ELLERBE W. CARTER FAMILY HISTORY
126 Grannis Ave., Titusville, Florida
(Roz Foster 5/28/15)

Ellerbe W. Carter, the eldest of five children, was born in Bibb County, Alabama in 1884 where his father and uncle owned the Briarfield Iron Works. The family returned to Virginia within a few years where Ellerbe spent his childhood growing up, graduated from the University of Virginia Law School in 1907, and practiced law for three years with his father who was also an attorney.

In 1910 he moved to Kentucky where he married his first wife Nancy Hall Pearson. They had two children, son Ellerbe Jr. and daughter Nancy Hall. Ellerbe became a member of the Kentucky National Guard and served as a captain in the Mexican conflict (sometimes referred to as the "Bandit War") in late 1916 and early 1917.



During the border conflicts with Mexico, Carter met a very interesting man by the name of George S. Patton. They joined other soldiers in searching for Pancho Villa after the attack on the U.S. border town of Columbus, New Mexico in 1916. They both played polo and Carter's daughter Patricia recalls a story that was told by her father about a polo match, "In one memorable polo match they played, Patton

wanted my father to bet him his horse on the match, but instead my father bet his shirt. When Patton won, he insisted that my father remove his shirt immediately after the match, while they were all still mounted on their horses."

Carter earned the rank of major in the European Theater during World War I. In the years that followed he remained in the Kentucky National Guard and received his star as a brigadier general in 1924 at the age of 38. While living in Louisville, Carter continued to practice law. He founded the Carter Guaranty Company in 1929. In the 1930's he was General Campaign Chairman of Jefferson Post's Unemployment Drive (or War Against Depression, March 17 – April 3, 1932).



During 1934-1936, he organized and trained the first Kentucky State Police Force, and held the positions of commander of the Kentucky National Guard and the Kentucky State Police, specified by a post state law that it must be filled by the National Guard commander. In 1939, as commander of the Kentucky National Guard, he led the effort to maintain peace during the period of martial law in Harlan County brought on by the coal miner strikes.

In 1941 as WWII approached, Carter deployed with the Kentucky National Guard as commander to Camp Shelby, Mississippi for training. Soon afterward in 1941, his wife Nancy perished in a tragic house fire in nearby Hattiesburg. The Guard unit went on to take part in the invasion of North Africa. At the age of 60 years, Carter did not meet the physical test requirements to take part in the North African campaign and was deployed to California. Gen. Carter's service included stationing at Fort Ord, California and The Presidio to oversee coastal protection. He later served as commander of the Artillery Replacement Center at Fort Bragg, N.C., and stayed at Fort Bragg until his retirement in March of 1946. Before he left camp 59 of his officers – captains to colonels – commended him with a scroll in which they expressed their "highest



Brigadier General
Ellerbe Winn Carter

respect and esteem". Throughout WWII he was listed as the highest ranking brigadier general for time in grade.

Prior to leaving the Army, General Carter purchased a home in March of 1946 located at 126 Grannis Ave., Titusville, Florida. He moved his family to Titusville to open a real estate brokerage business and in 1947 established East Coast Realty Co.

He was elected to the Titusville City Council in 1952 and served for six years. He persuaded City Council to get the town's fiscal affairs in order and strengthen the ability to sell bonds for utilities, roads and the like. This was a key mission of Gen. Carter in his initial years as a member of the city council. He helped save Draa Field as a high school football field when City Council wanted to build what would become Jess Parish Hospital on the property. Mr. Carter persuaded the council to select the current site on U.S. 1 and was instrumental in persuading property owners to sell to the city. He also led the effort for construction of low-income housing units at the corner of Grannis Avenue and Main Street. A plaque on a monument at the complex details Gen. Carter's efforts to get the housing built. The units – though remodeled many times over the years – are still there.

During the 1950s he also served as Mayor of Titusville, when the mayor was not a separately elected office, but a position filled by a chosen member of the City Council.

Following his years of service on the city council he put all of his energy in development of the Dixie Village subdivision which he owned and Orange Grove Park of which he was part owner. He established Titusville's first Republican Club and the first few meetings of the club were so small that everyone could fit on the front porch of the Grannis Avenue house. Helping to establish a two-party voting system in Titusville, he lived to see the election of a Republican to Congress, Dan Gurney, from the district that included Titusville. The Carters continued to be active in the Republican Party for many years, serving as the Republican National

Committeeman and Committeewoman, and campaigned for the election and re-election of President Eisenhower.

