you have, yes, on…on what you're given…your assignment.

[redacted] Right.

Carr: You have to get your assignment on what you picked up…

[redacted] Right.

Carr: Is written out.

[redacted] So you wrote it out in English?

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] So the tapes…Were the tapes in English or in Russian?

Carr: No, they're in Russian.

[redacted] So how did you translate?

Carr: Well, you…you…You have a…I had a dictionary. But we had had a course, you know, in Russian.

[redacted] Okay, okay.

Carr: You're supposed to have a course in Russian so you'd know exactly what you're doing, um, you know. And we had words. They…Where they give you a list of things to look for, they have the English word underneath the Russian words…

[redacted] Oh, I see.

Carr: On the…On the paper that you're given to copy from to pick out your words.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: You have a list up here of things to look for…words to look for, and then you have the word right underneath it…

[redacted] The English…

Carr: In English.

[redacted] Right.

Carr: So it's…So that's how you know.

[redacted] So that's how you knew.

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] And if you came across a word on the tape…Because the tape would have, like, holes and then the Russian characters above the holes, is that the way it looked?

Carr: ((Clears throat.)) It just looked like a tape…

[redacted] Oh, I see!

Carr: A plain, flat tape ((thumping on table)) with Russian writing on it.

[redacted] Oh, I see. It didn't have any holes.

Carr: No holes.

[redacted] Okay. Alright! So, suppose you came across a Russian word that you didn't have the English equivalent for.

Carr: Then you…Then you pull that and save it and asked…tell the instructor, this word…"I don't know what this word means."

[redacted] I see.

Carr: "It's not on the list."

[redacted] I see. Okay. Were there a lot of people doing this?

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] Would you say?

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] Forty, fifty people?

Carr: Yes. Yes. Yeah, you pull that word, and I only had my dictionary there, so I would look in the dictionary to see if the word was in there; most of the time it was.

[redacted] Iris, did you know [redacted]

Carr: Yes. And Norma Coffee, um hmm.

[redacted] Now, ((Carr clears throat)) do you happen to know where [redacted] was working at this time?

Carr: No, I don't.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: He and…He and Mr. Brooks were working someplace else. They were… ((Blocked by Ms [redacted]))

[redacted] Oh, he and Mr. Brooks. Do you think they were…

Carr: ((Talking at same time.)) Mr. Brooks was…

[redacted] Working together someplace?

Carr: Yes, I think so. I don't know.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: But, um…

[redacted] Okay. What was his name? Was it Tom Brooks?

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] Okay. I remember him very, very well.

Carr: Really?

[redacted] I remember [redacted] too. Okay.

Carr: I think he worked in B Group, didn't he?

[redacted] Who?

Carr: [redacted]

[redacted] No, he was in A. He was in A Group.

Carr: Was it A Group?

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: A Group.

[redacted] Um hmm. Um hmm.

Carr: And we were in what was then C Group.

[redacted] Okay. Alright.

Carr: C Group.

[redacted] Okay. Ah…Okay, that explains that process. And do you know if the cafeteria…Was the cafeteria integrated? I mean, you could eat any…You could sit anywhere in the cafeteria at Arlington Hall if you chose to go there.

Carr: ((Clears throat.)) I really don't remember that we had a cafeteria at Arlington Hall.

[redacted] Okay. Um hmm.

Carr: 'Cause I remember taking my lunch.

[redacted] Um hmm. Iris, ((microphone bump)) did you become aware at any time that a person with your educational background—and I see the certificates where you did well on the entry examinations in cryptology—and your experience teaching and so forth, that you were hired at maybe a low grade and…to do something that was beneath your capabilities? Were…Did you become aware of that while you were at Arlington Hall?

Carr: Of course I did.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: Of course I did. But I said, ((clears throat)) "They need somebody to go up the ladder." ((Acknowledgment.)) And the job that I was on then with the electrical engineering school was paying me more than the salary that I was going to get to get into government.

[redacted] Is that right?

Carr: But it didn't have the fringe benefits and all of the other things that I wanted for my future.

[redacted] Right.

Carr: And that's why I decided to go out there. And I said, "I can take my chances, because I'm pretty sure that if there is any upward mobility, I would be included. Um hmm.

[redacted] ((Interrupting)) You will make it. That's right. Okay. And you believe Jim Pryde was working in the mail room?

Carr: I think, yes. He was working in the mail room, and he…He was…He had no business, really, there, because he's fantastic. He has a perfect memory. He can look at this and tell you verbatim what's on that page. He has a…what they call a photographic memory.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And ((clears throat))…and anything they told him to do, he could do it. They began to realize that, though, in the later years.

[redacted] Right. Right. Okay…

Carr: But just think of all the loss to the Agency in those years before, you know, what I'm talking about. ((Spoken very weakly.))

[redacted] Yeah. And also, there were others who were very capable as well and didn't…

Carr: They could have made a greater contribution…

[redacted] Exactly. ((Interrupting.))

Carr: In other places and I know they would have.

[redacted] Exactly. And didn't…

Carr: Would have.

[redacted] Get the opportunities. Iris, what was it like…Now, you said the working conditions…The room wasn't overbearingly hot where you were.

Carr: No.

[redacted] No, it wasn't bad.

Carr: ((Clears throat.)) No, it wasn't bad.

[redacted] And you were married at the time.

Carr: Oh, I've been married all my life, looks like. ((Ms [redacted] laughs.))

[redacted] And your husband was in the Army.

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] Now, did he come back and join you in Washington?

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] Okay. And then where did you live when you were working at Arlington

Hall in the early years?

Carr: I lived at [redacted]

[redacted] And how did you get to…?

Carr: I drove.

[redacted] You drove. You had a car.

