

Oral Memoirs
of
Edwin White and Carolyn White

An Interview Conducted by

Porsha Dossie

April 18, 2015

Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences, and Stories
(RICHERS) of Central Florida

University of Central Florida RICHERS of Central Florida

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Interview Histories

Interviewer: Porsha Dossie

Transcriber: Laura Cepero

The recordings and transcripts of the interview were processed in the offices of the RICHES of Central Florida Department, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida.

Project Detail

RICHES of Central Florida is an umbrella program housing interdisciplinary public history projects that bring together different departments at UCF with profit and non-profit sectors of the community.

Central Florida has often been associated with large-scale, commercial tourism and housing development. While those aspects of Central Florida are important to the economic growth of the region, much of its history has remained unnoticed and under researched. The Public History program at UCF links many projects under one initiative to promote the collection and preservation of Central Florida history. By facilitating research that records and presents the stories of communities, businesses, and institutions in Central Florida, RICHES seeks to provide the region with a deeper sense of its heritage. At the same time, the initiative connects the UCF students and faculty with the community and creates a foundation on which Central Floridians can build a better sense of their history.

Porsha Dossie is a graduate history student at the University of Central Florida.

Legal Status

Scholarly use of the recording and transcript of the interview with Edwin White and Carolyn White is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on April 18, 2015.

Abstract

An oral history interview of Edwin White and Carolyn White, conducted by Porsha Dossie on April 18, 2015. Around 1967, the Whites moved to Oviedo, Florida, where they established a horse ranch. In the interview, the Whites discuss how Oviedo has changed over time, their horse ranch, and the wildlife that lives around their property. Due to technical difficulties, the first six and a half minutes of the recording lacked audio and were edited out of the final version.

Edwin White and Carolyn White

Oral History Memoir
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Porsha Dossie
April 18, 2015
Oviedo, Florida

0:00:00

Introduction

Edwin And then, uh...

Carolyn At church.

Edwin Got married. Yes.

Carolyn Met at church.

Edwin First Baptist [Church of Oviedo], and, uh, we moved to the Oviedo area then in about [19]60–67.

Carolyn Something like that.

Edwin Or something like that, and, uh, built a small horse ranch out in the Black Hammock.

Dossie Hm.

Edwin And Carolyn [White], uh, had horses, and a pony from the time she was that high, and, uh, always wanted to have one. So then we, um, started that and had, uh, stable there, and, uh, she started riding lessons and trained horses, and had about 50 students a week, didn't you?

Carolyn Mmhmm.

Edwin A long time, and then, it got a little too—more than we wanted, so we moved down, um, to Chapman Road, here in Oviedo, but we've been in this area since back in the '60s, and, uh, both our boys grew up here and, uh, went to all the schools here, and, um—and they have also stayed in Oviedo, so shows ya it's a nice place to live.

Carolyn Yeah, Lars [D.] White is our son.

Dossie Mmhmm.

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Carolyn He's Oviedo fire chief, and Don White is our other son, and he lives nearby, but he's more like standoffish, so *[laughs]*...

Edwin *[laughs]*.

Carolyn So he doesn't come to the meetings and so on, but he's still a good person *[laughs]*, but anyway, uh, here we are, and, um, we still love Oviedo. We still have eight acres, and we just love it, and I still teach riding and train horses. Keeps you young *[laughs]*.

Edwin We were here when, uh, UCF¹ was FTU.²

Carolyn Yeah.

Dossie Mmhmm.

Edwin And when they first thought about doing it down—building it down there, and we thought it would end up something like a junior college, or *[laughs]*, you know—now, it's what? The second largest...

Carolyn In the state.

Edwin In the...

Carolyn United States.

Edwin Yeah.

Carolyn Yeah.

Edwin It's unbelievable.

Dossie Yeah[?].

Carolyn So...

Edwin But, uh...

0:02:10 **How Oviedo has changed over time**

Carolyn Anyway, there's a lot of traffic on Alafaya Trail now.

Dossie *[laughs]*.

¹ University of Central Florida.

² Florida Technological University.

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Carolyn More than ever, and, um, it's just grown and everything, but we've still stayed the same. We still do what we do, and enjoy it, and – and still love Oviedo. So that's our story [*laughs*].

Dossie [*inaudible*]. So I'm just going to talk you guys a little bit about the changes you've seen in Oviedo, and then...

Edwin [*inaudible*].

Dossie Just go from there, 'cause you've been here since...

Edwin Well...

Dossie The '60s.

Edwin Yeah, there were two-lane roads. There was nothing any larger than that, and...

Carolyn Yeah, Alafaya...

Edwin Most of 'em...

Carolyn Trail was.

Edwin Were dirt.

Dossie Dirt?

Edwin Yeah, the – Chapman Road, leading up to [*clears throat*] where our...

Carolyn Mitchell Hammock [Road]?

Edwin Property is, was just, um – it was like a washboard road, and, uh, Oviedo was much, much smaller than – I can't even give you the size of it, but, uh...