Mr. Carter also served as Republican State Executive Committeeman for Brevard County, Chamber of Commerce Director, served as President of the Lions Club for two terms, and was a member of the American Legion for over 40 years.

General Carter once said, “I advise every man to take an interest in politics, but to put the interest of his community and country above personal ambitions. He may turn out an unsuccessful politician, but he can have more pride in what he accomplishes and certainly be of more service to his community.”



Patricia Cloyd Carter

Patricia Cloyd Carter relentlessly pursued knowledge her entire life. She was avid reader and had a command of words both written and spoken. From childhood she mastered reciting Shakespeare, Tennyson and Chaucer for hours at a time. She often entertained her children and visitors with recitations in front of one of the fireplaces at the Grannis Avenue home. Her love of learning and pursuit of knowledge led her to enroll in night classes at Brevard Community College (presently East Florida State College) when she was in her 60s.

In the early 1950’s the Titusville Women’s Club ran a library which charged people to check out books. As a member, Patricia disagreed with charging to check out books. She decided to start a “free library,” open to all members of the public regardless of race, as a counter to the “paid membership” library operated by the Women’s Club. Mrs. Carter and her supporters went door to door soliciting book donations and secured enough books to open the Titusville Free Library. Mr. Carter rented a portion of the Titusville Chamber of Commerce building for the library, which faced Hopkins Avenue and was a stone’s throw away from the

Women's Club Library that fronted Broad Street. Mrs. Carter's daughter Winifred recalls that the location was chosen as a way to draw a contrast between the paid and free library.

"Come over here and read for free, was the new library's unofficial slogan." She recalls that the Carters put a sandbox and swing set inside the library to enable mothers to keep an eye on their children as they selected books.



When funding renewal time came for the Women's Club Library, Patricia also applied which resulted in a bitter fight for City funding between the two libraries. In the end, the City gave funding to the Women's Club Library with the requirement that they stop charging to check out a book. After running the Titusville Free Library for several years, Patricia had made her case for the good of the community and closed her "free" library. Many of the donated books were combined with the Carter's already large collection of books on floor-to-ceiling shelves in one room of the 126 S. Grannis Ave. house that became known as "The Library." Molly recalls, "Our parents continued to add books to this collection until their deaths. We didn't have internet or google but we had books on all topics at our finger tips. I remember Encyclopedia Britannica, World Book Encyclopedia. We had all the classics, history, and art. When I was younger I read all the Nancy Drew books, sometimes having to wait my turn as one of my sisters would get the new edition before I did."

The story of the “free library” is told in the 1951 pamphlet titled “The Little Library That Would Stay Open and Stay Free.” Within a few years, the town’s elected leaders agreed to start a free public library.

Patricia Carter raised nine children. Eight children were born to Gen. and Mrs. Carter, six were born in the Grannis Ave. home. Patricia had a son by a previous marriage, Robert (Barker Carter) who was 7 years old. Gen. Carter’s two children, Ellerbe Jr. and Nancy were already adults when he and Patricia married.


General Ellerbe W. Carter
Patricia Cloyd Carter
and children 1957

Mrs. Carter’s practice of delivering her children unattended at home brought media from near and far to Titusville. Patricia gained national and international prominence in the mid 1950’s after the Associated Press ran articles about her planning to have a child by natural childbirth, at home and unattended. The family was the subject of an article published in LOOK Magazine dated November 13, 1956 with several family photos. Mr. and Mrs. Carter also appeared on the Art Linkletter TV show.

From time to time some expectant women in the neighborhood would drop by to say, “Hey, I’m going to have a baby, got any do-it-yourself books?” During this time she wrote several articles on natural child birth, and wrote about her childbirth practices in a published book titled “Come Gently Sweet Luciana” in 1957. She and her husband owned a printing press that was located in their home library on which she printed a community newsletter, the “Well Born Wag” as well as other publications.

In 1959, with four other women she established the League of Liberated Women, for women who had by choice borne at least one child without professional assistance.



