# Black Panther Party [1]

## Black Panther Party

by J. Christopher Schutz, 2006

See also: Wilmington Ten [2]; Wilmington Ten (from UNC-CH) [3]



Black Panther Convention, Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C., June 19, 1970. Image courtesy of Library of Congress. [4] The Black Panther Party [5] was founded in Oakland, Calif., in October 1966. The controversial organization espoused black pride and black control of neighborhood institutions, preached self-defense against alleged police brutality in African American [6] communities, and developed educational and food programs for the local black poor. The Black Panther Party quickly drew national media attention, and chapters formed in such cities as



Black Panther Convention, Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C., June 19, 1970. Image courtesy of Chicago, Library of Congress. [7] New York City, Des Moines, and Denver.

In North Carolina, Greensboro [8] had some Black Panther adherents, and Charlotte supporters formed the Afro-American Unity Organization, which failed to receive official recognition by the Oakland party headquarters. Benjamin Chavis, a future defendant in the Wilmington Ten [2] case, served as an officer in the short-lived Charlotte organization. It was Winston-Salem [9], however, that became home to the state's most organized Panther chapter [10], which operated a Free Breakfast for Children program; provided free clothing, free ambulance service, and classes in black consciousness; and held small rallies to promote its causes. The Winston-Salem office also established a satellite Community Information Center in nearby High Point, where a local police officer was wounded during a gun battle in February 1971.

Wherever it settled, including in Charlotte [11] and Winston-Salem [9], the Black Panther Party attracted the heavy scrutiny of the Federal Bureau of Investigation [12]. The bureau did not close its counterintelligence program files on the Black Panthers in North Carolina until the mid-1970s. By then, the Winston-Salem chapter, like many other Black Panther affiliates nationwide, was badly hampered by lack of funds, internal dissension, and the incarceration of its members.

**Reference:**

Philip S. Foner, ed., *The Black Panthers Speak* (2002).

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**Image Credit:**

Black Panther Convention, Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C., June 19, 1970. Image courtesy of Library of Congress. Available from http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003688170/ [4] (accessed September 19, 2012).

Black Panther Convention, Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C., June 19, 1970. Image courtesy of Library of Congress.Available from http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsca.04304/ [7] (accessed September 19, 2012).

**Subjects:**
Black and African American People [13]
Post War 20th Century (1946-2000) [14]
**Authors:**
Schutz, J. Christopher [15]
**Origin - location:**
Winston-Salem [16]
Charlotte [17]
**From:**
Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.[18]

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