Carr: I had a car. I drove to Washington when I left here.

[redacted] Right. You were… ((Ms Carr laughs.)) You were quite an independent woman.

Carr: I drove by myself.

[redacted] Isn't that something! ((Carr clears throat.)) You were just a very strong person. Of course, Washington was segregated, but that wasn't new to you because you lived in Texas.

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] And, so what did you…? And you made friends in AFSA-213, 'cause I've seen [redacted] pictures. There was a lot of socializing going on.

Carr: ((Laughs.)) Oh, well, you see all the…Most of the people that I worked with were younger than I was. So…

[redacted] I see. Okay!

Carr: And I felt an obligation to be as good as I could be to help them be good, you know.

[redacted] Um hmm. Um hmm. So when it was…There were discussions about the Agency moving, were you there when it was contemplated that we would move to Fort Knox? Do you remember that?

Carr: Yes. I remember that.

[redacted] What did you think about that? ((Carr clears throat.)) Would you have gone?

Carr: Yes, I would have gone.

[redacted] You are one of the few that would have.

Carr: Yes. I would have, because I intended to end my career there. I was tired of jumping around from…And I intended to stay with it because I had…I don't know, I was just so involved in what the Agency was doing and what it stood for, and I wanted it to be better. I really wanted it to be better, and I had a feeling that it was going to get better and that things were going to get better, you know, because everybody in there was not evil. And I happened to have been…have known some people in authority who were right minded, I thought, that I could talk to and that I could tell them things and that they would see to it getting straightened out. And, ah, in Personnel, there was Mr. [redacted] And when I would go to him he'd say…I'd say, "Well, let me see the (1G)." "You're not

supposed to." I said, "Why can't I see the files?" And I said, "I'm telling you that this person is entitled to a promotion at this time." And I said, "When the person was hired they put in her file that she was overqualified for the job, and now she can't get a promotion." And Mr. [redacted] let me see the file. I said, "You're not going to get into any trouble letting me see the files of..." He says, "You know, I really want to let you see the file." I said, "Well, it's okay."

[redacted] You know, Iris, what you have is a real display of faith and loyalty in the Agency. I mean, that's ((Carr clears throat)) very clear. Even though you came to the Agency during the period of segregation in the country, did you feel when you came that...that African Americans would break out of this...At some point early in your career you believed that African Americans would break out of this box and be able to go into reporting or Personnel or other areas?

Carr: If they were prepared. Yes. And I...

[redacted] If they were prepared.

Carr: And I preached, "Be prepared! Be prepared!"

[redacted] Because you believed it would happen?

Carr: Because I believed it would happen. And that's why I encouraged them to go back to school. Mrs. Alleyne...Alice Alleyne...

[redacted] Alice Alleyne, yes.

Carr: ((Clears throat.)) Was working with me, and I encouraged her to go get another degree. She got another degree and eventually, when they...When it came time that we had to separate, she said, "What am I going to do?" I said, "You're going to the Cryptologic School." I said, "That's the place you need to go with all the information you have." And so she...She told me not long ago, she said, "I'm so glad you sent me to the Cryptologic School." And that's where she retired, from the Cryptologic School.

[redacted] And she retired as a fourteen, I think.

Carr: Yes, she did. And so did Ms [redacted]

[redacted] And you're so proud of her, aren't you?

Carr: Oh, of course. I'm...Of course, but...

[redacted] Yeah, I can see it.

Carr: And I was so happy for them because they were talented; they could do the work. They were better than their counterparts, and I know...They had to be, though; but I wanted them to be, and I gave them...Oh, I tell you. But Mrs. Alleyne went to school and got her degree...

[redacted] She was...

Carr: After...while she was working...her advanced degree while she was working at the Agency.

[redacted] Now, Iris, how was morale? You were saying the work was boring but you made it less boring for yourself because you were interested in what the words meant; what was being...what was significant; what was being conveyed. You did research to make that job more interesting.

Carr: Yes, I did. I wanted to put something together so I could come up with something that they...They've got 200...I saw a shipment...shipment of so many tanks and where it was going and so on, and I was just reaching for a tape that's going to help me finish that, you know, if I could just, you know, find that. That's...

[redacted] So you put the story together?

Carr: I tried to, yes. I was trying to...

[redacted] Tried to put the story together.

Carr: Yeah, I was trying to put it together, because that's what they're going to do with the words we give them.

[redacted] That's right.

Carr: You know...

[redacted] That's right.

Carr: In the next section they're going to put it together. I wanted to put it together, too.

[redacted] That's right!

Carr: So I'm knowing what to do. So...

[redacted] That's right. And you...You tried to encourage your coworkers to...

Carr: To do the same.

[redacted] To do the same.

Carr: Yeah. ((Laughs.))

[redacted] Were you successful?

Carr: Well, some of them did, but that would keep it from being so monotonous and...

[redacted] Who were some of the ones that took your advice and made it less monotonous for themselves?

Carr: Oh, I don't know. I don't know. I can't remember...

[redacted] Billy Jones?

Carr: All those people.

[redacted] Billy Jones?

Carr: I don't think he was working in there with me.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: I think I had left there then.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: I don't know. There were so many.

[redacted] So many!

Carr: ((Acknowledgment.))

[redacted] If you can think of any of the names that worked in that section with you, I wish you could.

Carr: I wish I could, too. I…

[redacted] ((Chuckles.)) Think about it.

Carr: Oh, I will.

[redacted] Think about it. ((Glatter.)) Okay, then, we decided not to go to Fort Knox and then we decided we were going to go to Fort Meade.

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] Well, obviously you were committed to the Agency…

Carr: Oh, yes.

[redacted] So it didn't bother you that you were coming to Fort Meade.

Carr: No. No, I was going.

