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MEMORANDUM

To: Tim West

Fm: Joe Sinsheimer

Re: Interview With Ed King

Dt: November 17, 1998

Enclosed is an interview I conducted with the Reverend Edwin King, who served as Aaron Henry's running mate during the 1963 Freedom Vote campaign. Heavily involved in the Jackson, Mississippi civil rights movement for more than two decades, King also served as a MFDP delegate to the 1964 Democratic National Convention.

In the interview King 1) discussed civil rights activity at Tougaloo College in 1961-62 2) the role of Mrs. Doris Allison in the Jackson movement 3) John Salter's role in the Jackson movement 4) the development of student leadership at Tougaloo 5) and the interaction between the SNCC staff and the Tougaloo students in 1962-1963.

Interview with Ed King
Jackson, Mississippi
February 23, 1987

J. Sinsheimer: {I wonder if we could talk for a few minutes about Tougaloo College and the role that Tougaloo played in the Jackson Movement?}

Ed King: There is a constant awareness at Tougaloo of what was going on in Greenwood particularly. From a flow on weekends of SNCC people back to the campus to sometimes recruit, sometimes for rest and relaxation, sometimes just to have a meeting in Jackson. There is less of a flow, but there is still a flow from the campus out. SNCC did come off of the campuses and they were pretty much away from the campuses through '61 and '62. And other than the Mississippi people who joined SNCC most of the SNCC people had grown out of the campus based movement in 1960-61 that had pretty much died out of those campuses. I am not sure why.

Sinsheimer: That was one of my first questions.

King: I don't know. I don't think there was any great conspiracy or anything. It wasn't a class thing. The people on the campuses-- part of it was a fad thing. It lasted a couple of years like a fad does. And for others it became a revolution and a way of life. And that is not to put down anybody who was involved at a fad thing but that is just saying that maybe it is similar in the short term life it had on the black campuses.

Tougaloo does not have much happen in 1960 and Mississippi was the only state that did not have major demonstrations in '60. There were flickerings of demonstrations on the coast and occasional out of state people got in trouble here at a restaurant here, just passing through. But the Tougaloo students did start a movement of their own prior to the Freedom Rides. Mrs. Doris Allison who we spoke to tonight was very much an organizer, also a grass roots person, brought in as an organizer working with {John} Salter, Medgar Evers, and the NAACP, with an urban group of people and in a more middle class way but very similar to

SNCC bringing in local people who within three or four months of leadership in turn became leaders and organizers.

But Mrs. Allison was commenting that they {the producers of the television series Eyes on the Prize} should have gone back to the beginnings of things and she mentioned tonight the library. You know what she meant by that then? A group of students at Tougaloo in the late spring of '61 had a sit-in in the Jackson public library. This was before Salter was on the faculty, before I was on the faculty. The only surprise was that nothing had happened in 1960 because Tougaloo was certainly ready in the sense that a few faculty members were sympathetic and the students were there. It was still Mississippi.

The links in the upper South that Lawson had been building and the FOR {Fellowship of Reconciliation} in '58-'59. Lawson was supposed to come to Mississippi and to come to Tougaloo and even have some interaction with people at Millsaps in spring of '58 and repression was massive and the trip was cancelled. So I think there were organizational feelers that had gone out. Some of the literature got here. And some people from here, black and white, had participated in some meetings in the late '50's outside of the state. But the '58-'59 work that produced Nashville movement, it was a predecessor not produced it didn't happen here.

The library sit-in was probably triggered by library sit-ins in Memphis. I have never heard anyone say that but I have just in my own reading have seen that Memphis had similar things a few months earlier. No big thing in Memphis because there had already been restaurant sit-ins and stuff like that in Tennessee in 1960. But in the fall of '60-winter of 1961 there were library sit-ins at segregated libraries. And I think probably fairly successful, they probably got something desegregated.

Sinsheimer: How much do you know about what went on in Memphis because I did read that they had a bi-racial committee as early as 1956.

King: We had a bi-racial committee in 1955.

Sinsheimer: In Jackson?

King: It was stamped out by 1956. What we had was a human relations council sort of loosely affiliated with SRC. They may have really had a bi-racial commission looking at ways to....

Sinsheimer: Memphis clearly seems clearly ahead of Jackson all the way through.

King: Oh yeah. But blacks could vote. They could vote frequently. They could vote even more than once. That was the general rumor, the corrupt machine. And it functioned as a city. Mississippi did not have a city. Memphis and New Orleans were on the borders but it had no impact of an urban area on the legislature or the minds where you went.

