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Oral History Spring 07
Dr. Allen
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Formal Field Questions

A Note on Questions: I intend to divide my questioning into two different sections, Youth/Professional Experience. Each section will correspond to a different interview date. I understand that these categories are rather equivocal but I think it will be useful in allowing me to organize the chronology of the entire interview (I learned from the practice interview that this can be difficult when focusing on themes).

- Do I have permission to record you today?
- What is your full name?
- What is your current position?

Life in Arkansas and Tennessee

- What city and town were you born in?
- What day were you born?
- What was your earliest childhood memory?
- What was your town like?
- Did you know your neighbors?
- What kind of work did your father do?
- Where did he grow up?
- Where did he go to school?
- What was the very first school you attended?
- Was there much emphasis on education from family members?
- What were some of your favorite things you used to do as a kid?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- What kind of a student were you when you were very young?
- Did it ever seem strange to you that whites and blacks went to different schools?
- What did you think of white folks when you were younger?
- What were some methods you or your family used to deflect some of the racism?
- Did you ever retain any feelings of bitterness towards the white population as a whole?
- What were some of the interactions you had with the white community?
- Did the separateness or inequality of living conditions ever anger you?
- Did you have any favorite teachers?
- Any teachers that you despised?
- Was there a certain event or phase in your life that you remember that pushed

you toward academia?

- Do you ever think that you might have gotten married if you were not in academia?
- What was your high school like?
- When did you know that you wanted to go to Fisk?
- Had you ever visited Nashville up until that point?
- Did anyone else in your family ever attend college?
- Were any friends or family unsupportive of your decision to go to Fisk?
- Did you know what you wanted to study?
- How did you feel before you started? Nervous? Anxious? Terrified? Excited?
- Did you like Nashville?
- What didn't you like about it?
- Did you have any favorite political leaders at the time?
- What about black leaders?
- Did you feel compelled to participate in Civil Rights movement?
- Did the Civil Rights Movement have any affect on how you saw yourself or African-Americans in general?
- Do you think there was anything, technique, approach, leadership, that would have better served the Movement for racial and economic equality?
- What were some of your favorite memories of the Civil Rights Movement?
- Did you ever protest the war in Vietnam?
- Did you know anyone who fought in Vietnam?
- What did you think of the war? Did those feelings change at all throughout the course of the war?
- What kind of affect, both short and long term did the 1960s have on you?

Professional Experience

- How did you learn that you were awarded the Fullbright Scholarship?
- If you did not win the scholarship, how would that have changed your course in life?
- How did you decide what you wanted to study?
- Was it difficult to focus on academics when you were in a new and exciting foreign country?
- Did you miss home at all?
- What did you miss most about home?
- Did you make any lasting friendships in Spain?
- Did the whole experience affect your life? your own perspective on people or the world?
- What was your experience like writing your dissertation?
- Were you proud of yourself for finishing school?
- How supportive were your family members?
- Why did you come to Lasalle?
- Was the money good?
- What were your impressions of the school during the interview process?
- What did you think of Philly?
- Where did you live?

- Did you feel like LaSalle's campus population was experiencing the cultural upheaval as seemed to be occurring on other college campuses?
- Do you remember the very first time you stood in front of a class? Do you remember any of the students?
- Did you have any influential colleagues?
- Did you see any problems with the curriculum at LaSalle and if so did feel like it was up to you to improve it?
- How were you received by the rest of your colleagues?
- Any bad experiences with students or teachers?
- How long have you been involved in the Pennsylvania Abolitionist Association?
- How has that experience changed your life?
- Has it affected the direction of your scholarship?
- Where did you come up with the idea for your first book?
- Why did you think this topic was so important that a book needed to be written about it?
- How was the experience of research and writing different from writing your dissertation?
- Were you happy with it?
- How well was it received?
- Would you have done anything different?
- Do you have any frustrations with academia?
- Who are some of your favorite academics?
- Who was your least favorite president?
- Best writer of all time....
- What is your favorite movie?
- Who's your favorite musician?
- What will make you retire?
- How do you want people to think about race?
- What are some of the biggest obstacles to this?
- What do you think about Cornell West, James McWhorter and Eric Dyson?

- What do you want your enduring legacy to be here at LaSalle after you stop teaching?
- Or How do you want your students to remember you?