[redacted] You were going wherever we were going.

Carr: That's right!

[redacted] Did you ever think about moving out to Maryland?

Carr: No!

[redacted] No.

Carr: Huh uh.

[redacted] Why was that?

Carr: I had bought a house in Washington.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: And it was just as easy for me to drive there as it would be to start looking for another house in Maryland.

[redacted] Okay. Okay. Do you remember [redacted]

Carr: Yes. Yes, I do.

[redacted] Okay. Do you know anything about his background? He was in Personnel, as well.

Carr: Yeah. ((Clears throat.)) No, I don't, you know.

[redacted] Okay. That's okay.

Carr: He wasn't as outspoken as he should have been, that's all I remember but…

[redacted] Is that right?

Carr: If...I thought maybe he might have had an opportunity to help people a little bit more, but I wasn't afraid of losing my job.

[redacted] Um hmm. Um hmm. When did you leave this tape processing area? Did you go right into personnel after that? Ah, let's see, November, '53 you were promoted to Personnel Assistant in NSA-63 where you were Advisor to the Chief. And then in 1954 you moved from the division level to the office level.

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] We're still at Arlington Hall...

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] Because that was before we moved.

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: And that's where I worked with Mr. Kirby.

[redacted] Oh, at the office level.

Carr: Office level. ((Clears throat.)) I worked with him.

[redacted] So how was...how was...You were not assigned to Personnel, the Personnel...at the key component Personnel.

Carr: I wasn't work...No, not to the Office of Personnel, but all the...The Personnel in 63...

[redacted] I understand.

Carr: In the division.

[redacted] I understand.

Carr: Sixty-three.

[redacted] I understand.

Carr: And this is before Mr. Kirby became an assistant director.

[redacted] Right.

Carr: He was just chief of a unit.

[redacted] Right.

Carr: And I worked...

[redacted] How was he to work for?

Carr: Worked there with him. Wonderful! Wonderful!

[redacted] Oliver Kirby.

Carr: Yes, he was. He was very good to work for.

[redacted] And could you bring issues...Did you bring issues affecting African Americans to his attention?

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Carr: Yes, I did.

[redacted] And he would listen and take action?

Carr: Yes, he would.

[redacted] Um hmm. When did you come in contact with Dr. Tordella?

Carr: Dr. Tordella succeeded him. When he was moved…When he left that:

[redacted] Sixty?

Carr: Sixty-three, Dr. Tordella was assigned chief of that unit.

[redacted] And you continued to support that chief.

Carr: And I…I worked for Dr. Tordella in the same…

[redacted] Capacity?

Carr: Position.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: And, you see when the mail would come in—I wish I could do this for myself—but the mail would come in and would be so heavy, and they're all…And I would come in on weekends when I should…when I was off, and I would draft answers to all of the letters and put them on his desk. And invariably they would…(1-2G) came I started doing that for Mr. Kirby. I continued to do that for Dr. Tordella, because I could…

[redacted] So you would…

Carr: I knew them so well I could predict what they were going to say and how they were going to say it, and I would draft a letter to answer them to try to get the mail caught up. And then when they came in, all the secretary would do would be type them, and I would proofread them and put them in there for his signature, and that would help get the load out of the office.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: But I worked right outside his front office and, (B% I don't know,) we got along just fine.

[redacted] You thought highly of him?

Carr: Well, yes. Well, it seemed to…They knew that I could be trusted. That's one thing they found out, you know. And if I ever recommended anybody for anything, I was very sure that that was in that person's reach; you know, the person could do that. And whenever they would ask me about something, I would… ((Tape stops and restarts.))

[redacted] Iris, we…I want you to repeat. You were saying that Dr. Tordella and Oliver Kirby had confidence in you ((microphone noise here)) because whenever you recommended someone for a task or a job, you were sure that it was within their reach. ((More noise.))

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] And you also said that…that they could trust you and that you did not call

"wolf" when there was nothing to call "wolf" about.

Carr: That's right! Some people are always griping, you know, always. You've seen people like that, and I have too. And I didn't...I was not inclined to put my name on the line for somebody that's always crying.

[redacted] I understand.

Carr: Because...

[redacted] You were selective in the battles that you picked.

Carr: Very! Very! If anyone came to me I wanted them to have done their part.

[redacted] Exactly.

Carr: If they come to me, "Do everything you can to fix this yourself and be sure that you have, and be sure that it's documented," you know.

[redacted] Um hmm. And use...You probably wanted them to use the existing channels.

Carr: Yes! Of course!

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And then when that...When all else fails, if they had done it and I was convinced that they had, then I was willing to take the ball.

[redacted] Isn't that remarkable?

Carr: And I felt, well, this shouldn't be.

[redacted] And you had...Therefore, you had access to people who could change things.

Carr: That's right! That's right!

[redacted] And the workforce knew that; many people knew that.

Carr: But I didn't go to the work...to people that could change things unless it really needed changing.

[redacted] I understand.

Carr: And that's the only reason.

[redacted] And that's why you were effective. ((Paper noise.)) You weren't constantly running to them.

Carr: No indeed. I could change some things myself.

[redacted] Right!

Carr: And I would try to do that. Anything I could fix myself, I did it. And Mr. [redacted] and I did a lot of things in person...with things like that. ((Clears throat and rubbing or scratching noise.)) Well, we'd make recommendations ((telephone rings)) to the promotion boards and stuff, you know... ((Stops and restarts.))

[redacted] Iris, we were talking about security and you had some concerns with security...the Office of Security and it's interaction with...

Carr: Yes, and…

[redacted] Blacks.

Carr: Yes, and I was saying that this doctor that was…

[redacted] Started with an "R", you think.

Carr: And I can't recall his name.

[redacted] That's okay.