I never asked any of the Tougaloo people did you think of this because Memphis had done it. I am not sure people could answer that yes or no. The college chaplain at Tougaloo who was advisor to the NAACP group was black. He worked with the students.

Sinsheimer: Your predecessor? Do you know his name?

King: Yes. Mangrum. John Mangrum.

Sinsheimer: Why did he end up leaving Tougaloo?

King: He moved to California. I have never understood why. And may have had no unusual reason. May have given the later history of Tougaloo. But as I understood things coming in a year later-- but also I was visiting Tougaloo every three or four months, five months. Any time I came through Mississippi.

Sinsheimer: Was there a gap {between Mangrum and you taking the job?}

King: There was a gap.

Sinsheimer: The position was unfilled for a year?

King: It was filled by someone whose name I can't even remember who did not work out who had nothing to do with the movement but did not work. And then there was a vacancy. Mangrum I think was there when the demonstrations

took place and by the following September had gone to California. But he had been chaplain when I was a college student in '58 here.

Sinsheimer: Was he a native Mississippian?

King: I think so. It is my understanding that he was the advisor to the NAACP youth chapter and that the students had wanted to do something and that he and Medgar were slow. This is very second hand but always made sense to me. And it was sort of like the students were going to go ahead and do it and then the chaplain as the youth advisor and Medgar would support it. This may have also have been in the context that this way Medgar couldn't be fingered by national NAACP for doing this. I never took time to figure those points out because the key things was that something happened, that Mississippi black students did it a year later than the rest of the South but still before the Freedom Riders came to Jackson and before McComb.

Sinsheimer: Do you know who organized the library sit-in?

King: No, some other time I would be able to rattle off the names of each of the persons. I met some then and over the years when others would be back to visit I met some of them. But there was certainly a lot of pride that they had done it. Not in the sense that we are better than the Freedom Riders, but just an awareness that the movement did start in Mississippi, some significant local action like other people had been doing--inspired by the other people of course-- but that they didn't have to wait for ever for the others to come.

But no particular follow-up to it. It was done, they were arrested, got good publicity and it was off into court. No attempt-- I guess there would have been heavier fines than other southern states, this sort of thing. So there was not the kind of follow-up that you had in most cities where one thing lead to a demonstration that lead to one in another place that led to something else. This one was carefully done. It led nowhere but at least it opened the

door.

Sinsheimer: You do have that one, you do have a demonstration at Jackson State that sprang from it.

King: Out of the trial for it.

Sinsheimer: Right.

King: And this was more the contagion kind of thing. But dogs were used. I think people were really pretty frightened at how repressive it was over so minor an incident. It wasn't minor in the sense that it was trespassing on something sacred, where ever you began. But there also was no violence at the demonstration. Nobody in the library hit them with the encyclopedia. And I thought that was significant, that white Mississippi didn't automatically erupt into violence. It had to be stirred and whipped into it. Merely seeing blacks cross the lines-- they were arrested, people trusted the police, whites trusted the police to do the arresting. But you did not have the kind of violence that you later had.

Some of those students were back at Tougaloo the following fall. By the following fall you had freedom rides through the summer. Tougaloo became a host to the Freedom Riders when they came back to town for arraignments, legal technicalities and so on. And the president opened the campus. They needed a place where several hundred people could come. It was summer and he opened the campus to them let them use the chapel. Some people who had been on the Freedom Rides stayed at Tougaloo as students.

People move into McComb that summer and you are familiar with that. Tougaloo is the logical place if anyone wants to go to college. There was a small school here called Campbell College that helped and it was controlled by a black Methodist denomination until it was I think closed by the state but it was having financial difficulties and it would have phased out eventually anyhow. So Tougaloo was not the only school helping but it was the larger school.

By the time Salter comes the chaplain

Mangrum has moved who was the key faculty person the students were working with. My hunch is that at most places there had to be one or two key sympathetic faculty members whether they were very involved or not. Certainly the demonstrations and stuff that I know of in '60, the first wave of stuff was student led but generally the students felt they could trust one or two faculty members. Salter and his wife were working here and I think the way the arrangement was Salter really was working as an advisor to the high school NAACP chapter. His wife was the advisor to the campus chapter.

You had some people after SNCC didn't make it in McComb. There was some people wanting to do something in Jackson all along and the campus was the place where they would return for friendship and for support. Salter became a more visible leader but the first thing he really did with Medgar was sociological research, the same thing that Ernst Borinski had been doing for years trying to analyze what is happening in the community. And only slowly did both of the Salters become advisors to a kind of more militant group. But I think the group would have been there if the Salters had been there or not. They were able to help direct, they were able to help link high school students and college students with this dual role of advising two different youth groups.

