

Deborah Miles (D): Today is February 12, 2005 and we are at the Delta House in Asheville, North Carolina with two graduates of uhm Allen High School here in Asheville and I'd like for ya'll to state your names and what year you graduated from Allen.

Anita W. Carter (A): All right.....(laughter) I'm Anita White Carter and I graduated in 1963, three, yes, and I uhm.....

D: 1963

A: and this is my good friend

Viola Jones Spells (V): I'm Viola Jones Spells and I also graduated in 1963.

D: and we are both coincidentally librarians

V: uh huh

D: retired (laughter)

V: I have a new career thank you (laughter)

D: Well I have a couple of questions to start off with

V:..... It's my dream, well don't be like that, it's just my dream (laughter).....

D: Well, Allen was known throughout the south for being a very prestigious high school, so how do you think your experience uhm, either segregation or desegregation would have been different from people who went to Stephen's Lee.

D: Stephen's Lee is about the same really, except that Allen was little, or ....., it was just different

V: It was smaller, more intimate, I mean, it, Stephen's Lee was small, because my brother went to Stephen's Lee, but it was all girls and so we mostly focused on girl's issues and it was religious and so you focused on religious themes like every year we had a religious theme and we all went away, like, to a uhm retreat and we talked about religious things and you had the experience of getting up very early in the morning at sunrise and going out on the \_\_\_\_\_ field and being just by yourself and you saw all your other classmates and school mates individually standing there thinking about things that were important to you and how you wanted to relate to God and stuff like that. And we then we played bowling, you know we had to go down and set up the pins, we could roll the ball down there and bowl and that was really about the only bowling experience we had because we weren't allowed to go the bowling alleys or anything, uhm uhm recreational down there.

A: type stuff....

D: Where did ya'll set up the bowling alley? At Allen's?

V: It was that little retreat, it was way, it was out somewhere, I can't think of it now, right now what it was, but, it, they had like dorms and we had a chance to all be in the same room and late at night telling ghost stories and stuff like that.

D: So did, did you board at Allen.....

V: No, we were considered day students

A: I'm not sure, uhm if I can distinguish a particular difference between our experience and the experience of students at Stephen's Lee, except that uhm, it was a more intimate situation and I think we felt a little more protected uhm, from issues related to segregation, because we were sort of uhm, in our own little world, you might say and uhm we did have white teachers, so that and that was a very interesting experience to have the majority of teachers during the time when so much was going on with the problems of intergeneration and civil rights, and Viola just mentioned when we first came in, she just say two of them. We still know them, and Viola knows them better than I do.

D: and so, what are their names? And what do you remember about them?

V: uhm, well Miss. Rissley, Winiford Rissley was my piano teacher and I used to have to get up early in the morning before school started to go to Allen and have my piano lessons and then they had rooms with pianos, if you didn't own a piano you could go back there and practice. I laugh because the piano became a bone, a slight bone on contention in our family. (laughter) I won't go into that. (more laughter)

A: (Laughter)

V: but uhm, and uhm, Miss Walker, she was the principle of the school, not the principle, the superintendent and she mostly uhm did administrative kinds of things especially those that concerned the dormitory and stuff like that. And then uhm, Betty Sue Smith, she was our English teacher and uhm she was a very good teacher and I remember uhm, I remember we had to learn these poems and one was \_\_\_ by Richard Kip, Kip, Kipling? And I used to say, Miss Smith why do we have to learn this for? And she said, well this is one of the requirements and we have to learn this, and years later as I was, and in a very difficult situation at my job, that poem would come back to me and I always remember her.

D: Were these the first, was this the first time ya'll had had white teachers? When you went to Allen?

V: yeah, cus it was segregated,

A: Yeah, I went to Shiloh Elementary, which was a segregated a school.

V: I don't know when was the first time \_\_\_\_\_. I went to a catholic school first, and they had white nuns there. And uhm, then I went to Livingston Street.

D: what was the name of the.....

V: St. Anthony's ,.....

D: St. Anthony's. . . . . Did ya'll ever, did you hear by '63 if ya'll were probably at Allen at the beginning of the 60s, that Buncombe county schools were beginning to desegregate and maybe the beginning of Asheville City in '63-'64?

A: we were gone

V: we were gone and in college by then, in college

D: so you did ya'll ever hear anything about de, desegregation?