Carr: But I admired him, and he was telling me that the doctor before him had prepared, uh, letters of dismissal for people saying they were "mentally unstable" when they really weren't, in order to get rid of them, because you had to have some reason for getting rid of them and all, and nobody questioned a mental instability. I thought that…And all of them were of the minority group that they did this to.

[redacted] This was in the '70s?

Carr: Now, one of them that I remember that it happened to; her name is [redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

Carr: And I didn't know it at the time, but the White supervisor didn't like it because she questioned…She said, "Well, my work is better than this girl's work and I've been here longer, and why should she get promoted ahead of me?" She asked him that and it made him mad, and she says, "Well, I really want to know." And so then he went to the doctor…this doctor that was in cahoots with him, and they got rid of her.

[redacted] Now, the doctor was in Security or Medical, or…?

Carr: He was over the ((stutters)) unit down there where they have the medical…where they have the doctors. You know, where they have…

[redacted] Okay, the Med Center?

Carr: The Med Center. He was over the Med Center.

[redacted] Is that right!

Carr: And he was where he…He was…He wrote that letter for [redacted]

[redacted] And she's gone. And she left.

Carr: And she left and I didn't know she was gone for a long time.

[redacted] [redacted] was this in the '60s, '70s?

Carr: It must have been in the '60s.

[redacted] In the '60s.

Carr: Um hmm. ((TR Note: Audio out here for 25 seconds.)) ((cut in))…Black women very personal sexy questions. And if they…They'd sweat them out, you know, and then they'd…But if they answered in any way, they would approach them, and then they would use that to scare them to

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death and all, you know. And I just thought that was awful, and so I finally told somebody, but I think somebody else reported it, too. Anyway, I think they did stop that.

[redacted] Yes. They don't ask those kinds of questions any more.

Carr: Well, they sure did do it to the Black women when they were there; very sexy questions.

[redacted] Were you...You weren't polygraphed when you first went?

Carr: No. No, I wasn't.

[redacted] That was before they were using the polygraph.

Carr: But some of the ladies in my...that worked with me were, and they were talking about how horrible and embarrassing it was.

[redacted] Um hmm. Um hmm.

Carr: So...

[redacted] After we moved out to Fort Meade, ((verbal pause)) NSA-60 was re-designated C1, so you were in the Office of Collection, I guess.

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] And you still stayed in the Admin position assigned to C1?

Carr: Right!

[redacted] And...Okay, in May of '64 you were assigned to the Assistant Director for Personnel Management; you were in a staff position. Who was that, the Assistant...?

Carr: IMr. Conley.

[redacted] That was Herb Conley.

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] And you stayed in that position or in that area until you retired?

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] Okay. So now you are actually in the Office of Personnel?

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] Okay. At some point after we moved out to Fort Meade we heard that African Americans noted that they weren't being hired, they weren't coming in, in numbers—the people who were already in the building—we weren't being hired; that there seemed to be a large influx of low-grade persons from the Glen Burnie, Pasadena, Laurel, that area. Did anybody mention that to you?

Carr: No.

[redacted] Did you observe that?

Carr: No, I didn't.

[redacted] Okay. By the time…When did you start seeing people…African Americans moving out into other organizations in significant numbers; out of the "snake pit" and those kinds of organizations, would you say?

Carr: Well, there was a group that always stayed in there. But, ((clears throat)) when Mr. Libbert came in, John Libbert?

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: He was, um, very overt with his attitude to Blacks.

[redacted] He came in to 63 or…?

Carr: He came in to C1.

[redacted] C1, excuse me. Okay.

Carr: From the Navy Station, I think he came. They had had somebody out there. And that was when he brought his girl with him and she took over my job.

[redacted] Hmm. And he was pretty open about his…

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] His attitude?

Carr: Um hum. Oh, very. Yes. There's no doubt about how he felt.

[redacted] Could you relate some incidents or give some examples?

Carr: Well, he…Yes. He wanted a…somebody…a secretary, and there was a young lady in my organization; she was working…really working with me. But she was just about as good as anybody I had ever seen. Her name was Miss Blackwell. So I sent Miss Blackwell to the Navy Station to work for him. And he let me know right away that he didn't want her.

[redacted] Unacceptable! She was unacceptable. ((Sounds of disgust.))

Carr: And she was really good. And I said, "Well that's the person I sent for the job." And I told Miss Blackwell how he felt, how…before she left, and she didn't want to go. And then after he called and said he didn't want her, she really wanted to come back. I said, "You stay there until somebody else hears this case, Miss Blackwell." I begged her to please stay. I said, "We've got to do something about this situation and you have to help me do this." I said, "You won't be sorry." And so she said, "Well, they won't…Anybody won't eat with me. They don't speak to me. They don't do anything." (B% It's just…)

[redacted] Was this on Nebraska Avenue?

Carr: Uh huh. She says, "They act like I have the plague or something. And they won't include me in anything, and…" I said, "Just do your work. And on your lunch time leave the area and have your lunch and take a paper or a book or something to read." And sure enough, Miss Blackwell stayed there until Nebraska Avenue came back to…in Fort Meade.

[redacted] Right.

Carr: It was eventually...

[redacted] Right.

Carr: Came...It came to Fort Meade, and I had her back. But...And so she got several promotions, but she had to endure it. But I was telling her she's got to help me break the barrier, let them know what we can do. You've got to let people know that you're just as competent as anyone else and that your skin coloring has nothing to do with your capabilities in the office. And it didn't. She was one of those...If she hadn't been smart and couldn't pick up on things, I would never have sent her over there.

[redacted] No! No! Because then it would have just reaffirmed their...

Carr: Suspicions.

[redacted] Their suspicions and their perceptions.