Working with Medgar who wanted to see something done. Medgar had wanted to work with SCLC when it was first founded and was not allowed by Wilkins. So even though Medgar was following the discipline of his organization his actions frequently showed that he felt that you had to reach out and be broader than any one organization. Just basically my understanding that Medgar wanted, was willing to let the students do things and then come in and help afterwards. But certainly wasn't going to take the leadership himself. I don't know if this is getting anywhere. If I ramble stop me....

Sinsheimer: No, this is great.

King: But this is pretty speculative. A lot of things were tried but flopped or didn't go very far. I mean there were sporadic

attempts at sit-ins at a few downtown stores and a few attempts at some boycotts and different things like that. That didn't click but may have been the inevitable reaching and touching and trying to find a vulnerable point, or what is a point around which we can bring are people together.

Sinsheimer: Why do you think John Salter was so attractive to this group of students. I mean in some ways it is incredible how quickly he becomes.....?

King: He had skills that they needed, he could put things into a perspective of long American history, of labor union struggles, peoples struggles. He didn't play up the Indian part of things but he did come from a background of the West and of having seen miners strikes and different things like this. And felt that American history kind of moves in waves and cycles and that this was one of the waves getting started. But he had a great sense of confidence that something could be done if enough hard work was done. And this was probably what was needed more than anything else. Not just to say that you have problems and recognize them and admit them. That was difficult enough. There were enough black ministers had preached over Jordan for years. But what Salter could say was that something can be done here even in Mississippi. But no attempt to say what.

And the framework is there. There are demonstrations, bus rides, sit-ins, boycotts, I mean all of these things are in the air and have been since Montgomery.

Sinsheimer: Do you think that the kids that early were able to connect what was going on in Jackson, Mississippi to what Salter was talking about-- labor unions, copper mines.....

King: No, no. He would just mention that. Only in the sense that other people who seemed down and out and other people who looked like they had no resources. That this is the American story. That the American people find the resources and that the poor can band together and fight, and have, and it can be done here.

Sinsheimer: So it was essentially what he had already seen that had allowed him to have that confidence?

King: And his faith because most things eventually were broken. But some of it was conscious. The film I have mentioned to you that I have on the shelf right over there.... But he used this film Salt of the Earth. He got it from labor unions and it communicated extraordinarily well with black audiences here in Jackson. It would be shown secretly in churches. It was a film about a 1950's, 1949-1951 labor union strike in copper mines in New Mexico. The mix of people in the film are Mexican Americans and southern whites who have to stand together in a fight. And the outside resource in this particular struggle--Taft-Hartley is used--and the leaders were told they couldn't demonstrate, couldn't picket, and were placed under injunction which happened over and over and over in the civil rights movement. And it looked like their fight for safer conditions in the mines-- it wasn't even a fight for wages, true story-- and showing the film was all but illegal. It was a film that had pretty much been banned throughout the United States.

Sinsheimer: Did he actually show it to student groups?

King: Student groups and church groups. At the point at which the people have to give up the Mexican women come forward and say the injunction only prohibits the union men. We are not members of the union therefore we can strike and we can picket. And you are at a point where you have to have some outside intervention but in this one the outside intervention comes totally from within. And the movie is really about the struggle of the men to deal with their women taking new roles.

But the reason the film was repressed by HUAC and the FBI and the US government, massive repression, was because of red-baiting. And he would tell some of the history of the film. But you see the people defending themselves. Nothing crazy violent, most of it is nonviolent picketing but they fight back at times. And people here could see it and since it wasn't black,

if anything people could identify with it more. So in a sense he was preaching confidence and struggle, never that anything would be easy at a time that people are looking around and things are happening all over the South. If things had not happened in Mississippi than I think that Mississippi would have been the point from which the southern resistance once again would have spread back. It had happened before so it was just terribly important that Mississippi get included.

The first year was mostly quiet meetings that they did. On campus not much happened but not much was happening on any campus that second year. A few things. With Tougaloo a new president came into the college in 1960 {Dr. A.D. Beittel}. White, Quaker, congregationalist minister but very close to Quakers. Had been president of Talladeega in Alabama then had been chaplain in Beloit College in Wisconsin and sort of thought he had left the South. He was asked to come back to Tougaloo and did. But he and his wife were very open to the new things that were developing.

Sinsheimer: Where did Tougaloo get its money from in those days?

King: The money is 99 percent from out of state. So that it had a structural kind of freedom that no other college had.

Sinsheimer: Were there big donors?