V: well I was on the committee, ASCORE, where black students met with uhm , Mr. Roland who was our sponsor, he owned a jewelry store and that's where we would meet and we would plan our desegregation activities, we marched when they had the Ingles Yellow Man paper boy, or bag boy, they fired him or something like that. Well they weren't hiring then.

A: They were the first.

V: and then we met to desegregate the lunch counters and I was on the committee to desegregate the library.

D: So tell me, if you have, how that went, what happened.

V: uhm, we would meet and uhm we would map out our strategy, our president at that time was James Ferguson, we called him BoBo, his is now a really big lawyer in Charlotte and he also was on the uhm, one of the lawyers for the Wilmington 10 case, so we were very fortunate to have uhm, James, I'll call him James, I was about to call him BoBo, (laughter) I'll call him James, uhm we were very fortunate to have him as our president because he was very inspiring and he had great leadership capabilities and he gathered up, and especially with the support of Mr. uhm Roland. So we would map out our strategies and uhm, what we were gonna do and what we want to attack and we also made lists of key places that we were gonna target for desegregation. And the library of course was one of them and we discussed why we were going to approach the library and what were the reasons behind the fact that we pay taxes and yet we were not allowed to use the library, that fact that the library received private funds from Mr. Pack, Pack and that in it, it stipulated that it could not serve black people. So we went and we had a committee and we visited the man who was the Director of the library at the time. And

he listened to our concerns and he said that as far as he was concerned that it shouldn't be a problem, but he would have to take it before the board. And so we made an appointment for the next meeting and we went back and he said that the board had agreed that we should uhm, that black people should be using the library, or could use the library and uhm he gave us a tour of the library and showed us the records that the library owned, that they kept in a vault and that was very, it was very uhm, inspiring and it made a great impact on my life because, as he toured us, showed us around the library, he also talked about how they had programs at the library. And I thought that was very interesting. In fact, I later \_\_\_\_\_ the library (laughter) and did lots of programs. So the fact that we weren't able to have that experience as children, as teenagers, as adults, to go to the library to read books and to have programs and to learn about other information, we just didn't, we weren't exposed to any of those things. And I just thought that was wonderful. And then after it became known, and we announced that we would have people with the various churches, and went and announced the things that were open or what we were about, what the next activity was or what we, how the people in the community to support us, uhm, that's how we got the information out. Then people weren't going to the library. I mean, I think they were in such a habit of not going, it just wasn't part of their lives, so it was really something we had to work on and encourage people to go the library. And when we went to the library, they had to feel comfortable in the library because they weren't used to be able; even though we had a library, it was very small, but I think by that time it was closed.

A: oh yeah, I think it was, I remember ah, I did use the library, I used it a lot. It was ah, it was up where Pack Place is now and I was so fascinated with how large it was compared to the one that I had used down on ah,

V: Eagle Street

A.: Eagle Street, yeah, I remember the first book I checked out was Great Expectations at the public library.

D: Do you remember what it was like to go into that library the first time.

A: Ahh, yes. I was very uncomfortable, ah, the building was old and cold to begin with. And then it was ah, it was un, and uncomfortable feeling. But it was necessary and uhm and Viola's right we didn't get very many people in.

V: It wasn't a very welcoming place, I think, that I know about libraries now,

D: It wasn't, it wasn't.

V: It was a very cold place, it wasn't a warm place, and of course the people, the people on staff there, they didn't really make you feel welcome and then the patrons who visited the library, they would look at you like, you don't belong here, ( cough) and so you didn't feel comfortable and uhm although I do remember librarian came back, I was in the

\_\_\_\_\_ and she asked me if she could help me so that made me feel a little more welcome, but uhm, that's just the way it was at that time.

D: Who else was involved in that, ASCORE ? A S C O R E?

V: Ask Anita , can you remember the initials? I feel I can't, I can't remember all of the initials stand for, I remember Community, uhm Organization for the Races

A: Racial Equality,

V: Right, Racial Equality yeah \_\_\_\_\_. I can ask \_\_\_\_\_.

?: \_\_\_\_\_ the library?

D: Are you serious?

V: We couldn't even go in the library

?: How long did it take them to get, I mean how long \_\_\_\_\_ like I did \_\_\_\_\_

A: Well if they had it, remember uhm, I'm not so sure we were ready to ask for it.