Carolyn It was...

Edwin It has grown [*inaudible*].

Carolyn It was a farmers' town.

Edwin Yeah, it was...

Dossie Hm.

Edwin They grew, uh...

Carolyn Water...

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Edwin When we built out in the, um...

Carolyn Black...

Edwin Black Hammock...

Carolyn [clears throat].

Edwin Area, uh, they were growing cabbage, celery...

Carolyn Watercress.

Edwin Watercress on large acreage, and that was the main, uh, products back then. So it has grown now, and of course, with the water situation like it is and everything, most of the farming has moved on out where more water is available, and watercress is down near Lake Okeechobee, where they do have enough water to take care of that.

Carolyn And lots of orange groves around too.

Edwin Lots of orange groves, which there aren't a lot of those left. Uh, everywhere there was an orange tree, there's a house now.

Carolyn [laughs].

Dossie [laughs].

Edwin But, uh, we still love Oviedo, but, um, we sometimes think we liked it better...

Carolyn We like less traffic [inaudible].

Edwin [laughs].

Carolyn [laughs].

Edwin Less traffic, but we do have more conveniences, because here we are, so far out, and when you came from Orlando to Oviedo then, you felt like you were taking a day's trip.

Dossie Oh.

Edwin But you weren't, but, uh, it was, um—it was nice out here then, but it's—it's changed an awful lot. We do like the conveniences of a mall, and...

Dossie Mmhmm.

Edwin Publix right around the corner, and—in fact, Carolyn used to ride her horse from where we are on Chapman Road—rode all in the, uh, shoppin' center area.

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Carolyn We, uh, ran through Publix.

Edwin Yeah.

Carolyn Used to ride right through Publix.

Edwin Right where the bank was, and...

Carolyn Oh.

Edwin Uh, it—it has grown a lot, and we could take—we could go out the back of our property and, uh, take a, um, hayride and go all in through...

Carolyn Ceme...

Edwin Where the...

Carolyn The cemetery.

Edwin Yeah, the cemetery that was there and the, um—where the shopping center is actually. So we've seen it grow a lot. Mitchell Hammock Road is, um, now—what is it? Six lanes?

Carolyn Yeah [*laughs*].

Edwin Yeah, it's about...

Carolyn Just[?]...

Edwin Three each way.

Carolyn Huge [*laughs*].

Edwin And, uh, it was just dirt.

Dossie [*laughs*].

Edwin So it's brought conveniences. It's brought a lot of problems, and so on, but you can't get around it. You...

Carolyn [*laughs*].

Edwin You have to go with the flow.

Carolyn [*laughs*].

Edwin [*laughs*].

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Dossie Mmhmm.

Carolyn That's[sic] about sums it up. Don't ya think, Ed[win White]?

Edwin Yeah, unless she's³ got...

0:05:58 Horse ranch

Dossie Uh, is there anything else you guys would like to add that you—I haven't covered? [inaudible] you guys have givin' me a lot of information already, but if there's something you think you should add, feel free.

Edwin Well[?]....

Dossie Because you came in 1967 to Oviedo?

Edwin 'Bout '67, yes.

Dossie Um, what were you doing as a job then? Were you working as well?

Edwin She would—actually, we had the horse farm.

Carolyn Yeah.

Edwin And...

Carolyn I was—I had, like, 40 students a week. I was—had a lot of business. I mean, everybody wanted their kids to have lessons, and I had adults in the morning, and I taught kids in the afternoon...

Dossie Mmhmm.

Carolyn In group lessons and usually had private lessons in the mornin'. So I've been doing this for a long time. Kinda know what I'm doing [*laughs*] by this stage, and I still enjoy it, and I think it keeps, um, the physical—the physicality of it...

Dossie Mmhmm.

Carolyn Keeps us young. I mean, we're outdoors all the time, and it's, um—it's just part of our lifestyle.

Edwin Yeah.

Carolyn And we live on a small lake,⁴ and, um, it's really funny, because when we were looking for property, I was so sick of Black Hammock and it being so wet—very

³ Porsha Dossie.

⁴ Bath Lake.

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wet. If it rained, it rained in the Black Hammock. We were just indulged[?] with rain, and we just got so tired of it, and so finally, we just wanted to get out of there, and get where it's high and dry, and that's why we came over to this side of town, versus being down in the Black Hammock, and we were lookin' for high-and-dry property, and found it. One of my riding students told us that there was property down the street from them, and so we came and looked and bought it right away, 'cause we just – we really wanted to be high and dry, and so we just, um – my business followed me over here, and, um, still teach and still trainin'. I just don't give group lessons anymore, which I gave – I used to do a lot of that. So I still enjoy what I'm doing [*coughs*], and it keeps us healthy. So we still love Oviedo [*laughs*].

Edwin During that time, we were boarding horses for the people that lived in town also, so – in Orlando and Winter Springs and, uh, Winter Park, and, uh – so that brought a lot of the kids out ever[sic] day after school. They would come out to ride their horses and take their lessons and so on. So...