King: No, okay. No big donors. But it is a radical history--Tougaloo is a merger of a number of schools that go back into roots and roots either way into Reconstruction. But Tougaloo was founded by the AMA. Are you familiar with the AMA. The American Missionary Association set up schools for the Indians. Those didn't last too long. They set up schools for blacks-- for a period in the 1880's and 1890's there were Indians coming to some of these black schools. Several of the southern colleges were AMA. By this period Tougaloo is probably the strongest. The AMA would be the closest to the abolitionists of any of the southern colleges. Rust College In Holly Springs is run by the Northern Methodist Church so it

has white northern money from the outside
The Presbyterians and other
denominations....

The AMA chief's link is to New England and to the puritan tradition. The AMA still has schools that are fairly notorious. Nassar studied at an AMA school in Egypt. And the American University in Beirut is the American Missionary Association out of the puritan tradition. So Tougaloo and the American University in Beirut are sister schools. The anti-colonial movement against the French started at the American University. Arab independence movement started at the AMA schools in Egypt. But it always pushed education, freedom and democracy. And very little proselytizing and conversion. Likewise at Tougaloo people stayed Baptist. I mean there wasn't much push to make them into congregationalists. But the link was there so that there was always a New England link.

And the AMA itself was one of the earliest abolitionist groups and set-up with the Amastead revolt. But this is important. Most students don't look at their history any more than anybody looks at the history of Duke but this is a radical history for generations of American christian radicals out of the kind of things that produced the whole country. And these were the key schools for black. More so in Mississippi than anywhere else. The Amastead was a Spanish ship where the slaves revolted and mutinied and killed the captain. And ordered the ship be taken to the West Indies back to Africa. And at night-- during the day they sailed toward Africa and at night the Spanish crew followed the stars which the Africans did not know and turned the ship at night and headed north toward the United States. In the day they would turn back to Africa. And it ended up landing in Long Island or Connecticut.

And John Quincy Adams, the former president, became the chief defense lawyer and the AMA was organized to defend the rights of slaves to murder white slave owners who happened to be Spanish. And the Spanish claimed property rights. The US government started off backing the Spanish and wanted to have the mutineer slaves tried for murder. And the AMA and John Quincy

Admas as their attorney got the slaves freed and said that they had a right as human beings to mutiny and fight. And out of that legal group battle in the 1830's, maybe early 1840's, out of that came an abiding interest of what do we do. And the schools and the interest in education with the Indians-- they had to educate the blacks because the trial took two or three years. So they began teaching this group of slaves. So there is a radical tradition that could be appealed to. Anybody has got a conservative tradition. But there was that institutional radical history and that is rare anywhere. By the time of Reconstruction you have the white school teachers coming into the South whose parents were abolitionists but with Tougaloo you continue to be an island.

Sinsheimer: When was the school founded?

King: 1866. There are always white faculty members. There were always a few white students-- children of white faculty members who went to some classes. And the state sort of just ignored it. And the money came from New England and then the places where the New Englanders had moved. Well your area, Cleveland, the Oberlin area. I mean there is a wave of settlement across New York then Oberlin then Michigan. A little bit in the Chicago area, Chicago suburbs more. Wisconsin has a lot. A few hit Minnesota and the rest hit the Oregon trail and Hawaii.

We still vote that way. If you ever look at elections you look at the line of puritans and then pick Oregon and jump Hawaii. A lot of bad things happened with the missionaries and they are the pineapple growers in Hawaii too. So the money would come from the Midwest and New England. Later Tougaloo merged with a school run by the disciples of Christ which is denomination based in the Midwest-- Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio-- strong down into Texas and so on. With maybe half of its membership being southern. So within that denomination the southerners didn't want to support the agitation going on, the northerners did. So the real source was really the congregational money it was older....

So we are not dealing with a typical

environment of a black college. It looked the same but it was more open. It still took the students doing it, people forming it because inertia and everything else would set in. But slightly easier than if they had tried to do this at a Baptist school or something like that. When I came in-- I guess Salter came in fall of '61. I was still in graduate school. I came in January of '63 and dropped out of school because whatever chaplain they had had the preceding year had not worked and Ernst Borinsky the sociology chairman who has been a friend and teacher told me about an opening and encouraged me. Knowing that I was white.

I knew Mangrum. I don't even remember the name of this interim chaplain. He was there only one year. And I think was a very harsh disciplinarian. The chaplain was also Dean of students and teaching but therefore part of the administration. Also sort of being a counselor, so you had many roles. And apparently the chaplain that only lasted one year had a great deal of emphasis on rigid student behavior. I don't think his trouble was over whether they were in demonstrations off of the campus it was more did you bring the gilrs into the dorm after 10:00 o'clock and things like that. And for some reason just didn't work out. But left so suddenly that there was a vacancy in the middle of the year. I knew when I went there that there was already a strong movement .

