Guide to the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee Audio Recordings Collection

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Guide to the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee Audio Recordings Collection

Collection number: MS208

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee audio recordings collection
Dates: 1974-1977
Collection number: MS 208
Creator: Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee.
Collection Size: .75 linear feet(1 box)
Repository: African American Museum & Library at Oakland (Oakland, Calif.)
Oakland, CA 94612

Abstract: Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park was California’s first state historical park designated to African-American pioneers. The Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee audio recordings collection consists of 22 audiocassette of regional meetings, public hearings, and oral history interviews with the townspeople of Allensworth.
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
No access restrictions. Collection is open to the public.

Access Restrictions
Materials are for use in-library only, non-circulating.

Publication Rights
Permission to publish must be obtained from the African American Museum & Library at Oakland.

Preferred Citation
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Processing Information
Processed by Sean Dickerson.

Biography / Administrative History
While working as a draftsperson for the California State Parks department in 1969, landscape architect Cornelius "Ed" Pope noticed that there were no state parks in California dedicated to the history of African-Americans in California. Inspired to sustain the momentum of the Civil Rights Movement in the wake of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ’s assassination, Pope identified Allensworth, California, the first, last, and only town in California founded, financed, and governed by African Americans as an ideal historic district to fill that absence. Pope had attended elementary school in Allensworth while his family lived in Colonel Allen Allensworth’s former home from 1938 to 1940. Together with Eugene and Ruth Lasartemay of the East Bay Negro Historical Society, Pope successfully lobbied state park officials and state legislators to consider the feasibility of a State Historic Park at Allensworth, helping to shepherd the project through the community review process.

Appointed in October 1969 by California Department of Parks and Recreation director William Penn Mott, Jr., the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee was established to “provide for the public a historical prospectus of the Black American, his role, his contributions, and concerns.” Members of the Advisory Committee included Elena Albert, Cecil...
Berkley, Hattie Crawford, Earle Fletcher, Marcella Ford, Edward France, chairman Dr. Kenneth Goode, vice-chairman Alfred Green, secretary Kathryn Green, Dr. Ernest Hartzog, Gemelia Herring, James Holloway, Grandvel Jackson (President of the San Francisco branch of the NAACP), Marty Jenkins, Leamon King, treasurer Eugene Lasartemay, Ruth Lasartemay, Gaynelle Miles-Green, Frances R. Miller, Cecil B. Murrell, C.J. Patterson, Ben F. Peery, Cornelius “Ed” Pope, George W. Pope, Willie Pope, Jefferson Pierro, Josephine B. Smith, Dr. Robert Thornton, Royal E. Towns, Dr. Robert Trotter, Flo Williams, Vassie D. Wright, and Margaret Wheaton. The committee was chaired by Dr. Kenneth Goode, Assistant to the Chancellor at the University of California, Berkeley, while Alfred Green served as chairman for the Subcommittees on Land Acquisition and Site Planning. Green, a building contractor in Los Angeles, had also assisted in authoring the 1969 Watts Redevelopment Project Plan.

In 1971, the legislature requested the Allensworth Feasibility Study, which confirmed Pope’s earlier findings of the glaring deficit of African-American sites within California’s state park system and in 1972 the Allensworth Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places. By 1973, the state had acquired the land, and the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee, under the direction of Dr. Kenneth Goode, began work on further land acquisition and site planning. In May 1976, the state Department of Parks and Recreation approved plans to develop the park, and on October 9, 1976, the park was dedicated. The Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee continued to operate under Al Green and later Alice C. Royal to proceed with preservation, restoration and development of the park. Under Alice C. Royal the Advisory Committee produced staffing reports and resource management plans and promoted the Allensworth townspeople as beneficiaries of the park under the Allensworth Citizens Council. Alice C. Royal is the author of Allensworth, the Freedom Colony: A California African American Township.

Allensworth, California, was founded in 1908 through the California Colony and Home Promoting Association by former slave and retired army chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Allen Allensworth, together with Professor William A. Payne, retired miner John W. Palmer, African Methodist Episcopal Church Minister Dr. William H. Peck, and real-estate specialist Harvey Mitchell. Admirers and contemporaries of Booker T. Washington, Allensworth and his colleagues sought to acquire land and create a self-sustaining African-American colony away from socioeconomic stagnation and racial segregation. Although the community only flourished for a short time, over the next decade some three hundred African-American pioneers had established a self-sufficient farming community with its own school, church, businesses, and municipal government.