One thing she made quite clear – her way of having children may not be for all women. She strongly advised potential mothers that before trying natural childbirth, they have a long talk with and examination by their doctor. “For the woman who is not built for it, natural childbirth, and certainly one unattended by a doctor, could be extremely dangerous”. Mrs. Carter found it a source of deep, almost mystical satisfaction, and the results to prove it – 9 healthy, happy children; Robert (Barker), Molly, Teddy, Lila, Mary Winn, Clare, William Douglas II, Patricia and Winifred.

She was an avid supporter of the Equal Rights Movement and several articles were written in the Today newspaper about her “yard art” as a show of support.



In the 1960s, Mr. and Mrs. Carter challenged the Brevard County School Board to allow married women to attend public schools. Married men were allowed but not their wives. Their efforts led to a new policy to a permit married women to attend public schools. . Helping incarcerated pregnant women was a special project of Mrs. Carter, who for a time worked for the county parole and probation office.

She once led a protest to “save the trees in Blanton Park” that resulted in the City reversing its plans to strip the heavily treed park of its many trees. Mr. Carter prodded city officials to improve maintenance of the park and to make overall improvements over the years.

Mr. and Mrs. Carter fondly supported the arts, especially music and dance. In the 1950s, Mr. Carter hired a dance teacher from Orlando who came over on Saturday’s and gave lessons to the town’s children in the living room of the Grannis Avenue house. Awaiting students would peek through the porch windows into the living room. This was Titusville’s first dance school. They also donated their piano to a local church who did not have one.

Mr. and Mrs. Carter offered their home at 126 Grannis Ave. as a haven for many people in need of shelter. They served as advisers and counselors to residents of few means who needed guidance on property taxes, landlord evictions, bank foreclosures and other pressing problems. Gen. Carter's experience in business, law and civic matters was immensely valuable in this regard.



Brigadier General Ellerbe W. Carter, a prominent North Brevard businessman and civic leader died at the age of 86, October 11, 1972.

In 1983 Patricia Carter was honored with the designation as a Pioneer Woman of Brevard County from the American Association of University Women. The planting of a crepe myrtle tree in Mrs. Carter's honor and as a symbol of harmony followed the ceremony.

A loving free spirited mother, supportive wife and political activist, Patricia passed away May 9, 1984.

They were members of St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church.

The family home was later owned and occupied by the Carter's daughter Lila and her husband Paul Sanders. Lila was still living in the house when she passed away in February 2015.

The house had been issued several code violations, fell to despair and was threatened to be demolished if not brought into compliance by June 1, 2015. Through a collaborated effort of the North Brevard Heritage Foundation, Inc. (501c3), the City of Titusville and Carter family members, ownership of the house and property was transferred to the North Brevard Charities and Sharing Center (501c3). Mr. Sanders, property owner, transferred the house and property by quitclaim deed to niece Sonia Bradford and she quitclaim deeded it to the North



Brevard Charities Sharing Center on April 24, 2015. The North Brevard Charities and Sharing Center has been working with the City of Titusville to bring the house into code compliance by June 1, 2015. They are currently applying for grants and soliciting donations to rehabilitate the house for adaptive reuse. It will serve as a temporary and emergency overnight shelter for homeless individuals and families in North Brevard County. Overnight sheltering may also accommodate fire, storm and other emergency victims.

This historically significant house will continue to serve the public and will stand as a testament to the Carter family who have served the Titusville community in so many ways. Instead of the loss of a historic structure and a vacant lot, the rehabilitated house will provide much needed housing services for the community.



126 Grannis Ave, Titusville, Florida 32796

Parcel ID: 22-35-04-AU-00006.0-0022.00 Tax Acct: 2201149

Note: Brevard County Tax Records have the following information for property history:

Plat Bk 2, page 12 – Park Addition to Titusville 1913
DB 58, page 462 Robbins & Graham Addition to Titusville,
sold to John F. Bishop & wife Louisa
Plat Bk -505 sold to Ida E. Glenn 1915
DB 52 page 288 sold to Ida E. Glenn 1921
DB 83, page 287 sold to George H. Alderman
DB 90, page 108 sold to Adelaide L. Winslow 1929
DB 296, page 1 &7 sold to Eliaby (Ellerbe) Carter 1943
Probate death certificate 25-50 page 104, wife Patricia 24-14 page 1357, 2518 page 153
DB 2720 pages 1806 thru 1809 probate & exchanged hands from family members
Foreclosures 2958 page 196 2978

DB 3249 pages 3424 & 3425 Lila D. Carter & Paul Sanders, Jr.