



Carolina Population Center

In 1966, the Carolina Population Center was founded at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. To celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2006, a project was conducted to document the history of the Center. This transcript is an excerpt from an oral history interview.

Interviewee: Dick Udry

Interview conducted by: Grace Camblos

Interview date: October 11, 2005

Dick Udry was CPC Demographic Research Unit Director from 1973 – 1977, CPC Director from 1977 – 1992, and has been a CPC Fellow since 1992.

DU: I think that everybody would agree with me that what constituted population research in academia in the 1930s was demography, run by demographers, who were almost all sociologists, but the ones that weren't were economists. And they operated out of a couple of major universities, surprisingly enough beginning at the University of Miami of Ohio, and then going on to Princeton, and then going on to Michigan, and so on. But it was demography, was what population was. And then along came public health, who established - the schools of public health also established programs. And they were a mixture of demographic research, but also training programs to operate family planning programs. And those became the, so the addition of family planning programs as something that you taught in schools of public health became a part of the research activities also. And this essentially involved studies of births and deaths and marriages and divorces, and that was it. And then it came to, it added research on everything that has to do with any of those things. So it incorporated a lot of research in the family, insofar as it involved births, marriages, deaths, and divorces! And so I found that the research that I was doing on adolescents was considered population research, even though there were hardly any births, and no deaths, and a lot of sex. But that became population research. People wondered whether it was population research, at first, but then it became population research. And in that way, what was "population" incorporated a lot of other things that people were doing, and we called them population research.