

In Last Five Years

Growth Of Blacks With Food Lion Increased Tremendously

By Lori Grier and Karen Parker
Post Staff Writers

Food Lion Stores, then called Food Town, opened in Salisbury, N.C. with one store and a handful of employees. Today, there are more than 200 stores and approximately 9,000 employees. Many of those employees are black, but instead of being cashiers, bag boys or janitors, they hold top positions at Food Lion.

Mrs. Anne Davis, 36, of Salisbury, N.C., works in the Accounts Payable Department. As a former cashier in 1977, she ordered drugs and worked in the meat department. Mr. Berrier, former treasurer-secretary of the company, called Davis and told her about the position available in the Accounts Payable Department in 1979.

"I like the company. I have felt comfortable working here since day one," admitted Davis.

Although there are nine blacks and 17 whites in her department, she feels that "there are no opportunities for other blacks at present, because the company isn't hiring anyone now."

She would like to see Food Lion develop a screening process where both black and white employees could screen the employees to rid some of the negative attitudes of the employees.

She definitely has a future with Food Lion. "I have been asked to apply for promotions, but I turned them down. My family comes first, and my children keep me busy. I have flexible hours, and I just want to do what I'm doing," she informed.

Mrs. Anne Davis is a graduate of Dunbar High School, East Spencer, N.C. and attended Salisbury Business College. She is a member of the Senior Usher Board and Gospelers Choir at Shady Grove Baptist Church where Rev. John Gaston is pastor. She and Andrew Davis Sr. are the parents of Andrew Jr., 15 and L'Keisha, 7. Her hobbies include bingo, creative writing and short stories.

Mr. Vernon Sloan, 30, of Salisbury, N.C., is the Receiving Supervisor in Warehouse No. 1 on Harrison Road. Mr. Jerry Sloan, his brother, worked as a selector in the warehouse in 1971. During that time, Vernon was a senior in high school. Vernon picked Jerry up from work one day and decided to fill out an application. Five days after graduation, he was hired. He has been supervisor for one year.

"I like some of the people who were here when I first came. During my second year, I quit twice because of a misunderstanding with my boss. Mr. Tom Smith, president of the company, told me about the good future and benefits I could have with the company. Things are better now," pointed out Sloan.

There are approximately 35 blacks and 165 whites in the warehouse. Sloan knows that there are possibilities for other blacks, "if they are willing to put up with the hard work."

He would like to see a black personnel department manager assist in the screening process for hiring. "I would also like to see more blacks have the opportunity to show their abilities in other areas besides selecting products," he added.

His quitting days at Food Lion are events of the past. "I want to stay and grow with Food Lion. I'm going to try to end my career here because of the benefits. I hope to get 30 or 35 years," he predicted.

"I would like to thank Mr. Willie Thompson for convincing me to stay during those hard times and Mr. Ed Jones for giving me a chance to enroll in courses the company offered and attend seminars," acknowledged Sloan.

Mr. Vernon Sloan is a graduate of West Rowan High School, Mt. Ulla, N.C. and took a corresponding course from Cornell University in marketing-retailing. He is a member of the Church of Christ, Woodleaf, N.C. where Rev. Atkins is pastor. He and



Pictured above are some of Food Lion's administrative and management employees. They are seated left to right:

Vernon Sloan, Anne Davis, Jerome Funderburk; standing left to right are Johnnie Carson and Darrell Elliott.

Rosetta are the parents of Christopher, 10; Vernon Jr., 9; Tonya, 6; and Lekesha, 15 months.

Mr. Johnnie Carson, 43, of Davie County, N.C., is Supervisor of Maintenance in the Salisbury and Petersburg, Va. areas. Mr. Joe Mitchell, supervisor at Food Lion, told him about the position in 1978. It took three months for them to hire Carson, because he didn't want the job offer. He wanted his business, Carson Services, which specializes in refrigeration, to be a success. His business began to fail in the latter part of 1978. He was the first black refrigeration man in Salisbury and the first hired by Food Lion.

"I feel like I should have been here 15 years ago. I would have had a better opportunity in advancement for skills and promotion. If you apply yourself, this company will help you," related Carson.

The man voted most likely not to succeed in high school is in charge of six men. One who is black, Mr. Issac Markham, gives 110 percent effort, according to Carson. "The first thing I ask a person is if they are prejudice against me, because they don't spend black money. They spend green money," he emphasized.