V: Or to ask because we had it at Allen

A: At Allen, and we had it at our uhm small library, but ah no, I don't remember there being

V: You have to remember, I know you can't relate, because your world is quite different from ours, but these were things that we were never, ever going to. So if it's not a part of your life, would you think to go to it? To use, how would you use it because you weren't using it before. We probably would use it more because we were in school and even though we had a library at Allen, I went because they told me I couldn't go. And I helped to get it open and I wanted to go in there and I loved books and I wanted to read books that weren't available to me. But it just took time and I don't, when I go to the library now, I don't really see a lot of black people there now.

A: No, not at all, not now.

V: So, well, I had this story that I remember and I just have to tell you the story.

D: \_\_\_\_\_ tell it.

V: We had the little library that was down on Eagle Street, and they gave us, I think the librarians from Pack Memorial came down to that the library gift stores, my mother took all the little black children that were there and they told a story, well by James Brothers and I really loved it and I thought it was wonderful and I wanted to hear more stories like

that, so I went up to the librarian and asked her, well I heard you say you give these story hours. Well \_\_\_\_\_ when is the next one? And she told me the next story hour. So I said well I would like to come, can I come. Oh yeah, you can come. So I went home and I announced to my mother that I was going to the next story hour. She says really, how, ahh, who said you were going to the next story hour. I said I asked the lady if I could come and she said I can, so I'm going to the next story hour. But I didn't know at that time anything about we couldn't go up to the big library. (laughter) But my mother took me, so I went, but I didn't go back because they had told a very boring story that time (laughter) so I didn't feel like going back any more. But

D: Did they let you in?

V: Oh yes, (laughter) they had told me I could come, and I went, so.

D: What an amazing thing that your mother, instead of telling you that you couldn't go

V: \_\_\_\_\_ folks.

A: You had to know her mother, she was a remarkable woman, (laughter) very remarkable.

D: Who else besides uhm, uhm, James Ferguson was in the ASCORE.

V: Bernie Freeman, uhm, it's difficult to remember....

A:, Frank.....

V: Yeah, Frank did come. Frank, I first met Frank, he came, my friend Zaporra Nicholas, and Viola was there, uhhh it's probably a lot of other, it's just that I've forgotten. When haven't been around those people in a long time, forget who all was there, but those I do remember, Will McGowan and his sister Vernell was there

D: \_\_\_\_\_

V: I wasn't \_\_\_\_\_, I ah, I'm not

A: Most of these were Stephen's Lee students, most of them were Stephen's Lee

V: Not well Allen, well Vernell was an Allen, we were there

A: Why was I not there

V: Probably because you lived in Shiloh maybe, and it was quite difficult for you to come in to meetings. That's what I \_\_\_\_\_/

A: That may be part of it, but I remember my father was, had a very different attitude towards integration, and he was very much afraid for his children. So that may have been part of it, and he was quite domineering, but I did live in Shiloh and my friends were different. At the time it was Shiloh and town and I was in Shiloh.

D: \_\_\_\_\_ I was wondering if there was not a lot of adult support for the students?

V: Ah, ah, ah, it may be and I would say that there was fear, because uhm when I was ready to go off to college, my mother made it very clear that she did not want me going down there marching, going and getting thrown in jail. And she didn't want me, to have to come down there (laughter) and so when I went to college, I didn't. And at that time James Ferguson was the president of the student government and he asked me, because I was always hanging around he since he was my neighbor and I knew him. So he said Viola are you going to come down and hear my address and I said my mother told me not to come down here marching, cus she was \_\_\_\_\_ (laughter). And so I didn't. And it's not that at did everything that my mother told me to, because I didn't, there were a lot of things that I, ah ah, I had a mind of my own and I chose what things I wanted to do by myself and then, but I think there, I think I had enough trying to uhm, do college and get my lessons and I also I really didn't want to worry my parents and they were making a big sacrifice for me to go to college and so I figured they had enough to take care of that (laughter) that was my whole thing right there. And I had done my thing in to help Asheville, so I learned to really focus in college.

D: And where did you go.

V: I went to NC Central, in Durham

D: And where did you go.

A: I went to college in Greensboro and I was very anxious to get involved. But the Greensboro activity had passed, I missed it. I went down in '64

V: The were, they they initiated it

A: Yeah, they initiated it, and a friend of mine, Viola, who was in the group, I'm pretty sure \_\_\_\_\_, had gotten arrested down in Bennet \_\_\_\_\_, in Greensboro. She was ahead of us, and I was really anxious to get down there, but the activity had moved on by the time I got there.

