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### Edmund Green

Wimer Amina Carter Foundation

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# Bridges That Carried Us Over Project

## Interview Summary

**Interviewee:**

Edmund Greene

**Interviewer:**

Unknown

**Interview Date:**

February 24, 2023

**Interview Location:**

San Bernardino, CA

**Length:**

00:07:39

**Interview Summary completed by:**

M. Camacho Nuno, 2024

**Description:**

In this interview, Edmund Greene is the guest. Greene speaks about his role as the BSU president in San Gorgonio High School without even running for office. He then spoke about how he was in the first class to be bused into the high school, leading to racist violence that targeted him and other Black students. Over time, he mentions that racial tensions cooled but never went away entirely. Green then talks about BSU's role in mobilizing students and the need to be aware of the history to which the Black population has contributed. Importantly, he mentions how every ethnic group will have people who are just looking for chaos and are prejudiced. The interview ends with Greene and the interviewer discussing Black Study courses in the high school.

**Subject Topic:**

- High School
- BSU Presidency
- Racial Tension
- Riots
- Black Awareness and Activism
- School Curriculum

**Spatial Coverage:**

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
California State University, San Bernardino	5500 University Pkwy, San Bernardino, CA 92407
San Gorgonio High School	2299 Pacific St, San Bernardino, CA 92404

**Temporal Coverage:**

2023

**Key Events:**

- Greene discusses the Black Movement and becoming BSU president.
- Being the first class that was bussed to San Geronio High School and all the racist violence that followed it.
- Student Activism and eventual cooling of racial tensions.
- The importance of Black awareness and the need to be accepting.
- Black Study courses that arrived at the high school after Greene graduated.

**Key Organizations:**

- BSU

**Interview Index:**

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Video	00:00:09 - 00:02:27	Greene talks about being in the first class to get bused and the violence that came afterward.
Digital Video	00:03:36 - 00:04:26	BSU in mobilizing and protecting the Black student population.
Digital Video	00:06:50 - 00:07:21	The Black studies courses in San Geronio High School.

**Related Materials**

Additional oral history interviews are available from the Bridges That Carried Us Over Project at CSUSB, <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/bridges/>

**Full interview transcript can be found below.**

## Interview Transcript

### Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

Q: Can you clap your hands one times one? Okay. We're here doing a little interview about the BSU for the Bridges That Carried Us Over project with [Edmund Greene?]. And so I was wanting you to tell us a bit about how you first got involved in the BSU. Who or what inspired you?

EDMUND GREENE: Since the Black movement was really big then, not to mention the fact we were the first class to get out there, bused out there, the new bills went in effect, so I don't remember running for it, I think somebody nominated me for it, and then next thing I know I'm president, but had a great time doing it, unifying everybody. And all the races, everybody, we tried to unify everybody. Just get along, have a good time. [00:01:00]

Q: You said you were the first class to get bused to San G. I read about that story but I've never heard somebody who went through it, what was it like?

EDMUND GREENE: It was all three years I was there we had massive demonstrations, we had riots where we actually had to be escorted home with helicopters and police escort. It was wild.

Q: Can you tell me more about that? What would kick off those conflicts? What was happening?

EDMUND GREENE: A lot of times mainly it was supposed to have been about Blacks and whites, right? We were the first class to get out there. It was probably 60 or 70 of us out there in the school. Most of them were in the BSU. I think I have -- in fact I have a picture of us (inaudible) a BSU picture I have. Like I said mainly just it was tight, it was really [00:02:00] tight. We had police all over the place. I'm talking about even during school years. I mean even during classes.

Out in the parking lot. You'd hear one little incident, right? I think a lot of them were even made up. Oh, there's eight people over here jumping on this person. Next thing you know it's a full-on riot. And I was on the basketball team. And my coach (inaudible) told me, "You go out that door, you're not going to be on the team." But just I was one of the starters. I was going out the door anyway.

Q: Was it a student walkout?

EDMUND GREENE: Huh?

Q: Was it a student walkout?

EDMUND GREENE: No no, it was basically we were in the gym, and during practice, when one of these big incidents started. So you looked out in the (inaudible) there was just people fighting everywhere. It was really wild. And so like I said my coach said, "Oh." [00:03:00] Right in the middle of practice he said, "If you go out there, I'm going to kick you off the team." I turned around and looked at him. I said, "Well, I guess you'll have to kick me off the team." I never got disciplined. And we had meetings with even all the racists there, just trying to stem it down, because it was really just way out of control. There was really no actual reason for it. It was during that time. A lot of protests, a lot of fighting. We had it big-time at San G.

Q: What kinds of stuff did the BSU do to both protect the Black students and mobilize the Black students?

EDMUND GREENE: Well, at that time we started having where no student going to be walking alone, going to be two or three of them, so at least they have eyes all around and can be more protected. We had extra meetings. [00:04:00] Just to try to address the problem. Matter of fact, we had the local newspaper come down there. I got a picture of that too (inaudible) where we had all the clubs that were divided by race, right? All up there. We all met. And we were just trying

to get into that problem. It was wild, it was wild.

Q: It sounds it. What would kick off the problem? Why was there the problem in the first place?

EDMUND GREENE: Mainly because we were the first Black people up there so it was a lot of racial stuff.

Q: What would the white students and parents do in response?

EDMUND GREENE: (inaudible) what kicked it off, sometimes it would just be maybe a small fight out in the parking lot which turns into a giant fight with hundreds and hundreds of people involved in it. [00:05:00] It didn't take much because it was a powder keg anyway. Just needed a little igniting and it was all over the place.

Q: And did it change over the time that you were in school? By the time you graduated was it more calm or not really?

EDMUND GREENE: It was a little bit more calm by the time I graduated as a senior in '72. But it was still there. But at least it wasn't that bad. First couple years it was just like riots were amok. And then my third year I think we only had one big one. And then got (inaudible) anyway it was still a good experience. Still a (inaudible) for life.

Q: And how did your work in the BSU affect your life after you graduated?

EDMUND GREENE: Well, yeah, because it was a lot of Black awareness during that time. [00:06:00] And so at that point it made me dig more into the history of the Blacks and what we have contributed. And so you get to see a whole bunch that you weren't taught in school. Which today I still preach that. And also I always preach the fact that I'm not prejudiced with anybody, there's knuckleheads in every race. I have good friends who are Hispanic, good friends that are white, good friends that are Black, good friends that are Samoan. It just gives you awareness. We're all here. We're all people. Yes, we got slight differences. Okay,

big deal. Bottom line is we're all people.

Q: And there was no Black studies course at San G when you were in school?

EDMUND GREENE: I think they did. Is it just a straight curriculum [00:07:00] or something that was just devoted to that? No. There wasn't anything like that. Because I would have been in it.

Q: Some of the BSUs I know were asking for that kind of class.

EDMUND GREENE: Oh yeah, oh yeah. I think that started happening right after I left. Right after I left I started to hear (inaudible).

Q: Well, thank you so much for sharing a couple stories. I don't want to interfere with your party. So we'll stop there. But we'll talk more about the (inaudible) and other stuff.

EDMUND GREENE: Great place to grow up, I enjoyed growing up out there. Would do it all over again. [00:07:38]

**End of Interview:**  
[00:07:39]