**Scope and Content of Collection**

The Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee audio recordings collection consists of 22 audiocassettes. These recordings provide insight into the concerns and activities of the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee, which was organized to support and advise the State Parks Commission as to the development of the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park. Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park was California’s first state historical park designated to African-American pioneers and along with George Washington Carver State Park in Bartow, Georgia, one of the first parks in the nation dedicated to African-American history. Recordings include regional meetings, public hearings, and oral history interviews with the townspeople of Allensworth.

**Arrangement**

Series I. Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee cassette tapes

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.

African Americans--California--Allensworth--History.

Allensworth (Calif.)

California. Department of Parks and Recreation

Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park (Calif.)

Cultural resources

Historic sites--Conservation and restoration--California--Allensworth.

National Register of Historic Places

**Related Material**

African American Museum & Library at Oakland Vertical File Collection, African American Museum & Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library Allensworth Materials, Tulare County Library: Annie R. Mitchell History Room Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Photographic Collection, California State Parks Photographic Archives Royal E. Towns Papers, African American Museum & Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library
Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee cassette tapes

Physical Description: 22 cassette tapes
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically.

Box 1

Allensworth Advisory Committee Commission Meeting, Los Angeles, California 1974-07-12 https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000143

Physical Description: Cassette tape
Physical Description: Run Time: 18 (min): 15 (s) Side A
Physical Description: Run Time: 31 (min): 38 (s) Side B
Description
The July 12, 1974, Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee meeting includes State Parks Commissioner Robinson’s response to reports produced by the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee. Committee members raise objections to plans proposed by consultants which would include the development of recreation areas within the park. The appropriateness of recreational facilities at the site is debated. Committee Chairman Dr. Kenneth Goode speaks to the historical value of the town and recommends any recreation areas be supportive to interpretative functions of the park.

Box 1

Allensworth Advisory Committee presentation of plaque to Governor Reagan, Sacramento, California 1974-12-04 https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000139

Physical Description: Cassette tape
Physical Description: Run Time: 13 (min): 19 (s) Side A
Description
The Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee presents a progress report on the status of financial commitments to Governor Ronald Reagan. The restoration goals, total acquisition of land for development, and the building of conference, lodging and service areas are discussed. Governor Regan is presented with a plaque in appreciation of his support for the Allensworth project. The Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee, jointly with the California Department of Parks and Recreation, present Cornelius "Ed" Pope with a plaque recognizing his efforts.

Box 1

Allensworth Advisory Committee presentation of plaque to Governor Reagan, Sacramento, California [no audio] 1974-12-04

Physical Description: Cassette tape
Description
Tape contains no audio
The April 18, 1975, Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee holds public hearing with the State Parks Commission for a review and discussion of the Allensworth development plan. Chairman Dr. Kenneth Goode, speaking on behalf of the Advisory Committee, presents on a revised proposal, the support received from national groups such as the NAACP, and the need to acquaint African-Americans with the parks system. Committee members George Pope, Jefferson Pierro, and Al Green comment on restoration plans for the town. Allensworth citizens Mrs. Herring, James Larkin, and Colonel Allensworth's granddaughter, Mrs. Smith respond to the proposed form of the park. Dr. Alexander Lark, of the California State University, Fresno, discusses the educational dimension of the project, strategies for teaching the history of the town, possible outreach opportunities, and the possibility for the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park to reinforce political awareness in African-American visitors. The State Parks Commission department presentation includes a review and discussion of the development plan, projected costs, and expenditures to date.

Continuation of the April 18, 1975, Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee public hearing with the State Parks Commission for a review and discussion of the Allensworth development plan. The Advisory Committee's revised plan is not accepted by the Parks Commission on the basis of not being in accordance with the historic unit administrative code. Parks Commissioners highlight the proposed educational complex and museum, which would include a Black Arts section, Hall of Black Fame, and section of historic exhibits including African-American figures in wax and bronze statues. The museum is determined to be beyond the scope of a historical unit. The general purpose of the park as a focal point for an African-American political voice under the revised plan is discussed as being beyond the interpretation of history and classification as a historic unit. State Parks Commissioners point to the park's location as too far away from interested parties, and encourage the development of urban parks where African-Americans reside in greater numbers. The question is raised whether delays in approval resulted from being a historic unit proposed by African-Americans to honor an African-American leader. Recommendation is made for the historic site as outlined and restricted to the historical park boundaries. After the public hearing, Al Green conducts house to house visits with the townspeople of Allensworth to talk about the pilot plan for the rehousing and relocation of residents.
Box 1