Carr: That's right.

[redacted] So you have to send someone...

Carr: I sent...I sent my best. She was my best and I sent them...Not only that, she was one of THEE best. ((Stress is speaker's.))

[redacted] One of THEE best! That's the point.

Carr: That's right. But it was hard on her. And she was a young girl, and I think she was barely 20 years old, and she shed many tears because of the way they treated her. But I'll bet she's happy about it now, wherever she is. I don't know where poor little Miss Blackwell is.

[redacted] ((Laughs.)) Iris, were there others that you...I mean, it's like you were a missionary. ((Mrs. Carr clears throat.)) Are there others that you sent out to help break down the walls?

Carr: Well...

[redacted] You talked about Alice Alleyne.

Carr: Yes. I told Ms. Alleyne...Ms. Alleyne was sort of prejudiced herself. Well, you see...While I'm not...While I'm for doing for an injustice, I mean, I don't...I don't...They put it on a level of race. If...I knew there was a young man, his name was Cooney, and they needed somebody in a position overseas. I knew that Cooney would fit that position, and I wouldn't dare send a man over here or over there, and I would...I wrote a letter to explain why he should have that job and all the things that had happened over there, and I knew that Cooney would make it, you know. And, see, Cooney was not black by any means.

[redacted] You're not talking about Jim Cooney.

Carr: Richard Cooney.

[redacted] Richard Cooney. Okay.

Carr: Richard Cooney.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And so it was…It was just like that. If you see anybody out there that needed help then, or was being overlooked that could do the Agency some good…See, the Agency is your main concern; you're working for the Agency. If the A…they can do the Agency do some good here, let's get them in that job, you know. Let's do that. And so that was what my mission was; to have the best person in the right place so that we could help (2-3B). ((Blocked by Ms [redacted]).

[redacted] You helped [redacted] a couple of times.

Carr: Um hmm. Yeah, but it was…But just for…But when I could see people being, you know, abused and overlooked and…on purpose, that really went against the grain.

[redacted] Now, tell me about [redacted]…the incident that you talked about. We didn't capture it on tape. That's very interesting.

Carr: About his wife?

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: Well, she worked down in the machine section of the Agency and I was working up in M01 at the time.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: And, he came up there…

[redacted] Somebody is coming with flowers for you. ((Sound of doorbell chimes.))

Carr: Well, he… ((Recorder stops and restarts.))

[redacted] Okay. Yes. We were talking about [redacted] wife. Okay.

Carr: Well, Mrs. [redacted] was working in M4, and I don't remember her supervisor's name, but I do remember that she was (B% [redacted] mother and [redacted] worked in the outer office of C1.

[redacted] And [redacted] was White.

Carr: Yes, [redacted] is White and so is her mother. And they worked right in the office with Mr. Kirby. And she and I have had a lot of assignments together because she was chief in that office and I was head of the personnel in one of the division offices, and so we had…And I had no idea that anybody in her family would be that…be like that, because she was so very different. [redacted] was a very loving, kind person and I didn't expect that. Ah, when they told me that lady was her mother, I just couldn't believe it.

[redacted] You have to tell what happened, though.

Carr: Oh, she struck [redacted] wife. They had some kind of a disagreement about some of the work—and she was an excellent worker.

[redacted] [redacted] wife was.

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: So, I went down to the section—I had never been down there in the machine...

[redacted] To Machine Processing?

Carr: Machine...Machine Processing. And I went down there and I took her out of there.

[redacted] [redacted] wife?

Carr: I took her and told her to get all...everything (that) belonged to her and come on out. And I was admonished that I couldn't take her out of there, but I escorted her up to my office anyway. And I took her up to my office and I kept her there until I could get her reassigned. Then I went straight to Mr. Kirby who was over that...in that machine shop as well as the place where I worked and where she worked...

[redacted] Because he was Deputy for Personnel, I guess.

Carr: He was Deputy Director for Co...

[redacted] Administration?

Carr: For Collection.

[redacted] Oh, okay. Um hmm.

Carr: And...So I explained it to him, and he...He immediately had her reassigned. And I told him how that...how smart she was and cooperative, too, and I don't know how this came about. And I was sure I could get my report to him corroborated. And I was very sure of that because she had had outstanding performance appraisals and a lot of stuff to back it up, you see. ((Multiple acknowledgments.)) So I felt very secure in recommending her for a different position.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: Now, as I said, if you're clean and you have done your part and done all you can do, then I'm willing to have a sit-in and participate or do whatever's necessary ((Ms [redacted] chuckles)) to change things.

[redacted] Iris, were you...Well, I'm sure you were aware—I mean, as smart as you were and as in-touch as you were with everybody—that the eating establishments, as well as, of course, the living establishments around Fort Meade were segregated when we moved out there, and that ((Mrs. Carr clears throat)) people of color sometimes couldn't get served. Did you have any run-ins with...?

Carr: No, because I never ate anywhere except on the Army post over there where we used to have parties for dignitaries or something like that...

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: And in the building

[redacted] Okay. You didn't go out.

Carr: And even during the other war we would, ah...We could eat in the

government buildings, you know.

[redacted] Right. Right.

Carr: Even during segregation we could always eat in a government building, and we would always find one close by wherever you were…

[redacted] I see.

Carr: Downtown.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: So you could go in a government cafeteria and get your lunch or whatever. So I never…I always felt that to be an advantage, having come from Texas where you really learned how to cook and all. ((Both laugh.))

[redacted] Iris, did you ever go TDY or, you know, travel for the Agency?

Carr: No, not for the Agency. I went to Europe and stayed a long time on my own though, and while I was in Frankfurt I did have a message for the people that worked there, and when I was in Honolulu, but…We had a station there, too.

[redacted] Right, right. Okay.

