

Carr, Julian S. ^[1]

Carr, Julian S. [Shakespeare]

By Michael Coffey, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, 2020.

1845-1924

Julian Shakespeare Carr was a major North Carolina industrialist in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Known for his business successes and his philanthropic activities, he was also a key figure in the state's white supremacist movement and, through his public addresses, an important shaper of North Carolina's variant of the post-Civil War "Lost Cause" myth.



"General" J.S. Carr, November 22, 1923, in military dress. Image from the National Photo Company Collection at the Library of Congress. This image of Carr has been excerpted from the original photo which shows Carr standing with two women and a man, three are holding flags.

^[2]Born in 1845 to Chapel Hill merchant and slaveholder John Wesley Carr, Julian Carr entered the University of North Carolina in 1862. In 1863 he was conscripted into Confederate service and was initially detailed as a clerk for the Bureau of Conscription. In the following year he was transferred to Company K of the 41st Regiment N.C. Troops (3rd Regiment N.C. Cavalry), serving with the rank of private. Following the war, he returned to the university and then spent two years working in business for his uncle in Arkansas. After his return to the state, he went to work with the Durham-based tobacco firm W. T. Blackwell and Company. With the help of a \$4,000 gift from his father, Carr purchased a one-third interest in Blackwell. Carr's marketing of the company prominently featured its Bull Durham trademark, and the company's brand became famous worldwide. Carr soon branched out into other areas of business, including textiles and banking. His purchase of the Thomas Lloyd Mill led to the renaming of the surrounding community to Carrboro.

Carr also provided financial assistance to a variety of individuals and organizations. He donated land for the relocation of Trinity College to Durham and financed the building of a dormitory at the University of North Carolina. He also provided financial assistance to a number of other institutions, including Wake Forest, Davidson, Elon, Greensboro College, and St. Mary's. A racial paternalist, Carr also provided financial assistance to the North Carolina College of Negroes (modern North Carolina Central University) and the Training School for Colored People in Augusta, Georgia. He also assisted in the education of Charlie Soong, who would later play an important role in the Chinese Revolution. In addition, Carr provided financial assistance to Josephus Daniels in the latter's acquisition of the Raleigh News & Observer.

Active in Confederate veteran affairs, Carr was commander of the North Carolina division of the United Confederate Veterans from 1899 to 1915 and became leader of the national organization in 1921. He was given the honorary title of "general" by the organization for his efforts on behalf of veterans, even though during the war itself he held no higher rank than private.

Carr's attempted forays into politics were unsuccessful, as he was defeated in runs for both the lieutenant governorship and for a U.S. Senate seat. His political speeches and his various addresses related to memorializing the Confederacy demonstrate his commitment to racial inequality and his view that the white supremacy campaign of the 1890s and early 1900s was a continuation of the Confederate cause. He averred that the Confederate cause was based on the defense of states' rights rather than of slavery, and that in a sense the Confederates were the real victors of the war as states' rights still existed. He exaggerated the ratio of Union to Confederate forces as the cause of Confederate defeat, defended slavery as a positive good, and claimed that slaves were loyal to their masters during the war. He supported the disfranchisement of blacks, romanticized the role of the Ku Klux Klan during Reconstruction, and approved of lynchings and other forms of violence against African Americans. At the dedication speech of the monument to UNC students who entered Confederate service, Carr bragged of having whipped an African American woman near the site shortly after the end of the war due to her supposed insolence towards a white woman. The recovery and publication of the speech in recent times played a key role in the toppling of the monument, known locally as "Silent Sam," by protestors in 2018.

References:

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Image Credit:

National Photo Company. "Genl. J. S. Carr, May Belle B[...], Major, 11/22/23." Photograph. National Photo Company Collection. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2016836206/> [4] (accessed April 23, 2013).

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