Carson believes that blacks could have a chance in the company. "Most of the time blacks want something easier than refrigeration work. It's hard work, and you really have to apply yourself. Whatever I get I work for it. It doesn't take an education to make money, but it takes skills and wanting to do."

He would like to have more communication about the new products to know what's going on in the refrigeration industry.

He predicts a big future with Food Lion. "I want to be president of Food Lion, but I'm satisfied being supervisor of maintenance. I always aim for big goals. Just in case I fall one step short, I'll be vice president," he stated.

Carson continued, "If I see you're trying, I'll help you. If you don't put forth an effort then forget it. That's also the company's outlook."

Mr. Johnnie Carson is a graduate of Davie County High School and attended North Carolina A&T State University where he had to withdraw and enlist in the 82nd Airborne Division because of financial problems. Later he attended IBM in Charlotte and Rowan Technical School where he received certificates in refrigeration. He is president of the Refrigeration Service Engineer Society, certified heat pump specialist, licensed in refrigeration, and is a member of the Scottish Rite Masons. He is also a member of New Bethel Baptist Church, Davie County, where they're in the process of getting a new minister. He and Martha are the parents of Mrs. April Butler and Mrs. Angel Bush.

Darrell Elliott and Jerome Funderburk hold administrative positions with Food Lion. They agree a sincere interest in the business and enthusiasm has been the key to their success.

Elliott, 24, is the perishable foods supervisor for Food Lion stores in eastern North Carolina. Projecting 280 more Food Lion stores will open throughout the Southeast in the next 10

Second in series

years, the Newark, New Jersey native speculates blacks can have a professional future with the grocery chain.

"The growth of blacks with Food Lion has increased considerably in the past five years," Elliott explained. "It takes initiative on the part of the employees to really progress. You must let people know what you want."

Though Elliott began his career with Food Lion only

four and a half years ago, he feels that "his exceptional progress will continue and looks forward to soon advancing to regional perishable foods supervisor."

Elliott stated, "If blacks will realize that there can be more to working for a food chain than doing the basic duties, they will understand the many opportunities available to them. When they get grocery store jobs they shouldn't stop at front-end jobs or settle for always

being a grocery manager; they must let somebody know what they want."

Funderburk certainly didn't hold back about his ambitions with Food Lion Stores. At 25 years of age he has progressed to grocery manager, and has every intention of becoming a store manager for Food Lion.

"I received my first job with Food Lion while I was a senior at Livingstone College," revealed Funderburk. "At the time I was a bagger and had plans to return back to my home in Washington, D.C. when I graduated." Apparently Funderburk was performing the type of dedicated service which Food Lion stores claim. His post-graduation plans were interrupted by an invitation from the store manager in Salisbury to remain with the company.

Now in a three-year period, Funderburk is store manager of Food Lion No. 10 located in Salisbury. "I'm still trying to move up to higher positions and I feel that I deserve to," Funderburk frankly stated. Presently he has trained over 200 managers for Food Lion Stores.

One disappointment that Funderburk experiences is the small number of blacks who train for management positions. "Out of the 200 managers which I have

trained, only two of them have been black," remarked Funderburk. "There are many opportunities for advancement, but the employee must have enthusiasm."

Elliott added, "Food Lion is a company that shows pride. That's what makes our company grow and that's what employees must have," he assured.

Elliott and Funderburk feel they are considered two of Food Lion's "good employees," not "good, black employees," suggesting promotion isn't based on the employee's color but his or her devotion to perform satisfactorily.

Elliott is a graduate of the University of South Carolina where he majored in accounting. He is married to Anita Gale who also works for Food Lion Stores. They are the parents of one son, Darrell Jr.

Funderburk and his wife, Adrian Renee, have two children, Nadezhda and Jerome Jr. Mrs. Funderburk is also a member of the Food Lion team as an employee.

Do you have something to say? Then do so for everyone to read. The Charlotte Post, the only other voice in town, welcomes all letters on various subjects.



BEAT THE HEAT - The record high temperatures that have been broiling the state for the past week didn't spare Campbell University students who had to register for fall classes in more than 100 degree temperatures. The registrar's office is trying to move the students along as quickly and conveniently as possible, but for students stuck under a hot sun, the cool breezes of autumn seem as far away as the end of the line. (Photo By Charlie Stines)

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