Carr: So I did get around, but not…

[redacted] Not paid…

Carr: Ah, not…No, I paid my way.

[redacted] You paid your way. Okay. ((Pause.)) Okay. Let's see. You went fr…You were a management analyst and you stayed in the M Organization until your retirement. And you retired as a 13. Did you s…You had bought a house in Washington by the time we moved out to Fort Meade.

Carr: Oh, yeah.

[redacted] Did you stay in that house the entire time, until we…?

Carr: No. ((Clears throat.)) Let's see. I remarried in '53, I believe.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: And then we bought a house together…another house.

[redacted] Um hmm. In Washington.

Carr: In Washington.

[redacted] Okay. Okay. Let's see. ((Paper shuffling.)) Well, this was fascinating! Any…Anything else you can tell me that would make the experience more…make me realize the experience more…more assessable to me? Anything you can tell me about the working conditions, the people, any other incidents you can recall? You talked about Jim Pryde being very bright; Alice Alleyne…

Carr: [redacted] was exceptionally bright.

[redacted] [redacted]?

Carr: Yes, and I had her go to this school. Oh, [redacted]

[redacted] Okay. Okay.

Carr: She was a [redacted] at the time.

[redacted] Right. Okay.

Carr: Oh, yes. And she had a brilliant mind. And I went in the restroom one day and then she was standing in there crying, and she had been reprimanded, ah, un…well, unduly by her boss, who was John A. Smith at the time. And I said, "Well, you don't want to work under conditions like that. I think you should be more than a clerk. You should at least be a secretary working for him like that." And she couldn't get a grade. I said, "Well, come on down and work for me until we get it satisfied." And I took her out of that restroom and took her down there. John A. Smith came to see me. I said, "Well, I think she deserves a better chance." And he sort of respected me, too.

[redacted] Well, you…Obviously! I mean, the way you pulled people from place to place and…I mean, you had a lot of…

Carr: Nerve.

[redacted] Yes, you did.

Carr: That was all. That was it. ((Laughter.))

[redacted] You had a lot of…

Carr: I had a lot of nerve. And I said, "Well, I don't know…" You know this…Because it was just wrong. It was wrong to keep her there and typing all day and all night, and she had so much talent.

[redacted] Um hmm. She could do more.

Carr: Oh, yes, she could. And when I got her out…She would have still been there as a secretary.

[redacted] Mm. Okay.

Carr: And I…I don't know. And it…It…And at the time I was just doing what I thought was right for the Agency, not necessarily for her…

[redacted] Right.

Carr: And certainly not for me. And I'll never forget when I went in to the promotion board, I walked in there and all these people—I'm the only minority person in there—and, you know what the first question was they asked me? "We want you to tell us why you should a get a better…you should get a promotion, and you drive a better car than we do."

[redacted] Were you testifying for somebody or you were being interviewed for a promotion?

Carr: Yeah. Yeah.

[redacted] You were being interviewed for a promotion.

Carr: I was…Yeah. You were supposed to…I was expecting them to ask me something about phases of the work or something. you know, or some…You know. I walked in there with nothing in my hand, and that's what they asked me.

[redacted] Where were you when this happened?

Carr: In M01.

[redacted] In M01.

Carr: Um hmm. But the promotion panel is made up of people all around, you know.

[redacted] Right. Right. But as a potential promotee they would interview you.

Carr: Um hmm. Um hmm. You had to go before the board before you could get a promotion. And…Well, you know what I told them.

[redacted] Exactly what did you tell them, Iris? ((Ms [redacted] laughs.))

Carr: I said, "Well, I hope I NEVER need a promotion, because I thought in government you got equal pay for equal work. If I don't deserve it, then I don't get it. If I work for it, I'm entitled to it. If I'm doing the work, I'm entitled to it. And that's 'cause if I lose this job tomorrow, the menu on my table won't change, 'cause my husband buys the groceries in my house," and I left. But I got the promotion.

[redacted] But you got the promotion.

Carr: But I thought that was so absurd.

[redacted] It is. It is.

Carr: To ask an intelligent person...Ah, did they…Maybe they didn't assume me to have the intelligence. Why did I NEED a promotion? You don't NEED promotions in government.

[redacted] You deserve them. You deserve them.

Carr: And I noticed in some of the papers that were recommending promotions they would state that the person being recommended had so many people in his family and he was the only breadwinner and all that, so that he would be selected over any woman that was applying for a promotion or something. And that's not right! That's not the way it goes.

[redacted] You noticed that when you were even…when you were a personnel assistant in 63?

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] Starting from back then?

Carr: Yes. Well…

[redacted] Do you remember…Do you remember, Iris, when there was racial coding on the forms?

Carr: Yes. On the forms. Yes, I do.

[redacted] Do you remember what the codes were?

Carr: 01, 02 and 03, wasn't it?

[redacted] I'm not sure. I think so.

Carr: That's what it was, I think. Yes, I do, and I thought that was ridiculous. I did! I really did! I...That just...They...I said: "They don't care how good you are; they want to know what color you are."

[redacted] What color you are.

Carr: Yes, that was very upsetting to me.

[redacted] Now, someone was telling me that the initial coding came on the interview form that was filled out at the initial screening interview. And when someone from personnel would interview somebody...

Carr: They would code the paper.

[redacted] They would code the paper. But then we were told...But that...that paper never went to the managers, and I was certain that the managers had access to the code. The code was on something that management routinely saw. It was...It followed you, I think, on your paperwork.

Carr: I think, too. I think so, too.

[redacted] You've seen codes, haven't you?

Carr: No...Of course!

[redacted] Sure.

Carr: Of course, I've seen the codes!

[redacted] Because you were in Personnel.