D: .....did ya'll have these conversations a lot, what was happening in Greensboro?

A: Yes, at school we did,

V: at Allen we did, because there was a girl, named ....., heck, it came to me the other day. It was, since you mention it.....it was like a

A: (laughter)

V: Nitty, twitty,

A: Maxine Twitty

V: Maxine Twitty, she had this thing, she had met E \_\_\_\_ Blair. I saw pictures recently; that's what brought it to my mind. She had met E \_\_\_\_ Blair was one of those students that initiated the sit-ins while he was A & T College at the lunch counters. And she would have this writing correspondence and we were girls, we would all talk about it because he was so cute. And we thought well how fine, she's writing to him. (laughter) Wow. And so we found out what was happening at Greensboro and you know how the sit-ins started with the activities they were doing there and uhm and of course we talked about it when we would meet, have a ASCORE meeting.

A: And I think the faculty, the teachers at Allen were very much aware and involved us in the conversations. Do you remember when we couldn't go to the movies downtown.

V: I remember when we couldn't, yeah

A: I mean, no Allen, because we were Allen students, we weren't allowed to go sit in the balcony, do you remember that, they told us do not go sit in the balcony (laughter).....

V: Maybe you didn't but I went (laughter)

A: It was sort of a, a, early kind of boycott for the movies. Do you remember that?

V: It may have been, and I just don't remember, because I decided that that was one of the things .....

A: And our teachers, I remember the teachers saying uhm, if they won't, why would you go and sit in the balcony, and it was frowned upon to go sit in the balcony at that period, but the conversation was there and....

V: Do you remember what teacher that was?

A: I don't remember, but I remember I didn't go to the movies for a while, for a while..... so, (laughter)

V: I went because, it was really one of the one things we could do and we had it for entertainment and such. ....but you didn't go to the movies, but do you remember when we had to save those caps to get into the movies for free on Saturday?

A: (laughter)

D: And which movies would you guys, which movie theaters did .....



V: The only one you could... but I remember

A: the Plaza

V: oh they had the Strand

?: Paramount

D: Which one? (door opening)

A: The Paramount

V: The Paramount

A: But I remember the Plaza, that's the only one .....

V: and the Strand, you could have never seen.....

D: Where was the Strand?

A: Where the Fine Arts theater is now

D: Okay that is the one that was called the Strand and the Plaza.....closed

V: Right

D: And where was the entrance for uhm the Balcony at.....

V: On Eagle Street

A: It was on Eagle Street, around the corner

D:.....

V: It was like look, a balcony, you go up, I mean it was like a.....

D: So never .....you, the customers coming in from one way would never see the other ..customers, ..... Is the Fine Arts that little door that's to the side now, how would you get into the one in front

V: .....

?: on side or (it was sad)

D: Jamal ..... be open.

J: I want to say that there was less willing to.....

A: The lunch counters were very difficult, because even after it was approved that we could go to the lunch counters, they still would not serve you.

D: .....

A: They just wouldn't serve you, you would just sit and sit and sit and they still wouldn't serve you.

V: And you would just,.... Then you got tired and you left and you never got served. And the waitress was very rude and they would uhm, you know, stare at you or ig .....and no body would say anything to you.

D: At which lunch counter

V: Cress'

D: That's the one on Haywood..

V: No. That's the one on a Patton

A: Uh huh

?: It that near the bank where the Heart Center is now?

V: Well both of them at times. Woolworth's and Kress', both of them, but seems like to me Kress' more so than Woolworths.

D: So you went to the Kress's and would sit.

V: Well I would go with someone. At least we would be in pairs, at least pairs and we would go and we would sit. Because once things opened up, you had to go in to test them. And we uhm, so which ever ones we'd targeted we'd definitely would test and encourage other people to go and test also. The community.

D: uhm huh I think there was another one called Newberry, is that one?.....

V: It may have been, I just can't remember all, but I remember those. Newberry?

A: Newberry, where was that at, Newberry, do you Newberry?

D: So it was just the Kress and

V: Kress, Woolworths

D: Woolworth's

V: and S & W...

A: S & W may have been a little later because they were private, so but I know eventually they did open up.

D: Can you tell us what else was going on Eagle Street during that time?

A: Some ghosts (laughter) I was concerned with.

? : ..... crisis that was going on during that time.

A: Try '63.

