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## Department of Archives and Manuscripts

### **Carter, Asa Earl (Ace)** **Publications, 1956 and undated**

#### **Background:**

Asa Earl Carter, segregationist, politician, speech-writer, and novelist, was born in Anniston, Alabama, on September 4, 1925, and lived in nearby Oxford. He was one of five children of Ralph and Hermione (Weatherly) Carter. Carter served in the United States Navy during World War II and later attended naval training school in Colorado.

In 1954 Carter moved to Birmingham, Alabama, where his political activities included hosting a radio show for the American States Rights Association and providing leadership in the Alabama Council movement. Later he founded the North Alabama White Citizens Council in Birmingham.

As a speech writer for George Wallace in the 1960s, Asa Carter wrote the most famous racist rhetoric of the civil rights era. From the steps of the Alabama state capitol building, on Inauguration Day, 1963, Wallace delivered the words Carter had written, "In the name of the greatest people that ever tread the earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny. And I say: Segregation now! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!"

Carter also wrote speeches for Lurleen Wallace when she ran successfully for the governorship of Alabama in 1966. Although Carter is associated by the media with George Wallace and publicly claimed that he wrote speeches for Wallace, Wallace denied any association or collaboration. Carter ran unsuccessfully against George Wallace in the Democratic primary for governor in 1970.

After his loss in the election, Carter gave up politics and left Alabama. He adopted the pseudonym Bedford Forrest Carter and assumed the role of a largely self-taught, part-Cherokee novelist named after Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest. By 1972 Carter was in Sweetwater, Texas, where he wrote his first novel, *Gone to Texas* (1973) which was made into the successful film *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976) starring Clint Eastwood.

Carter also wrote *The Vengeance Trial of Josey Wales* (1976), a sequel to his first novel; *The Education of Little Tree* (1976), a purported autobiography of his early years, considered his best book; and *Watch for Me on the Mountain* (1978), a sympathetic portrayal of Geronimo. Carter died in Abilene, Texas, on June 7, 1979; he is buried near Anniston, Alabama.

**Scope and Content:**

This collection contains three issues (March, April, and September-October 1956) of Carter's white supremacist newspaper *The Southerner* and one LP record entitled *Essays of Asa Carter, Album 1*. The record (purchased at a flea market by a member of the Archives staff) is the first in a series of twenty. On the record Carter reads four of his essays, "Communism: Trojan Horse," "Savage Showcase," Reconstruction Times," and "Jesse James."

**Related Collections:**

American States' Rights Association Papers (files 416.1.1 and 416.1.2)  
Birmingham, Ala. Police Department Surveillance Files (file 1125.1.16)  
James W. "Jimmie" Morgan Papers (file 266.11.35)  
United States. Federal Bureau of Investigation Asa Earl Carter Investigation Files

**Subject Areas:**

Carter, Asa Earl, 1925-1979  
Carter, Forrest  
Novelists, American -- 20th century.  
White supremacy movements.

**Size:** 1 reel microfilm and 1 LP record album

**Source:** Purchase and BPL staff.

**Restrictions:** Standard preservation and copyright restrictions.

**Guide Prepared by:** Jim Baggett

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**File Number:****Description:**

1265.1.1

*The Southerner*, March, April, and September-October 1956 (microfilm copy).

1265.1.2

*Essays of Asa Carter, Album 1* (33 1/3 LP).

This record album contains four of Carter's radio talks:

### “Savage Showcase”

This essay begins with excerpts from a report to Congress on the deteriorating conditions at the “showcase” Washington, D.C. public schools, a decline Asa Carter attributes to the integration of the schools and a decline he predicts for Alabama schools should white and “Negroid” races be forced to integrate. The rest of the essay seeks to explain how integrationists came to be viewed as progressive and enlightened in mainstream American culture while segregationists are mocked as backward and unintelligent. Carter follows this line of thinking back to Franz Boas (regarded among academics as the father of ethnology) whom Carter regards as a charlatan and instigator of a conspiracy among college anthropology departments to indoctrinate students with integrationist propaganda. The result, argues Carter, is not enlightenment but brainwashing, leading students to “tragic animalism.”

### “Communism: Trojan Horse”

Responding to the liberal press’s admonitions to readers to accept the “changing times,” Carter argues that the basis of this change is an illegal restructuring of the law so that power is centralized in the federal government, a move from rule by law to rule by men. This restructuring is being enacted by communists who have infiltrated the federal government and the United States Supreme Court. Citing a report by Senator Eastman, Carter argues that the Supreme Court justices (some appointed by Franklin Roosevelt) consistently voted for positions supported by the communists. On every level, the federal government is moving to control the lives of Americans down to the smallest detail, a strategy which predated and resulted in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Arguing that freedom means freedom from government, Carter pledges to continue to resist change in America.

### “Reconstruction Times”

Karl Marx maintained that the victory of communism would be assured if people could be convinced that the cause of communism is inevitable. Carter reminds his listeners of this logic and points out that Southerners seem to be acquiescing to integration for the same reason—“It’s coming anyway; there’s nothing we can do about it.” Using stories of his grandfather’s will and the will of Southerners in confronting the tyranny of the federal government during Reconstruction, Carter encourages Southerners to “renew

the covenant with our great-grandparents” and continue to fight for the heritage of the Southland. Part of this essay anticipates *The Education of Little Tree* in Carter’s story about the manners and teaching methods of his “mountain man” grandfather.

“Jesse James”

Asa Carter counters the depictions of Jesse James as either a Marxist Robin Hood driven to stealing by oppressive capitalism or as a common thief and brutal killer by “plowing through” the old books that are being culled and replaced by liberal revisionist historians. According to Carter, the true story of Jesse James is being silenced because James was a true Confederate and a victim of repeated cruelty and deceit by the federal government. James robbed banks because they were owned by carpetbaggers, and he robbed trains owned by “rich Yankees.” His exploits were his way of “proving that the all powerful government was not all powerful,” and Jesse James was a symbol of hope and resistance to Southerners to whom freedom has always meant freedom from the tyranny of a centralized government.