And I knew Salter was involved. Most of the teachers I knew-- the few teachers I knew and had known were white. I assume that some of the black teachers supported it. But I had worked in Alabama in Montgomery and had been to Atlanta a number of times in the preceding three years so I knew the kind of divisions that existed and that particularly middle class blacks were often very down on direct action and the movement even though it was the middle class kind of students that started things.

But Tougaloo had other kinds of reforms going on that were very much a part of the movement period. So that there were radical reforms in student government.

Sinsheimer: What do you mean by radical?

King: Rules about all kinds of social behavior,

things like this were modified. Students insisted on having a strong student government with a strong voice to the president and to the rest of the administration about on-campus issues. They didn't have an honor code but they were trying to develop student codes of behavior but was related to the kind of meaning of freedom that they were struggling for outside. They set up a student court, student judge, where there would be more due process in infractions of various rules. Now later a lot of the rules just disappeared. But there were millions of rules governing college life. And at Tougaloo in miniature it was played out, it began to be played out around the rest of the country over the next few years.

The students who were in the movement were very involved in the campus reform movement. And if anything were putting more energy there than off-campus during the first year or so. They retreated from that as the college retreated from the civil rights movement. The radical student government-- I don't mean crazy radical but for the times-- collapsed with a group of fraternity blacks who had generally been hostile to the movement except at its most romantic periods but were generally hostile to a new kind of student replacing the traditional kinds of student leaders. They were hostile. I wonder if that didn't happen on many campuses and why the movement lasted such a short time. It may have spread out in other areas and threatened the kind of traditional people who were running the campuses.

Sinsheimer: I know it happened at Howard. That is exactly the scenario.

King: Well, I don't, so that is good. Okay But I saw it happen at Tougaloo with black faculty members who were identified with black middle-upper class backing the more conservative students who were more interested in partying to retake student government, to abolish some of the reforms and give power back to the faculty and the administration.

Sinsheimer: Cleve Sellars and I had a long talk about

Howard. He told me about--Stokley Carmichael and that whole class, I can't call all their names right now, but they took over the student newspaper, they took over this, they took over that.

King: Oh yeah, the newspaper was more alive and so on. They did not take it over politically to bring others into the movement. It was a natural outgrowth of enormous energy which as a teacher I know spilled over into the classroom into better class work. More sense of responsibility, more self-respect as a student, more willing to be challenged and pushed as a teacher. More willing to push and challenge a teacher to do his or her best. Very wonderful environment. There was more going on at this level than the public level of a sit-in at Woolworth's or the library or so on.

Sinsheimer: Did you have class divisions at Tougaloo?

King: Yes, there were.... But soriority-fraternity people supported the movement for a while, the women more than the men. The soriority men seemed to support activism more than the men. I don't know where that goes or how that would hold up anywhere {else}.

Sinsheimer: Were kids with better economic backgrounds less likely to join the movement?

King: That-- I can't say. The Tougaloo people get more involved I think than any of the other colleges. The clas that graduated in 1964 is the class that came in after the first demonstrations in the spring of '60. So Joyce Ladner is in this class-- well she may not have come straight to Tougaloo she was a transfer from Jackson State but she knows that things have happened.

So this generation of students going to school in September of '60 if they think at all we may think we are going to be part of something that is different because college students are doing something. The preceding September nobody went to college knowing that college students were doing something. That class that graduated in '64, entered in fall of '60, over half of the students had been jailed that graduated in '64. I doubt that there is any other college in the

nation that touches that. Some of those had been fairly active since the spring of '61 and of course there were people in the class of '61 who had been jailed, were seniors at the library sit-ins. And most of those would have been arrested in the Spring of '63.

Sinsheimer: Just to finish the Howard story. {Cleve} told me a story where they actually-- every Friday at Howard they had the step shows, sororities and the fraternities. It got to the point it was such a class distinction about who was involved in the movement that on Friday a group of them would actually go and get a watermelon and sit in the middle of the quad, in the middle of these step shows, as a cultural protest to the whole thing-- to the light skin {the skin color consciousness of the fraternities and sororities} and everything. A deliberate action of defiance and they were hated on campus {by those groups} for a variety of reasons.