**Allensworth Advisory Committee Commission Meeting, Bakersfield, California**

**1976-05-14**  
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000146

Physical Description: Cassette tape  
Physical Description: Run Time: 16 (min): 09 (s) Side A  
Description  

Box 1

**Allensworth Advisory Committee and Department of Parks and Recreation Ad Hoc Committee Special Meeting, Sacramento, California [Tape 1] 1976-07-26**  
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000136

Physical Description: Cassette tape  
Physical Description: Run Time: 60 (min): 00 (s) Side A  
Physical Description: Run Time: 32 (min): 21 (s) Side B  
Description  
The July 26, 1976, Allensworth Advisory Committee and Department of Parks and Recreation Ad Hoc Committee special meeting includes introducing the staff relative to Allensworth State Historic Park and presents work on the temporary visitor’s center in the town’s historic core. Drafts for the ranger’s office, agricultural shed, exhibit trailer, graphic panels, audiovisual room and artifact displays are discussed.

Box 1

**Allensworth Advisory Committee and Department of Parks and Recreation Ad Hoc Committee Special Meeting, Sacramento, California [Tape 2] 1976-07-26**  
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000136

Physical Description: Cassette tape  
Physical Description: Run Time: 37 (min): 26 (s) Side A  
Physical Description: Run Time: 28 (min): 35 (s) Side B  
Description  
Continuation of the July 26, 1976, Allensworth Advisory Committee and Department of Parks and Recreation Ad Hoc Committee special meeting to introduce staff relative to Allensworth and present work on the temporary visitor’s center in the town’s historic core. Drafts for the ranger’s office, agricultural shed, exhibit trailer, graphic panels, audiovisual room and artifact displays are discussed. Included on the tape are also Al Green’s remarks at the 19 February, 1974, Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of Parks and Recreation Western Regional Conference held in Los Angeles, California.
Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee cassette tapes

Box 1

Allensworth Advisory Committee Meeting, Allensworth, California 1976-09-11
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000140

Physical Description: Cassette tape
Physical Description: Run Time: 35 (min): 43 (s) Side A
Physical Description: Run Time: 28 (min): 20 (s) Side B

Description
History interview with Allensworth town resident, Armilda Archer Smith, daughter of George and Lucy Archer. Her father was a farmer and her mother was a midwife and general nurse in Allensworth. The Archer family had relocated along with Joshua Singleton to Allensworth from Kansas in 1912 when Mrs. Smith was 10 years old. She was educated at the first town elementary school, located in James Hackett's home, by William A. Payne and Margaret Prince. During summer breaks, Mrs. Smith worked at the granaries and frequented the Mary Dickinson Memorial Library run by Ethel Hall Norton. Born May 30, 1895, Norton was among those few African-American librarians in the early 20th century with an opportunity to provide public library service to an African-American clientele. Mrs. Smith also recalls various town residents such as Joshua Singleton, the General Store Owner and friend of the family, Mary Gross, owner of the Allensworth drugstore, and other early citizens.

Box 1

Allensworth Advisory Committee Meeting, Los Angeles, California [Tape 1]
1976-11-13
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000142

Physical Description: Cassette tape
Physical Description: Run Time: 46 (min): 27 (s) Side A
Physical Description: Run Time: 46 (min): 30 (s) Side B

Description
The November 13, 1976, official meeting of the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee held in Los Angeles, California includes remarks from Committee members on the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park dedication. Cecil Berkeley reviews the October 9, 1976, dedication ceremony and its attendance. Betty Williams presents the mock-up of the Allensworth souvenir book and discusses the attendance list and groundbreaking program. Josephine Smith, Program Chairman, shares her remarks about the dedication. Kay Green speaks about former Allensworth pioneers who travelled from Los Angeles to attend the ceremony and their reminiscences. Resolutions from the legislature are discussed by committee members.