Carolyn And[?]

Edwin Both our – both our boys loved having all the girls coming out every afternoon...

Carolyn [*laughs*].

Edwin After school [*laughs*], and it kept the boys at home too.

Dossie Hm.

Edwin Because the girls came to them [*laughs*].

Dossie And your – both your sons grew up in Oviedo and attended, uh, the Oviedo schools?

Edwin Yes.

Carolyn [*inaudible*].

Dossie Did they go to Oviedo High School?

Carolyn Yeah.

Edwin Yes[?].

Carolyn And – and the grammar school.

Edwin Yeah.

Carolyn Yeah.

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0:08:50

Staying healthy

Carolyn And, uh, we – we just fell in love with Oviedo, and we just, um, became more a part of it, being uptown now, not back in the Black Hammock, and, uh, so we've enjoyed it a whole lot. We enjoy church here and met a lot of friends in church, and you finally just grow into the community. That's what happened to us, and we still love it, and we still love what we do. We still keep healthy that way. I keep telling him that [*laughs*].

Edwin Yeah, it's – it keeps me going and...

Carolyn [*laughs*].

Edwin It's making me healthy.

Carolyn [*laughs*].

Edwin [*laughs*] Uh, and during that time, we were, um – she was taking care of the boarding and the, uh – and I was an IRS⁵ agent, so I did that until I retired, and then, um – since I retired, I'm still doing the horses.

Carolyn [*laughs*].

Edwin That's helping.

Carolyn [*laughs*].

Edwin Not[?] doing me [*laughs*]...

Carolyn So...

Edwin But we've met a lot of nice people, and we still run into 'em occasionally at, uh, the grocery store or something like that, and – so it's been an interesting life.

Carolyn Lot of people ask us, "How do you keep so young?" You know, 'cause we're physical[sic] good shape, except for my neck [*laughs*]. So I had an accident, and, um, so I had neck surgery. So the past couple of years has been a little bit rough on me – getting' over it, but I'll get over it again. So anyway, we still love what we do. We still love workin' outdoors. We – we just – I just feel like we're blessed to have good health.

Dossie Yeah.

Carolyn I think when you get our age – I mean, goodness – and you're still goin' strong, and you're still able to do physical work, you know, and I don't think anything

⁵ Internal Revenue Service.

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by[?] goin' out and trimmin' trees and doin' all kinds of stuff, 'cuz we've always done it.

0:10:58

Bath Lake and the surrounding wildlife

Carolyn And livin' on the lake, we had to keep the lake clean. So if – we've got that lake pretty well cleaned by now.

Edwin [laughs].

Carolyn [laughs].

Dossie What lake do you guys live on?

Carolyn It's, um...

Edwin Bath Lake.

Carolyn Bath Lake.

Edwin B-A-T-H.

Carolyn It's kind of a funny name...

Dossie [laughs].

Carolyn Because it's a smaller lake, but it's nice, and it's clear water and everything. So we've kept the lake nice and clean, and – and, uh, keep our property up and enjoy it. We – we enjoy our work. So I don't know how many people can say that at our age.

Dossie [laughs].

Edwin And even though...

Carolyn [laughs].

Edwin Oviedo is grown so in the traffic and, uh, all the houses [clears throat], we still, on our piece of property, have the deer coming through, um – going from one location to another, and they pass through our property most[sic] every night, and we have the fish out there, and we have all kinds of water birds, and, uh, we, right now are...

Carolyn We have...

Edwin Going through the, uh, sandhill cranes, which have been coming through our property eighty[sic]...

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Carolyn Eight...

Edwin Eight years.

Carolyn Eight or nine years.

Edwin And they, each year, have a—an offspring, and so this year right now, they have a little one about that big. Well, *[laughs]* he's grown...

Carolyn *[laughs]*.

Edwin Already in a week, and we have, uh, all sorts of animals around, and right now, there's a, um, *[great]* blue heron—two blue heron[sic] that have built a nest in the top of a pine tree...

Carolyn Down...

Edwin Down by the lake, and they have offspring in there right now. So...

Carolyn They're huge. Blue...

Edwin There's always something...

Carolyn Blue herons.

Edwin Exciting happening.

Carolyn They're beautiful birds. They're huge too. When, you know, they go up there and they build this humongous nest—I mean, it—thing is probably that big.

Edwin Yeah, it looks like an eagle's nest. It's so huge.

Carolyn And they—I know they have at least one—maybe they have two babies in there, but they're quite noisy, and they're raising them. So that's our first for that—with the blue herons puttin' their nest up there. So the blue herons just hang out at our place. We have eagles once in a while that'll land, and it's—it's just interesting. That pretty well sums it up, I think, Ed?

Edwin Yeah.

0:13:17 **Closing remarks**

Dossie Well, I thank you guys so much for talking to us and taking out the time to come[?] here.

Carolyn *[laughs]*.

Dossie This is really nice.

Carolyn Thank you for inviting us.

Edwin Yes.

End of Interview