V: This was really happening before '63. Cus I was like the younger and BoBo was at least 3 or 4 years ahead of me, he was like a senior and I was like a freshman. So this, 63 was my senior year, so this was the c \_\_\_\_\_,

A: Late, late sixties, early '59 – '60 years

D: .....so this would have been 59-60.....

V:.....what basically was happening, except maybe uhm, uhm, the sit-ins, basically that most, the biggest thing in this country were the sit-ins and the marches and the strikes.

D: you mentioned a deal about, ah they wouldn't hire bag boys at the

A: That was at the first Ingles.

D: So what do you remember about that?

V: They used to spit at you, patrons coming in and walking by, that was like the only real mean thing, expect for having things saying to you or, but after that there wasn't anything really, you weren't jostled or pushed....

A: Your talking about at the lunch counters right?

V: No, when we marched, ah, because of wanting Ingles to hire bag boys, black bag boys. Right.

D: And where was this at one particular .....

V: I remember, ah, ah, I might be wrong, but it seems like it was the Ingles on College Street. Seems like it was down that way.

A: I thought it was A & P,

V: Maybe it was A & P, I just ..... a grocery store. (laughter)

D: .....groceries in it, may it was .....

V: I think it was A & P

D: .....across from the Court house.

V: Yes, that's, that's College Street isn't it.

D: uhm hum .....

V: .....the Tribunal, it was down there yeah.

D: So it was an A & P, .....

A: Well I don't know, I don't remember what ..... you know out in my area it was A & P, I remember there was one ah.....

V: Whatever grocery store was there, that was the one we.....

D: .....

V: marched at.

D: ..... did you have signs?

V: Yes we had signs,

D: And did you make.....

V: Yes we made all of our signs,

D: Do you remember.....

V: We didn't have money to buy anything so it was definitely made. (laugh)

D: And how many students were there?

V: We had a ....., I don't remember how many students were there, but we had a sizeable number of students.

D: and were there any adults?

V: I can't really remember

A: It probably was just students

D: And what did you parents think about you doing this, did they ever say anything to you?

V: Well they encouraged me, I mean, I wouldn't have been involved if my parents disagreed, I'd been home. (laughter) But my my parents supported me in going to the meetings and uhm my activites things, cus I did whatever my parents told me to do and I definitely, they must have supported me and agreed to it.

A: My parents were not supportive, my mother was, but my father wasn't.

D: What was his .....

A: He was just afraid for us. He was ah, my father was considerably older than my mother and ah, he was ....., he was considerably older so he was more of my grandfather's age than my father would have been and he was just frightened for me and really..... that's why I was so anxious to go to Greensboro. (laughter)

?.....

A: No, I mean, no not ....., you could make your own choices .....

D: .....one of the things that ya'll sort of talked about this from the very beginning, what were some of the ways that Allen did things, that you felt like the schools now could benefit from? Could, could do some of these similar rituals or the way students are taught or more interaction between the teachers and the students.

A: One thing, it had very small classes. And I don't think, I don't know if the schools can do that anymore, because it's just not possible given the number of students, but ah, I thought the interaction between student faculty was very different. We, we knew them so personally, they would have receptions for us, umm different kinds of interaction and I'm sure it was because we were so small. In my geometry class, there were two of us, Anita and Ernestine, taught by Mrs. Walkers,..... (laughter) uhm, they had somewhat of a new deal for you. (laughter) But uhm, I don't know what else. We did have a lot of rituals, a lot of rituals. Ah, I remember, and I don't recommend this for current students, would not work, but when we went to school, we had to go through inspection. You had to have, you had to stand there and show your nails; they had to be clean, ahmm it

V: It was a different culture.

A: It was a different time, a totally different time. It would not work here.

V: But I think it was good

A: I think it was good, I guess

V: We had to check for your hems, make sure you didn't have hanging hems, make sure you had a safety pin, and that you had the proper buttons to button up your clothes, and ah it was good for, remember it was an all girls school and so it was good for women to make sure they looked, were neat and appearance was great and looked good and uhmm, we all talked about whenever the girls in the dormitory, when on Sundays when we take them to different churches in the neighborhood, in the community. And whenever the Allen girls would come in they all had gloves and hats and stuff like that. We had a reunion, umm, several years back, some us met in \_\_\_\_\_ and we talked about some things we were not allowed to do, we could do them but were not allowed to, they frowned on us doing them. We weren't supposed to eat as we walked in the street, in out ..... I was like .....I could see myself running somewhere eating my lunch. (laughter) Allen wouldn't like that, (laughter).

