

**African Elephant Profile**  
09/29/08

<b>Name</b>	Nita
<b>Age</b>	26, Came to the NC Zoo in May, 1979 direct from the wild in South Africa. She was approximately 3 yrs.old. She was probably part of a culling operation.
<b>Height</b>	8'
<b>Weight</b>	
<b>Physical Description</b>	Female. Nita is the smallest of the elephants in height but is rather chubby. She has only one tusk, the right side. Her ears are more rounded in shape as most elephants from South Africa tend to be. Also, Nita's tail hairs are normally very long, almost touching the ground.
<b>Medical Profile</b>	Nita has historically been subject to bouts of ventral edema starting around the navel and working it's way back towards the back legs. The largest it has ever gotten is softball size before slowly spreading and eventually going away. She hasn't had a case in the last 2-3 years. In 1995 she contracted salmonella. Although Nita had a severe case, she pulled through. She never completely stopped eating or drinking water although they were greatly diminished. She had 4 catheters in each ear pumping fluids to prevent dehydration, which would manifest itself in her reluctance in allowing herself to be stuck in the ears for blood draws. She has not shown any recurring symptoms of salmonella since recovering. Around 1982 or 1983, Nita got a rock stuck in one of the nostrils of her trunk. As the NCZoo didn't have a staff veterinarian, a vet from a private practice in Asheboro came to see what could be done. She was tranquilized, and the rock was extracted. After two days she was allowed back out in the exhibit. At closing, she was noticed exhibiting the same behaviors as when the other rock was lodged in her trunk. Sure enough, she had a rock lodged in her trunk! However, it was not the exact same rock as we had kept that rock in the elephant barn kitchen. Again, the vet was called to come and extract the rock from her trunk, which was successfully accomplished. Since then, Nita has had no more incidents with rocks.
<b>Psychological Profile</b>	Nita is usually uneasy with new people or situations but once she becomes accustomed to the new person or situation, she is very easy to work with and around. Nita is the least dangerous elephant in the collection. She is not an aggressive elephant and if she does get anxious or scared, she almost always moves away instead of charging or trying to hit someone. Nita is the matriarch, such as it is, being dominant over Diamond. Nita is subordinate to C'Sar but she and C'Sar get along very well.
<b>Training Profile</b>	Like C'Sar, Nita was originally trained in free contact in 1979. She was extremely responsive and easy to work with and around in free contact. The same is true in protected contact, but as mentioned before, if she is unsure, anxious, or out of sorts, she will go to a far space and just stand. This is usually the exception rather than the rule. Nita picks up new behaviors relatively quickly. The attached document lists the completed behaviors that Nita can perform.
<b>Comments</b>	In general, Nita is very easy to work around. She likes to dominate Diamond. She also likes to beg( like all elephants). As she approaches 30 yrs. old, it is imperative to try and get her bred.

**Nita died on 10 October 2002 after a 2 week illness. She lost her appetite and thirst. I.V. fluids were administered for several days. After about a week, she went down and could not get back up. She was rotated from side to side 2 times over 3-4 days. When it came time to rotate her again, she was lifted on a railing system to try and make it easier but she cried out once and died on the spot. A necropsy was performed and many samples were collected and sent off. We knew that Nita had an infection but all the tests have come back negative. We may never know what made Nita sick.**

In June of 1978, the N.C. Zoo received its first elephant, a 4 year old male from International Animal Exchange. The zoo had purchased 5 elephants from International, 1 male and 4 females. The male was already in the country, spending winters at the IAE holding facility in Michigan, and summers at the Toledo Zoo. At Toledo he was reported to be called Flapjack. Upon his arrival in North Carolina, his name became C'SaR. The company Contractors Service and Rental had donated a large part of the purchase price on the stipulation that they could name the little bull, ergo C-S-a-R. As the 4 females purchased were still in Africa, it was almost a year that C'SaR was the only elephant and he seem to thrive on all the attention. At that time no one on the keeper staff of the N.C. Zoo had any elephant experience or training. However, C'SaR's temperament was such that with some very basic commands just about anyone could work around him and did! Looking back after 25 years of working with C'SaR in both free and protected contact, the things that we did that first year cause me to just grin and shake my head. But on the other hand it served as a great foundation in some respects. We took him on walks in the woods and undeveloped parts of the zoo. We took him swimming in the large lake and grazing in open fields. Keepers would load him into a covered, wooden trailer and transport him from his stall in the newly built zebra/giraffe barn to the Contact Area of the Interim Zoo, about 1½ miles. There he would be unloaded, put on a picket line in a corral for the public to pet.

In July 1979 the N.C. Zoo contracted Benny White, from Busch Gardens Tampa, to come and start the training process of the elephants and the keepers in what would come to be known as free contact. Then, it was just elephant training. C'SaR really took to the training and was much easier to work around than the 4 year old female. C'SaR was taught to do all the basic behaviors: lie down, stretch out, sit, work on a tub, walk a plank, and pick up things and carry it with either his trunk or his tusks. We could also ride him as well. We felt the more behaviors we could teach him to perform, the better off we would be in the long term and this philosophy seems to have been borne out in both free and protected contact.

In 1981 C'SaR developed a severe limp on one of his front legs. As the N.C. Zoo did not have a staff veterinarian at the time, a veterinarian from a near by private practice came and examined C'SaR. It was determined to give C'SaR a painkiller, Butazolidine. The injection was given IV in the left ear. While the needle was in the vein, C'SaR shook his head a fraction causing the needle to come out of the vein, injecting a minute amount of the drug into ear tissue. That, unfortunately, was all that was needed. It took several months as keepers watched a portion of the ear slowly become necrosed and fall off. Today he has very limited use of that ear and his cooling system was compromised. He compensates for that by spending more time in the pool.

In 1985 he attacked a female keeper as a training session was finishing. No injuries were incurred, but it became an extremely valuable lesson to all who worked around the elephants. He can be very patient and forgiving, but he is still a male elephant and can become very dangerous very quickly. It still applies today as an adult male in a protected contact system.

In 1991 C'SaR made it abundantly clear that he had become too large and too dangerous to continue to be managed by free contact. It was decided that he would be managed by a "remote" system. He would walk to and from the exhibit on his own. This also meant that the keepers had little or no control of him. The NC Zoo's elephant barn was not set up to be a protected contact barn, we had no elephant restraint device, and protected contact was just getting started on the west coast. At this point in time, C'SaR was about 17 years old.

The N.C. Zoo converted to a protected contact system in 1994. Like most other bull elephants I've heard about in protected contact management, C'SaR really shines. He does so well that we start any new behaviors on him then, transfer what we learned from him to the females. He is dependable to the point that we can sometimes start new keepers training on him. Then C'SaR becomes the teacher and the keeper is the student.

In recent months we have started training C'SaR for reproductive assays. While he seems to have some physiological anomalies, we haven't given up hope yet of C'SaR siring babies. Again, during this training period his forgiving attitude shone forth as he would come into the restraint device time and again knowing that what was in store was probably going to be uncomfortable.

As you may be able to tell, I have been with C'SaR since his first day here at the zoo. We have both grown up physically and emotionally together and have seen many changes here at

the N.C. Zoo and the zoo profession. As you might guess, he will always have a special place in my heart as he has been part of my extended family for the last 25 years.