Ed King: This had to be there at Tougaloo because the takeover and the shift back by people who had been biterally against the movement. And they retook things by the fall of '65, by the fall of '64. And certainly had a lot of support. And were very anti-movement unless you had Bobby Kennedy or somebody come to campus where you were supposed to be very pro-movement. Three or four years later when Black Power is on the scene the class thing isn't there. They can all be for Black Power. You can still have the same social class and the same folks dominant, even the light skin thing had been done away with by then.

Tougaloo in this reform stuff-- the kind of first chief justice or whatever they called him of the student court that lasted only a few years had a jail record. Most of the student government leaders did. In the last two years one student government leader was white-- the president of the student body and his chief justice was black. They were good friends. The women that they went with were all movement people.{Break}

Suddenly people who had been displaced seemed to realize that the traditional ways to rise and so on were being threatened.

Just as I saw happening with FDP {Freedom Democratic Party} as SNCC helped produce a new leadership class in the community after about two years there was a community reaction but the old leadership class to restore itself. If that meant alliances with the whites and Hodding Carter and people like that, it suited other interests, but it got, it re-established what was being threatened. ...

In these movement years, for three years in '63, Eddie O'Neal who was an older student, Baptist minister but very much involved. He was helping push through these student government reforms. He was jailed a block away from Woolworth's that day and he had supported throughout the year. He was the pastor of a black Baptist church, small church outside Jackson. So he had these traditional connections.

As I said even a white student was student body president but you split and had two positions this chief justice kind of thing which was as powerful as student body president. And then they elected

_____ who was an African exchange student, then he was replaced by a very traditional, cow-towing to the new black president, so proud that they had a black president but a president who was anti-movement and the president of the student government was anti-movement and very fraternaty. And making fun of people who still were in the movement. Given the atrocities of Mississippi you could still fill the chapel if somebody came to give a speech on some horror that had happened.

Sinsheimer: So by the time that you finally actually arrived on the campus the boycott had already started?

King: A couple of weeks before. They were planning it....

Sinsheimer: You were in Jackson then or you were still finishing up school?

King: I was still in Boston. Came back down in the fall of '62. I came back frequently for trials in Alabama where I had been arrested and then would come on over here usually any trip and I always visited Tougaloo.

Sinsheimer: So when did you actually accept the job?

King: Late November, early December of '62. So I was here in November before the boycott started but it was being planned. And there some demonstrations at Christmas time before it started. I came back down early in January. It had been planned for three or four months, and very carefully planned. And Medgar did support it as long as it seemed to be the youth that were doing the leadership.

Sinsheimer: Do you think there was any initial jealousy toward John {Salter}?

King: From Medgar? There must have been some just out of human nature. John needed to learn so much from Medgar about what was this place like. And John and Medgar traveled around the state together with John doing traditional sociological kinds of analysis. They may not have been doing data based survey to prove that the swamp in blank county has as many bodies floating in it as the swamp in some other county but it was good sociology. But it was applied he wasn't trying to do publishable studies.

So I think he recognized in Medgar a person who understood the scene, being part of it, and had committed himself to changing it. And Medgar realized that Salter was willing to go on out there with him. Medgar and Borinski had talked a great deal but by this point Borinski was in his '60's and wasn't going to go traveling all over the state with him. It wasn't that he was afraid.

Sinsheimer: How involved did you get in the beginning?

King: They were distributing leaflets. And meetings several nights a week.

Sinsheimer: How many students do you think actually got involved?

King: Several hundred. I mean a really sizeable proportion. On any weekend there would be at least 20 and some times 40 or 50 students, risking arrests every time they did it.

Sinsheimer: What was the size of Tougaloo at that time?

King: Maybe 700 or 800 students. But Salter was a genius for finding things that people could do which called for commitment and which were chancy but you had a good chance at getting away with it. A boycott is perfect for that because you can give your all for the cause by not doing something. A lady can sit home and listen to the radio and it can be a radical decision that changes her life because normally every Saturday afternoon she goes shopping downtown. But you didn't ask her to picket. You had to only ask a very few people to do the most risky things. But it is not just the genius of Salter it is what has been done in Montgomery and was done in other places and was done before the civil rights movement.

Sinsheimer: At this point is there legitimate student leadership? In other words are there clearly defined student leaders on campus? Who are those people in your mind?

King: Yeah, all the way. Joyce {Ladnber}, Dorie, her ister dropped out of school. People came in and out. The ones who dropped out of school had a lot of following of course back on campus. Moses is around frequently. I was told to keep Moses away.

Sinsheimer: Who told you that?

King: The black business manager who later became president. I was told to keep Moses from speaking in the chapel. Why it is was all right with the white college president, a group of black faculty made it clear that part of my role as chaplain was to isolate Tougaloo students from the movement students. And that is what they expected from me. And I just sort of scratched my head and acted like "Well, us dumb whites we don't know nothing about that business."