A: Ladylike

V: You had to be

A: That was the word. That was the word.

V: You had to be very ladylike in all of your dealings, when things, it was funny but, I think it did have an impact with me because my, may daughter's expecting now and so we were talking the other day about, you know, her coming up and how I was. I would never check....., spank her in public. And she could count on that, but,

?: ....to school.....(laughter)

V: but that was, that was, you had to be very cordial and uhm cultured.

A: polite

V: yes, but it had it's place, you have to sometimes ..... in the real world you have to learn when to put that aside. (laughter)

A: One thing that I think ah, that we, there was a lot of focus on that was basic etiquette, uhm, that I think students could use a little bit more of now..... Ahh, the proper way to use eating utensils..

V: Well they had an open audience, and so we were taught to, to listen and to do as we were told. But I think students now, they are a lot more challenging than when we came

along, and I think that's good, and I think that these things can be taught to them but you have to think of really interesting ways to gain their attention and to put the message across, because I was a children's' librarian for many years and then lots of things we went over, my vacation reading club, hours .... the library, and ahh, it's just that you have to be 10 feet tall and you have to come up with some new things to get them , their attention, and you can do it.

D: What was graduation like?

A: Very ritualistic, very formal and

V: I thought it was great.....

A: I did too, there was a lot of, there was a lot of ahh.....

V: Because those are things you carry with you and you still remember and not something you just go through and its just, you know, but

A: It was more than a day, it was a week almost of activity. Uhm, we would have the mother/daughter banquet and mother's and that was during graduation week,

V: Yeah, it was a whole year of

A: Yeah , a whole.....

V: You had to have a senior ....., that was you conducted, you paired with someone, and .....

A: Fredia was my partner, she couldn't come to that she was supposed to

V: ahh and ah, we had to, and it was religious, it was a religious activity that happened around 5:00 o'clock and the two of you stood up at the stage and podiums and you had conducted a whole service, with scriptures and everything to support and hymns to support what your message was. And I remember we also had, hymn day, every class had to learn a hymn and it was like a little contest. Who could sing, which class would sing the best. And we won our senior year,.....(laughter)

?.....(laughter)

? .....memory .....(laughter)

?: I had my name on .....(laughter)

A: Ahhh,.....the mother/daughter banquet, which was the ladies thing. Ahh, that was part of ..... And mothers and daughters also dressed alike. Well, my mother and I dressed alike.....

D: ..... that stuff.

A: Well we did, and so

D: So what did your dress look like.....?

A: I remember it very distinctly, it was ah remember now this was the late 60s.... (laughter) You know you had the basic dress and it kind of fit at the waist and that was the split, no not flared, just sort of straight,

V: uhn huh, straight line...

A. yeah, straight line, and with a scoop neck, and ours was uhm, blue with a sort of a not a lace but a cotton over the top of the blue..... never forget it as long as I live. And what else did we have, we had vespers, we had something else,

V: I don't remember

A: Oh, we had senior music concerts, that week because uhm, most of the girls a number of the girls did take piano, or music lessons, we'd usually have some sort of talent concert that week. I remember I had to do, I took piano, I had to play, I forgot.

V: Did you take it all the way up to your senior year.

A: I did, yes I did and I still can't play (laughter). ahh, I forgot. I forgot it, so but I remembered the uhm, what is it the chorus and I just played it. (laughter) and then got up and bowed. (laughter)

V: Yeah, we used to have to do the piano concerts,.....

D: Where did you, do you know where you got your little dresses....., did she make them.

A: No she didn't make them, she got them.....

D: So where would you shop for clothes.

V: We went to Ivy's, Bon Marche's

A: Bon Marche's

V: and uhm,

D: And where they segregated?



V: No, you could shop, I remember shopping in there with my mother as a very young child

A: They would take your money (laughter)

?:.....

V: But we couldn't drink the fountains, I remember I always got thirsty and my mother said. I'd say I'm thirsty and I want some water, she'd say well wait until we go so-in-sos or wait until we get back, and I'd say dry I'm thirsty, there's a water fountain, (laughter) She'd say you can't drink that water, "Why not, it's water ....." (laughter) so then she'd say I'll tell you later, not now, just wait. So uhm, we could shop and there was also John's Bargain Store, you could go there, but my father would take us there, John's Bargain Store on Lexington Avenue, they had jeans and ..... and all of that kind of stuff.