Carr: Yes, I was in Personnel.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And nothing...Nothing bothered me more.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: I thought that was really something. And...

[redacted] So when people would select people for jobs or start looking at paperwork of candidates for jobs they could see from the paperwork whether...what color they were.

Carr: Yeah. ((Clears throat.)) I rem...Oh, Otis Wilson was the last person that came in as my boss, and he wanted somebody in his office to help with a certain phase of the program. I wish I could remember the man's name, but any rate, I got several 201 files from the office and I brought them to him. And I told him I had put my number one choice, number two and number three choices on there, and I gave them to him; all of them were good. The number one choice was the one he took. This man had a Master in Business Administration from Harvard, and he had graduated cum laude, and then he had all these recommendations from places

where he worked. He had had only outstanding performance appraisals wherever he worked and all this, so he decided he would talk to him. Alright, I set up the interview. The man walked in the office; he stayed about five minutes and he was gone. Then Mr. Wilson called me in the office, and you know what he said to me? He said, "Let me tell you something. Any person that gets this job in my office is going to be White, Anglo-Saxon and protestant." And I said, "You poor thing." I said, "Don't you know that I can have you fired for making a statement to me like that?" I said, "But I feel sorry for you, and [redacted] And I said, "If it were not for that, I would go and...and..."

[redacted] Turn him in?

Carr: "Turn you in." I said, "But you can't talk to me like that."

[redacted] This was in...This was...

Carr: But how about that!

[redacted] Oh, I can't believe it!

Carr: That's what he said to me. But did you know that since that time he has become a democrat, and he has become one of my very good friends.

[redacted] No!

Carr: He calls me to ask me how to vote. He calls me on any occasion...several occasions. He always calls to ask me about different people.

[redacted] This is Will...His name was Wilson?

Carr: Otis Wilson.

[redacted] Otis Wilson.

Carr: Um hmm. And he lives there in...on [redacted]

[redacted] No kidding.

Carr: And when I go there he'll take me to dinner at his private club. And they...They used to not let Negroes come in that club, the University Club there in Washington. But he got to be one of my staunchest friends, really! But I told him, I said, "I feel sorry for you."

[redacted] And he made that statement.

Carr: He made this statement.

[redacted] So this was before you retired, so it was...

Carr: Oh, he was the last boss I had, so it had to be in the...

[redacted] Late '60s? "Cause you retired...

Carr: Late '60s. I retired in '71.

[redacted] Seventy-one

Carr: It might have...Yeah. It had to be ((whooshing sound)) in the late '60s.

[redacted] Isn't that something!

Carr: And he didn't want me to retire or anything. I'll tell you, shortly after I retired, he retired.

[redacted] Hmm, hmm, hmm! Did you...Other than Dr. Tordella, did you come in contact with any of the seniors?

Carr: Any other what?

[redacted] Any other seniors? Dr. Tordella? You came in contact with Oliver Kirby, Herb Conley. Any others? Other...

Carr: Yes. Benson Buffham.

[redacted] ((Laughing.)) Oh yeah, of course! He was a very gracious, gracious person when I went to visit with him.

Carr: Yeah, I went to a party at his house.

[redacted] Now, did you work for Benson Buffham?

Carr: Yes, I did, in the same capacity. He came after Tordella. He came...

[redacted] I see.

Carr: In the same...

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: Place.

[redacted] Okay, alright.

Carr: He followed Dr. Tordella.

[redacted] Did you have the same...

Carr: Rapport?

[redacted] Rapport with him?

Carr: I sure did. I sure did, and he appreciated me being there because I would help him without anybody knowing I was helping him, you know what I mean? It wasn't any flamboyant thing. I didn't...I didn't have to let anybody know that I would write him a note and tell him who this person is that's coming in to see you, you know, and I would give him a little background or something, you know.

[redacted] Right.

Carr: You know, but I didn't...

[redacted] You were like an executive assistant.

Carr: Well, I guess. Well, I know that I was...would do things to help him, not to expose his...You know, he had to learn what was going on in the office.

[redacted] Sure.

Carr: I was there long before he was, so I'd...I'm supposed to know. But, you

know, if I found it necessary to tell him something, I'd tell him.

[redacted] Um hmm. So did you bring concerns of minorities to his attention, or did recommend people to him?

Carr: Not necessarily. Not necessarily. It was a…Oh, that was a…I was trying to think of this girl, her name was Sergay Somers.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And she dressed like a man and she kept her hair cut short like a man. And, oh…And then one day somebody was…But she was not a minority member.

[redacted] Okay.

Carr: And somebody (B% sitting next)…felt her leg…One of the supervisors or something felt her leg, and oh, she almost died. So she came and told me, and I said, "Well, I'll report it if you want me." She said, 'Yes, (B% somebody) report it. And my mother had me dress like this so that people won't approach me and won't bother me, and all, and so, and he did." And I…And she was crying. So I mean, it…"It's just one of those things," I says. So you help out wherever it is. So…

[redacted] Was Benson Buffham…Did he listen to…when you would go to him?

Carr: Of course!

[redacted] Yeah.

Carr: He sure would.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: He would. He found out that I was always in his corner, so to speak, trying to make the Agency work. Because that's the way I felt about Mr. Kirby, Dr. Tordella and Mr. Buffham. They wanted the Agency to do its job.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And I wanted the Agency to do its job.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: And they were conscientious. I couldn't let them down. I wanted to tell them so badly what the problem was, but I couldn't prove it. They had…They didn't get the loyalty from some of the people that were in positions…certain positions that they deserved. If they had had the loyalty…They didn't know what the meaning of the word was. That's the (1G).

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: You have to be loyal to something. And they weren't loyal to the Agency. They were just there to collect…to see how much money they could get and who they could step on to step up.