Sinsheimer: They were just terrified of losing complete control?

King: And that the college would suffer, might be closed. But in a sense the off-campus people were heroes to the ones on campus or some of the leadership in a sense was there. And

people floated. Dorie Ladner would be a student for a while and out. Guyot had graduated from Tougaloo and Hollis I guess graduated. The group on campus considered itself a link of SNCC. They called themselves NAACP at first but they operated like SNCC. They were always looking for other black colleges which would still have a viable group that they could relate to and be both college students and SNCC. And that had sort of gone by then.

Sinsheimer: By the time of winter-spring of '62-'63 is there anything happening at Campbell.

King: Not much. They are helping with some of these other things. They can be turned to to help on Saturdays and so on. They were still sanctuary for Jackson State students since they were right next to Jackson State. It was a very small school. Probably only had 150-200 students. Their administration was clearly sympathetic to the movement because they had taken originally the students from McComb.

Sinsheimer: And the Dean there sounds pretty strong. Dean Jones?

King: He is an advisor as the movement develops and it is a logical position that the Dean of that school should be in on things.

Sinsheimer: He also had the clear support of his Bishop. The Bishop put up money to take those kids from McComb. Because a lot of kids from McComb finished high school there. Which I thought was a pretty gutsy move.

King: The school eventually collapsed but I think the state helped pushed it over in a financial crisis. I think just the state, maybe more. Rust College in Holly Springs is a center for the movement there. And in east Mississippi a small school affiliated with the Northern Presbyterian church, so not tied in with southern money, at West Point called Mary Holmes. Through its faculty and some administration and mostly through national church contacts is open so that Mary Holmes becomes the conduit for the Head Start money in '65. Which Tougaloo was ordered not to. At least by Brown

University. Whether the orders came from higher up-- and I think they did, but the advice of the Brown people on a number of things, critical things. But it no longer mattered quite as much because Tougaloo was no longer the only place we had to turn.

Sinsheimer: By the time you got to campus what sort of relationship did Medgar have with the students. I mean was he really revered or....

King: Oh yeah. But revered more that they wanted a hero and needed a hero. But not revered as much as Jimmy Travis and the people up in Greenwood. Those were the real heroes. Was Peacock and Sam Block or Hollis {Watkins}. So already you were getting your heroes from your peer age group. And therefore not even as much frustration with Medgar's, you know, some vacillation and so on because you had your heroes and they were real heroes. Mrs. Hamer is not much of a figure during this time. She slowly becomes known. Aaron {Henry} is well-known.

You are constantly having interracial meetings on campus. Not interracial meetings that would be maybe once every two months but you still might have some other kinds of meetings so that Medgar is on campus for some reason legitimately. Aaron is on campus visiting. The civil rights commission, the state advisory committee, of which the college president is a member might meet. The Human Relations Council was reorganized and had its meetings at Tougaloo. But this is stuff going on at the level of the president and Dr. Borinski so you do have very heavy movement going on at many levels. I think that is because of the tradition of the school and because of Adam and Ruth Beittel. But the state had the need and they turned to Tougaloo as the only place where you could have those kinds of meetings and this sort of thing.

Prior to Mangrum the chaplain at Tougaloo name was Bender and he had been dead since mid-fifties. But his wife was still there and worked in the library. She is still alive. And Reverend Bender was a hell raiser who had tried to register both faculty and students to vote in Madison County.

Sinsheimer: Right, he was mentioned in the interview I read this morning.

King: Okay. So I always thought as chaplain that I was in a tradition of both Mangrum and Bender and I happened to be white. But that there was a long tradition, you know in post-war times of the college chaplain legitimately being concerned in the social concerns and issues of the black community.

morning.

Sinsheimer: What percent of the students do you think were from Mississippi?

King: Oh, it is still very high and would have been very high then. Almost all. And those who were not like the key movement leader was Austin Moore in '62-'63, he was expelled from the college by the conservatives on the faculty and in the administration. I consider all but lynched. And I did not stand up for him. I was on the administration and his grades had dropped because he was so involved.

May even have been-- there were rumors that there were some black teachers who were knocking movement students down. I couldn't believe it. Now I wish I had paid more attention to the rumors. Because I too was too naive and hopeful and couldn't believe that these black divisions could be this nasty. Now I believe green and white and purple divisions can be just as nasty. So I would try to encourage students not to even think that anything like this was going on and just say "Look, you flunked the test. You can't deny that." And sometimes they would say, "Yes, I can." I would try to keep people rational.

