

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Carver Gayton

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Gayton, Carver
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Carver Gayton,
<b>Dates:</b>	June 4, 2008 and October 9, 2017
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2008 and 2017
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:58:07).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Corporate executive, academic administrator, and museum chief executive Carver Gayton (1938 - ) became the first black F.B.I. agent from the State of Washington. Gayton also became the first full-time black coach for the University of Washington in 1968. When appointed as Director of Affirmative Action programs, he established the first affirmative action program by an institution of higher learning in the state. Gayton was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 4, 2008 and October 9, 2017, in Seattle, Washington. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2008_080
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Academic administrator, corporate executive, and museum chief executive, Carver Clark Gayton was born on October 18, 1938 in the Madrona District of Seattle, Washington to John Jacob and Virginia Clark Gayton. Born to a rich heritage, Gayton was raised in a family of ten and attended Madrona Grade School and Meany Junior High School as a youth. Afterwards, he attended Seattle's Garfield High School where he excelled academically and athletically. He was a member of the school's football team and was named to the All-City and All-State teams for his talents as a running back. In his senior year, he was elected Class President and was recruited by the University of Washington Head Football Coach Darrel Royal with a four year scholarship. In 1959, Gayton started as a freshman on the University of Washington football team, but was injured and unable to play after his second game, when he tore ligaments and cartilage in his knee. By the following season, Gayton recovered from his injuries, and he was allowed to play in the 1960 Rose Bowl, helping the Huskies defeat the University of Wisconsin forty-four to seven. That spring, he graduated from the University of Washington with his B.A. degree in history and a minor in English.

In 1961, under the leadership of Coach Jim Owens, Gayton served as an Assistant Coach for the University of Washington and was instrumental in the team winning the Rose Bowl for a consecutive year. Afterwards, he was hired as a teacher at his alma mater Garfield High School. In January of 1964, Gayton became the first black Federal Bureau of Investigation agent from the state of Washington when he received a letter signed by the bureau's director J. Edgar Hoover. While serving in that capacity, he conducted thorough background checks on appointed government officials and alleged members of the Italian mafia. Subsequently, Gayton returned to his career in education and pursued his M.A. degree in educational administration at Temple University. In 1967, he went on to work as a special security representative for the Lockheed Missiles and Space Company in Sunnyvale,

California.

In 1968, Gayton became the first full-time black coach for the University of Washington. He was also assigned to the Department of University Relations and served as an assistant to the department's vice president. During his tenure as an assistant football coach, Gayton recruited fourteen black players, the most in the University of Washington's history. In 1969, in protest of the suspension of four black players by Coach Jim Owens for threatening to boycott the team, Gayton resigned as head coach and was appointed to the new position of Director of Affirmative Action Programs. As the director, he established the first affirmative action program by an institution of higher learning in the state, and instituted the first comprehensive staff training program at the University of Washington. In 1972, Gayton earned his M.A. degree in public administration, and in 1976, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Washington. Shortly after, he was hired as a full-time assistant professor in the Department of Public Administration at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida.

After serving two years as Assistant Professor, Gayton was recruited by the Boeing Company as Corporate Manager of Education Relations, and was responsible for supervising a contract with Cogswell College. Under his leadership, Boeing helped its employees in furthering their education by promoting night classes at Cogswell College. In the mid-1980s, Gayton was promoted to Director of Education Relations and Training, and in 1991, he became Boeing's Corporate Director of College and University Relations. From 1997 until 2001, Gayton served under Governor Gary Locke as the Commissioner of Washington State Department of Employment Security. Prior to becoming the Executive Director of the Northwest African American Museum in 2005, Gayton was a lecturer and consultant for the University of Washington. He serves on several boards, including the U.S. Department of Education National Advisory Panel/National Center for Post Secondary Governance and Finance and The Association of Governing Boards. Gayton retired as Executive Director June 25, 2008 and lives in Seattle, Washington with his wife Carmen and their son Chandler.