[redacted] Um hmm.

Carr: Haven't you seen people like that?

[redacted] Yes. Yes.

Carr: And they're not going to shake the water if it's going to keep them from getting a promotion. They're going to do whatever it takes to get that promotion and make all the money they can. But see, that wasn't that important to me.

[redacted] You were a rare individual, a rare individual. Um, I can't think of anything else, Iris, unless there's something that you want to share.

Carr: But you can see how I tried to move people into…

[redacted] Yes I did.

Carr: To positions and…

[redacted] Yes I did. And you were very…

Carr: And it would have been for the…best thing for the Agency, 'cause when I went there they had…They send people around to interview you on your job…job performance, um, to classification group.

[redacted] Right, right.

Carr: They would classify your job and say how much money it was worth and stuff like that, you know.

[redacted] Right. That's right. Right. They still do that.

Carr: They're still doing that?

[redacted] Um hmm. They have position classifiers.

Carr: So, if you don't know the full picture, it's very hard for you to tell somebody in terms of how much your job is worth, you know. So I wanted them to talk to the supervisors or somebody else after they interview the worker…

[redacted] Right. Right.

Carr: To find out where that work goes from there, because…

[redacted] Right.

Carr: They try to let you know only what you need to know to do what is on your desk. And I said they don't have any idea what impact…

[redacted] That's right. That's right.

Carr: This has on the world—not only just this Agency—the world! Because the people we take in here and train and get them ready, go overseas.

[redacted] That's right.

Carr: And we have installations at several places over there. And their conduct over there and what we're doing or how we…how we train them is reflected in…

[redacted] That's right.

Carr: In many instances, all over the world. And if we make a…We push the

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wrong button at the wrong time, the whole world could explode.

[redacted] Um hmm. You felt very strongly about what you were doing…

Carr: Ooooh!

[redacted] And the mission of the Agency.

Carr: The mission we were in was so important to me; I couldn't see how they couldn't have less than the best.

[redacted] We're the best. Um hmm.

Carr: Everywhere! Everywhere! But, I don't know.

[redacted] Hmm. Did you know…We've talked about some African Americans. Did you know Minnie Kenny?

Carr: Yes, I did. She had a sister. What was her sister's name?

[redacted] I didn't…I didn't think she had a sister that worked.

Carr: Oh, one was a little…One of them was little and the other one was big. Minnie Key Her husband was named George?

[redacted] No, no. Minnie Kenny. Her husband's name was Bill. And I don't remember her maiden name.

Carr: Oh, you're saying Kenny.

[redacted] Kenny, yes.

Carr: Oh, I thought you said Key.

[redacted] Um hmm. She became a very, very prominent African American woman; retired as a super grade from the Agency, and I just wondered if you were aware of her. ((Carr coughs.)) ((Long pause.)) No? You want some more water, Iris?

Carr: No, I really don't. It'll go away.

[redacted] Iris, I just have one more question. On your PERSUM you indicate that you had gone to Howard, from '44 to '51. Was that at night or…?

Carr: Um hmm.

[redacted] It was at night. And what were you studying, and was it math and English again?

Carr: Um hmm. ((Clears throat.))

[redacted] So you had credits from both Columbia University and Howard working towards your masters.

Carr: Um hmm. Yes.

[redacted] Well. ((Recorder stops and restarts.)) I think that about sums it up.

Carr: I think…((clears throat)) I never completed my dissertation for my masters degree, but they gave me credit for having a masters in 1956 from Howard.

[redacted] They did?

Carr: Yes.

[redacted] Did they really?

Carr: Um hmm. And it's in the book…in the book of Howard graduates. And it says for 1956.

[redacted] So were you awarded the degree?

Carr: No, I don't have the degree. I wrote the…I…When I got the letter I wrote for it but I never did get it. So I don't know. But anyway…

[redacted] But you completed all the course work.

Carr: ((Clears throat.)) I completed all the work.

[redacted] Hmm. That's remarkable.

Carr: Um hmm. And they did list my name in the…

[redacted] As a graduate, or being awarded.

Carr: Uh huh.

[redacted] Okay. Well, Iris, thank you so much for meeting with me. This has been fascinating and I really admire you. And I can see why people think so highly of you.

Carr: Ooooh, I was doing what…

[redacted] I know.

Carr: I thought I was supposed to do.

[redacted] But a lot of people don't do that. So, I wish you the best. Thank you.

Carr: I really enjoyed…((Recorder stops and restarts.))

[redacted] Iris, we started the tape recorder again because I want to hear the story about when you went to see General Canine.

Carr: ((Laughs.)) Okay. I was still in the interim-clearance stance…status, ((clears throat)) and I was…In my clearance group there was a young man ((phone rings)) who also went to my church. ((Recorder stops and restarts.))

[redacted] So there was this young man in your group.

Carr: Yes! He belonged to my church and he was from a very fine family and I knew them all very well. You remember Ora Sue, and I showed you her picture on the wall…

[redacted] Right. Right.

Carr: And her daughter is my godchild. At any rate. I didn't…That hadn't happened then. I didn't know them that well. But he was caught with some numbers in his pan…or in his pocket or something. At any rate, he was making a delivery for someone who had been at the Agency for some time, and he wasn't really involved in this, but he was the one that got

terminated because of this. And when I found out about it, I said: "Well, they've got the wrong person. The person who's writing the numbers in the Agency is still here. He didn't know anything about it. He hadn't been there that long or all, and I think an injustice has been done to him." So I went to see General Canine and I walked in the office and he says, "What do you want?" And I..."What can I do for you?" And I told him, I said, "I think an injustice has been done and..." ((Recording ends abruptly.))

////////////////////////////////////End of transcript////////////////////////////////////