But I know I didn't have courage enough when this student, Austin Moore who was a very creative guy, very bright guy-- and I guess must have ended in '62 on academic probation for some reason. And was a movement leader through the years. {His} father was president of the Chicago area Tougaloo alumni. So we had several northern blacks like that. Like Austin but they were really from Mississippi families. So even the out of state people you have are still Mississippi rooted. Now they had a very

different experience.

With his {Moore's} case when it got down to examining the ten or twelve people who were subject to being expelled for not making the grades. The ones who were not movement activists whose grades were much lower than his each had conservative faculty member talk about how nice she was or he always polishes his shoes or he is doing better. And when it came to discussing this case of this movement person, these same black middle class people just dumped on him.

I didn't realize then how important and powerful his father was. His father doesn't know why his kid was kicked out of school. Thinks he spent too much time in the movement. His father was somewhat sympathetic to the movement. I couldn't speak up any more than saying, "Well, I think he is doing better and improving and I have counseled with him and talked with him." Because I saw it was just so blatant that the people they were keeping in were marginal people often and the issue strictly was movement and that they were not going to bend the rules for him and they did bend the rules for a number of other people.

But I felt that bending the rules for one was wrong that when they wouldn't bend it for him I didn't have enough position to fight. And we had always said that movement students had to make their grades and you could never ask teachers to do it and teachers tried never to schedule exams, well you tried not to schedule demonstrations on exam day. This kind of thing. If the teacher knew that there was going to be a boycott at Easter then you might schedule your exam a week later but no teacher would adjust a schedule more than a few days. There was never any question that the academic priority was first. And Beittel was firm on that, that students had every right to go to jail, but students would never be excused of any academic work because they had been in jail.

Sinsheimer: Did the vast majority of the students honor that?

King: Oh yeah. But likewise no student who went to jail in a freedom demonstration would have

that held against him unlike Jackson State and other places where you were expelled. But the corollary was that you had to make your grades. People dropped out like Dorie when she wasn't going to make her grades, she knew it and she was too involved in the movement. So there was a lot of low back and forth and then some people forced out who tried to do both. Over later years I saw how frequently students who were put on academic probation and then repeated and repeated and repeated. And I realized that rushing Austin Moore out-- he really was ramrodded out. But Beittel and I and Borinski and those people-- and Branck, there was one black in the administration who was sympathetic to the movement. He was the academic dean. A.A. Branch. And he was not a Mississippian. He was from Memphis. So in a sense above the local class scene. But that was very obvious just instantly that the faculty was not as supportive of the movement as it looked. The president was, the dean was, the business manager was strongly against.

Sinsheimer: What was his name? Owens, he became president and replaced Beittel. And I think a majority of the black faculty was hostile to the movement with few exceptions, but there were exceptions.

Sinsheimer: What about-- How did the students receive Mrs. Allison?

King: They worked together fairly well on the committees that they had. Most of these committees came together only the last five or six weeks. She would have had more contact with the high school students as president of the Jackson branch. And she would be working with the city students, sort of like the college students could handle themselves. When it got down to strategy meetings you had representatives from the Jackson chapter, from the college campus chapter, and the high school chapter, then you expanded a strategy committee beyond that.

Sinsheimer: Do you have any idea how big the Jackson NAACP was at this time? In terms of active people?

King: I guess 150 with another 150 who helped with fundraising.

Sinsheimer: Did it grow during this period?

King: It had been growing for several years with more memberships. But the main thing it had done was have a membership drive and have a membership tea. There were fundraising things. But I think blacks were joining all over the country and especially when there was no other organization.

Sinsheimer: Did NAACP members help with telephoning {during the boycott}?

King: Yeah, but others who were not members did. But the first ones who did, I mean Mrs. Allison had a network of people.

Sinsheimer: Those people were punched into that work early?

King: Oh yeah, the filme {Eyes on the Prize} had good pictures on Montgomery and how many people worked helping set up car pools and stuff like that. And these would have been middle class peoples in a sense that Doris and Ben Allison are middle class. They are no longer-- I mean they are retired-- they are no longer the middle class. There is a real middle class now with real money.

Sinsheimer: What did they do?

King: He was some kind of mechanic. I do know but I am not thinking right now. You know in traditional sociology terms it would have been upper working class or lower middle class but given the black community-- they were educated, she is at least high school and convent educated through the Catholic high school system whicjh would have put them whether they have any college or not-- she is a graduate of a segregated Catholic high school, she still would have been in the top five percent of the people educated wise. Now there a number of college educated blacks floating around Jackson and she was able to relate to them very well....

End of interview.