Carver Gayton was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on June 4, 2008 and October 9, 2017.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Carver Gayton was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 4, 2008 and October 9, 2017, in Seattle, Washington, and was recorded on 8 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files. Corporate executive, academic administrator, and museum chief executive Carver Gayton (1938 - ) became the first black F.B.I. agent from the State of Washington. Gayton also became the first full-time black coach for the University of Washington in 1968. When appointed as Director of Affirmative Action programs, he established the first affirmative action program by an institution of higher learning in the state.

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## Restrictions

### Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

### Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

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## Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Gayton, Carver

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Gayton, Carver--Interviews

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African American executives--Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## Occupations:

Civic Leader

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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## Administrative Information

### Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

### Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Carver Gayton, June 4, 2008 and October 9, 2017.  
The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

## Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Carver Gayton, Section A2008\_080\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

Carver Gayton was born on October 18, 1938 in Seattle, Washington to Virginia Clark Gayton and John J. Gayton. His maternal great-grandfather, Lewis Clarke, was born a slave in 1815 in Campbell County, Kentucky, where he was the son of an enslaved black woman and a white Revolutionary War soldier. He escaped to Canada; and, in 1846, published a slave narrative based on his life, which inspired the character of George Harris in Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' Clarke died in 1897, and laid in state at the Kentucky State Capitol. Gayton's maternal grandfather, Cyrus Clark, was born in 1865 in Windsor, Canada, and returned with his family to Kentucky after the Civil War. He became a railroad porter, and married Guela Johnson Clark, who gave birth to Gayton's mother in Nashville, Tennessee in 1903. Gayton's maternal family later moved to Spokane, Washington. His mother attended Howard University in Washington, D.C., where she lived with her paternal uncle, patent attorney Henry Baker.

African American families--Washington (State)--Seattle.

African American abolitionists.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 1811-1896.

African Americans--Ontario--History--19th century.

Video Oral History Interview with Carver Gayton, Section A2008\_080\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:20 ?

Carver Gayton's paternal great-grandfather was a sharecropper in Yazoo County, Mississippi, and a descendant of slaves abducted from the Congo. His paternal grandfather, John T. Gayton, was born around 1866 in Benton, Mississippi, and moved in 1888 to Seattle, Washington. There, he was employed as a barber, bailiff and the head steward of the Rainier Club. In his later years, he was a librarian for the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington, where the lawyers admired his strong memory. He was a Mason and lifelong Republican, and close friends with newspaper publisher Horace R. Cayton, Sr. Gayton's father, John J. Gayton, was born in 1890, and spent his

early years on a farm in Hazelwood, Washington. After moving to Seattle as a child, Gayton's father worked with his brothers as bartenders at the Rainier Club and the Seattle Tennis Club. His father attended Seattle's Franklin High School, and was active with the Democratic Party.

African American families--Washington (State)--Seattle.

Revels, Hiram Rhoades, 1822-1901.

Video Oral History Interview with Carver Gayton, Section A2008\_080\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Carver Gayton's parents, Virginia Clark Gayton and John J. Gayton, met in 1926 after his mother's move to Seattle, Washington, where she initially lived in the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA. His father, a talented singer, was trained at the Cornish School of Music, and admired tenor Roland Hayes. He turned down an offer to study music in England, in order to marry Gayton's mother. They had eight children, of whom Gayton was the sixth born. His older brother was civil rights attorney Gary Gayton. In Seattle, Gayton initially lived in the Central District; and, in the sixth grade, moved with his family to the Madrona neighborhood, where they were the first black household. The community was otherwise multicultural, and some of Gayton's close friends were Sephardic Jews. Gayton began his education at the Madrona School, and then attended Edmond S. Meany Junior High School and James A. Garfield High School, where record producer Quincy Jones was an alumnus. He also recalls his mother's strict discipline.

African American families--Washington (State)--Seattle.

African American couples--Washington (State)--Seattle.

Segregation--Washington (State)--Seattle.

Video Oral History Interview with Carver Gayton, Section A2008\_080\_002\_004, TRT: 4:29:16 ?