D: And where was that

V: On Lexington Avenue

D: On the where, the first block or the second block.

A: Probably the second block

V: Probably the second block

? Were you allowed, do you remember if you were allowed to try on clothes in the store?

A: I can't remember back that far, I'm trying.....

V: As a teenager I did, as a teenager, but maybe not as a ..., you couldn't try hats on. That I do remember. You couldn't try hats on.

A: That's wicked, why would you buy it if you can't try it on?

V: Or you had to put paper in the hat to try it on because of pomeanade. (laughter)

D: Ohhh, okay

V: ahhh, sigh, God,

?: Didn't wear hats?

V: You had to wear a hat to go to church.

A: uhm hum

V: .....go to church without a hat.

A: Yes I did, I went to Shiloh church and I didn't wear a hat.

V: Oh excuse me. (laughter)

?: Fain's.

?: Huh?

?: Fain's

V: Oh yeah, you could shop at Fain's. That was a big place, you could shop at Fain's.

? Do you know where Fain's is..

V: Fain's was great for sewing

?: It's where the General Mast is at.

V: Yeah, Mast General.

D: Did ya'll date? Did Allen girls have dates.

V: Oh yeah, we had dates.....

A: We had parties, thought when Allen had parties

V: All of the guys wanted to come to our parties.

A: Yeah, but they had a male, what do you call it, a stag list. Because so many of the girls lived in the dorm, uhm and each girl could put so many names on the stag list so that meant, if there was a party, you didn't have a date, especially the girls in the dorm, ah, there would be gentlemen there for you to dance with, and even the young ladies from the city, and these guys had to be approved, I mean there were some people, you know, ahhhhh

V: Yeah, they had to be approved before they could come

A: Before they could come.

V: We'd put their names up (laughter) and

A: Where you on a stag list?

?: Yeah I was on every stag list.....

D:.....come on over, I got, no no no, come on please..... Where, I want to hear about some guys perception.....

? J. Harrison (H).

D: Mr. Harrison, I think I might have met you from the railroad.

V: Yes,

D: That's great,

Where was I .....

Allen was on College Street you know across from the Berry Temple Church, yeah those .....

D: So did you, you went to some of these events at Allen.

H: Yeah, I guess.

D: I'd like to hear about that.

H: Yeah, I enjoyed it. I mean we looked forward to going over, ahh, to the basketball games and we used to invite some to our varsity dance, uhn huh, the girls would sometimes get upset, our young ladies in school, ours at Stephen's Lee, because they didn't want us bringing someone who went to Allen to our dances, or whatever, but

A: .....usually the day girls, because the dormitory girls couldn't go to your dances.

H: Well, I didn't, break it down, but I mean there were day, people who just went over to Allen during the day and went back home, but I, yeah I ah, took ah, I know I took

V: That's right you used to go with that ....., what was her name

A: Charlotte...(laughter)

H: Yeah, I used to, I used to, yeah..

A: Charlotte Cherry.. (laughter)

H: I really, (laughter).... no,

?: .....

H: But I used to take, ah do you remember Barbara Mennis,

V: Yes

H: Well okay, .....Well .....

V: she went to our church though, didn't she, Barbara Minnis went to our church, I mean Mt. Zion? Wait a minute.....

H: Well, see Barbara, well she might have gone, I think she did go to Mt. Zion. But ah, her mom, I mean her Aunt worked out at the VA, she was a nurse out at the VA and Barbara, they stayed out in Haw Creek and ahh, she didn't you know, she didn't ah, she didn't stay on campus there at Allen, she just went there during the day. Come over and visit some of her cousins on Blanton Street where I stayed. I used to walk from Blanton Street to Haw Creek.

D: I'm thinking is Blanton in Kenliworth?

H: That's a long walk

A: uhm hum.

D: Where is Blanton

V: Right off of, uhm, top of South French Broad.

H: it's what.....

V: it's in that area.

.....yeah, right over there, yeah, .....but that's a pretty good walk....

D: So you would walk to Haw Creek?

H: Sure,

D: and that's where she

H: that's where she stayed.....

D: and how would she get to the dances?

H: Oh, oh we'd ahh,

D: get in a car and go to them..

H: yeah, usually we'd have a means of getting there, a ride, I had a couple of friends who automobiles fortunately, (laughter)

? (laughter)

H: they were very rare at the time ...(laughter)

A: and .....(laughter)

H: but we used to go over there on Sunday's, that's for sure. I mean.....

