

**Volume 16**

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**A Moment in Time Capsule 1960 –  
Greensboro Sit-Ins begin February 1,  
1960**

**Lead: Beginning in early 1960, attempts by black college students to integrate the lunch counter at the Elm Street Woolworth's Department Store in Greensboro, N.C. gave start to the sit-in movement.**

**Intro: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Since the Brown v. Board decision by the Supreme Court in 1954, pressure had begun to build in the black community to take direct action to end segregation in other**

**parts of society. Particularly galling were the laws providing for “whites-only” public accommodations such as eating establishments. Department and drug stores such as Woolworth’s, Kress, Walgreen’s and Thalheimer’s in towns and cities across the south provided quick food and cheap eating services, usually lunch counters as a convenience for customers, students or workers on lunch breaks. African-Americans were denied access to these counters despite the fact that they were loyal customers in other parts of the stores.**

**Beginning after Christmas break on February 1, 1960, Ezell Blair, Jr, Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, and David Richmond, four students from**

**North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro, shopped for school supplies and then sat down at the lunch counter in Woolworth's and asked to be served. Refused by the waitress and then the manager, they remained in their seats until the store closed. The next day they were joined by two more students, were refused service, and sat from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM, reading and doing their homework. Originally called by the media a "sit-down" soon the movement assumed the name "sit-in."**

**Word spread by telephone calls and media coverage to colleges all over the South and soon "sit-ins" were occurring in stores all over**

**Greensboro and in other cities such as Richmond, Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Raleigh and Fayetteville, buttressed by picket lines outside the stores and boycotts of the stores. By the end of the year 70,000 protesters, mostly black, had participated, 3000 had been arrested and most of the chain stores had caved in, no longer willing to enforce a law that had caused a precipitous drop in profits.**

**Research by Erin Morgan, at the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

## Resources

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