Carver Gayton grew up in the Central District of Seattle, Washington, where he attended Edmond S. Meany Junior High School and James A. Garfield High School. He excelled in football as a linebacker and a punter; and he played in the 1956 Washington all-star game in Spokane, Washington. Gayton received encouragement from his language arts teacher, Miriam Eskinazi, who motivated him to succeed academically. Upon graduation, Gayton received a football scholarship to attend the University of Washington in Seattle, where he studied English and history. Despite his knee injury, he joined his teammates in defeating the University of Wisconsin-Madison Badgers in the 1960 Rose Bowl. However, the Washington Huskies' black players, including Luther Carr, Jr., George Fleming, Joe Jones and Ray Jackson, were only permitted to play a few positions. Gayton and his teammates were recognized by black publications like the Los Angeles Sentinel and the Philadelphia Courier for their success.

Video Oral History Interview with Carver Gayton, Section A2008\_080\_002\_005, TRT: 5:32:35 ?

Carver Gayton played football at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington. However, he suffered significant injuries that necessitated surgery in subsequent years. Gayton reflects upon the changing attitudes toward football injuries, like concussions. Gayton studied history under Thomas J. Pressly, a white professor from Tennessee whose course explored themes of race and civil rights. Pressly supported Gayton's career interests, yet he equated Gayton's maternal great-grandfather, Lewis Clarke's slave narrative with propaganda. Upon graduating in 1960, Gayton began teaching English at his alma mater, Seattle's James A. Garfield High School. At this point in the interview, Gayton talks about friends of his parents, Virginia Clark Gayton and John J. Gayton, including Edward L. Jones, who was a Seattle-based historian and an early proponent of the Out of Africa origin model of humanity.

Video Oral History Interview with Carver Gayton, Section A2008\_080\_002\_006, TRT: 6:29:11 ?

Carver Gayton joined the faculty of James A. Garfield High School in Seattle, Washington in 1961. There, he introduced black studies themes to his U.S. history classes, which the school's principal supported despite student resistance. Also that year, Reverend Samuel McKinney, the pastor of Seattle's Mount Zion Baptist Church, invited Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to speak at Garfield High School, where Gayton had the opportunity to shake Dr. King's hand. Heeding the suggestion of his brother, Gary Gayton, Gayton joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 1963. Gayton trained under FBI special agent Mark Felt at the academy in Quantico, Virginia. He was then sent to Kansas City, Missouri, the first former slave state to employ a black FBI agent. Around this time, common representations of the FBI included television programs like 'The F.B.I.' and 'The Untouchables.' Gayton also talks about the importance of learning African American history.

Video Oral History Interview with Carver Gayton, Section A2008\_080\_002\_007, TRT: 7:26:32 ?

Carver Gayton was one of three African Americans in his training class at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Quantico, Virginia in 1963. Upon graduating from the academy, he met FBI director J. Edgar Hoover; and was assigned to cover the states of Missouri and Kansas. In the Kansas City FBI office, Gayton worked with James P. Hosty, who was later investigated for being in contact with Lee Harvey Oswald at the time of President John F. Kennedy's assassination. In 1964, the FBI sent a hundred agents to Philadelphia, Mississippi to investigate the murders of Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney. At this point in the interview, Gayton talks about the FBI's infiltration of the Ku Klux Klan and the Communist Party; the relationship between the FBI and Kansas City law enforcement; and the absence of African American FBI agents in the South. Gayton was later recognized for his contributions to the Civil Rights Movement in Seattle, Washington.

Video Oral History Interview with Carver Gayton, Section A2008\_080\_002\_008, TRT: 8:31:43 ?

Carver Gayton served as a special agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the central district of Kansas City, Missouri from 1963 to 1964. During this period, he met Kansas State Senate hopeful George Haley, who introduced Gayton to his brother, Alex Haley. At this point in the interview, Gayton talks about his relationships with FBI informants who were connected to criminal organizations, like La Cosa Nostra. Gayton was then transferred to the FBI office in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he primarily handled bank robberies and fugitive cases. He continued to befriend a variety of informants, including one who alerted him to a planned mass poisoning of police officers during the 1964 riots in North Philadelphia. Around this time, he and other FBI agents were also frequently threatened by white supremacists. In 1967, Gayton decided to leave the FBI; and he returned to Seattle, Washington, where he was hired as a security representative at the Lockheed Missiles and Space Company.