D: And what would happen on Sunday afternoons at Allen's?

A: Oh, Sunday afternoons, we weren't there..

V: The dormitory girls were there

A: They had what was known as visiting hours and uhm,

V: no calling hours

A: Visiting hours or something, ahh, the girls in the dorm, ah could receive gentlemen callers, (laughter) on Sunday afternoons.

H: Uhn huh,

A: And again, these callers names had to be on the approve list to go and maybe go visit and sit in the parlor, and ah the day girls just thought that was fun, I didn't, I thought that was halarious.

? Why did you think that was halarious?

A: It just seemed, it just seemed so; they were chaperoned; different than being home.

H: yeah

V: well they need to see people sometimes...

A: oh I thought it was great but that's kinda why

H: I think that's why a lot of them used to look forward to going to different churches on Sunday, they'd meet other people and they

A: They would meet boys, of their friends when they went to the church, church was a big activity.....

V: All ..... Church in black communities. And even for those of us at home.

A: I couldn't have friends there on Sunday afternoon if I didn't go to church Sunday morning, you know (laughter)

? How did you get denied?

.....

V: well if you had a bad reputation ...

H: or created a scene or whatever....

V: yeah, or, or , a or somebody brought your name up, I'm sure they asked other black adults in the community or at the schools and they would give them a bad report. You acted up or you didn't go to school or you were a problematic individual. You didn't go, they didn't need problems. (laughter) and they were responsible for these young ladies and the direction that these young ladies lives were being taken, and so they just couldn't be bringing bad influences, to expose your child to a bad influence, they were responsible. So you had to approve of who was going to be brought into their environment.

D: Did ya'll meet girls from other parts of the .....

A: Oh, very definitely, ah a number of students in the dorm were from out of state, ahm remember the girl from Texas who always wore pink?

V: I don't remember it...

A: ahh, Donna, Donna.....

V: I know we had girls schools..... Young girls from New York.....we had girls from all over, that's the truth. Ah either because their parents wanted they to go to private schools or special education, Donna because I think her mother lived here and had something about her family had been exposed to .....

A: and you have to remember that at this time, many of the girls came not from northern states but from southern states, where schools were segregated and integration started the demise of Allen. Because students weren't just coming in for that reason and it was just too expensive to maintain that school. Fewer and fewer students, but, yeah, private school plus getting away from that segregated environments. In fact, do you remember the guys that went to Allen,

V: The Burnsville boys.

A: The Burnsville Boys. (laughter)

A: We had a unique situation

V: We had ah guys in the class, at least three maybe four, but at least three guys from Burnsville and two or three girls from Burnsville and their photographs are in the Archive up at UNCA \_\_\_\_\_. And ah, they were, I'm not sure the real reason, but part of it was that Burnsville had no high school,

V: Also there was some kind of segregated reason or racial reasons why they had to come, there was no school for them to go to I think,

A: And Burnsville refused to allow them into the white high school and then I think the the counsel here in Asheville was involved .....

?: \_\_\_\_\_

A: and bringing them to public schools they were going out of district, so I'm not sure whether Burnsville paid for them to go to private school in lieu of providing public education or I don't know, I think that law

V: \_\_\_\_\_ a lawsuit,.....

A: but I'm not sure, but any way we had these three guys in Allen

V: and all of these girls....

A: and all of these girls and ahh, the guys lived in Shiloh and we would take the bus, coming to school. In fact one married my cousin. It was just different.

V: It was different...

A: they were only there for a year and there were two or three girls from Burnsville.

D: I ran into a woman from Andrews or Murphy,

V: Ann Miller,

D: That's who it is,

V: She was at Allen's with us.

D: uhm hum,

V: I saw her last week,

D: are there a lot of young women, who may remember other Allen graduates?

V: there probably are but, I 'm not able to pinpoint them, but there are probably a number.....

A: I have trouble remembering names. We used to call, there was one a very young girl, I don't know her, but someone in the sorority,

V: Louise is still here,

A: Ahhh,

V: do you remember Louise, in our class, (laughter)

D: How many were in your class.

A: thirty may be

D: that many

A: I can't remember (laughter)

V: Maybe twenty to thirty, maybe,..

?:\_\_\_\_\_

V: Yeah, very few African.....

(END OF TAPE)