Box 1

Allensworth Advisory Committee Meeting, Los Angeles, California [Tape 2]
1976-11-13
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000142

Physical Description: Cassette tape
Physical Description: Run Time: 60 (min): 40 (s) Side A
Physical Description: Run Time: 37 (min): 20 (s) Side B

Description
Continuation of the November 13, 1976, official meeting of the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee in Los Angeles, California. Al Green discusses the new orientation trailer. Mrs. Croslyn, former teacher at Allensworth, shares her participation in the dedication ceremony program and recollections of moving to the town, the school, and the Hackett and Phillips family. The future of the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee is discussed with possibilities raised of contracting with the state or becoming a cooperating association. Eugene Lasartemay, Cecil Berkeley, George Pope and Kay Green recommend the Advisory Committee remain intact but restructure and reduce to quarterly meetings. The Treasury Report is presented by Eugene Lasartemay as to the historical reconstruction and interpretative planning and research budget.
Box 1

Allensworth Advisory Committee Meeting, Central Valley Area 1976-12-04
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000147

Physical Description: Cassette tape
Physical Description: Run Time: 61 (min): 37 (s) Side A
Physical Description: Run Time: 59 (min): 55 (s) Side B

Description
Topics discussed at the December 4, 1976, Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee meeting include procedures for operating a cooperating association, visitor services, reports on crowd control during the park dedication ceremonies, agricultural uses of farm areas within the town, park maintenance, and water use issues at Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park.

Box 1

Allensworth Advisory Committee East Bay Negro Historical Society Bay Area Meeting, Oakland, California 1976-12-11
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000145

Physical Description: Cassette tape
Physical Description: Run Time: 57 (min): 74 (s) Side A

Description
The December 11, 1976, East Bay meeting of the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee includes considerations for the change of committee format, how to encourage African-Americans to settle as landowners and employees in Allensworth, ways to bring portable water to the town in abundant supply, and appeals to youth to fill the void of African-American farmers in the area. Chairman Al Green discusses the need for promoting present African-American economic opportunity. Dr. Kenneth Goode discusses the role of the Advisory Committee after the formal dedication of the park and encourages the evolution of the committee into a cooperating association, which might have a broader membership, and the establishment of an Allensworth foundation. Margaret Wheaton supports Dr. Goode’s suggestion in order to negotiate concessions contracts. The prospect of leasing farmland is discussed, with significant preference given to Allensworth residents and African-American farmers.

Box 1

Allensworth Advisory Committee Women's Civic Improvement Club Meeting, Sacramento, California [Tape 1] 1977-02-05
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000144

Physical Description: Cassette tape
Physical Description: Run Time: 45 (min): 13 (s) Side A
Physical Description: Run Time: 37 (min): 49 (s) Side B

Description
Topics discussed at the February 5, 1977, Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee Women's Civic Improvement Club meeting include the procedures for forming a cooperative association and possible Allensworth community trust for projects in the town site. Eugene Lasartemay proposes incorporating as a corporation and contracting with the state to operate the park and fully complete the general development plan. Betty Williams, Marcella Ford and Frances Miller favor remaining in an advisory role to the State Parks Commission. Betty Williams requests discussion of alternative organizational structures.
Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee cassette tapes

Box 1

Allensworth Advisory Committee Women's Civic Improvement Club Meeting, Sacramento, California [Tape 2] 1977-02-05
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000144

Physical Description: Cassette tape
Physical Description: Run Time: 56 (min): 03 (s) Side A
Physical Description: Run Time: 45 (min): 49 (s) Side B

Description
Continuation of the February 5, 1977, Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee Women's Civic Improvement Club meeting in Sacramento, California. Motions are made that the committee remain the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee and continue to operate within an advisory framework. Grandvel Jackson is appointed as chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Reorganization. Sam Colors presents drawings of proposed reconstructions for the Carter House, Singleton General Store, Hackett House, the livery stable and the Allensworth Hotel. The Colonel's House is proposed as usable for a living history museum, while the General Store and Allensworth Hotel are discussed as potential sites for operating concession and lodging facilities within the park. Cecil Berkley presents on proposals for the leasing of the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park farmlands to train African American youth in farming technologies. Former Allensworth resident Jefferson Pierro shares recollections of raising cattle and cotton farming in the town.

Box 1

Allensworth Advisory Committee Women's Civic Improvement Club Meeting, Sacramento, California [Tape 3] 1977-02-05
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000144

Physical Description: Cassette tape
Physical Description: Run Time: 05 (min): 50 (s) Side A
Physical Description: Run Time: 31 (min): 11 (s) Side B

Description
Continuation and closing remarks of the February 5, 1977, Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee Women's Civic Improvement Club meeting in Sacramento, California.

Box 1

Allensworth Advisory Committee Black Student Union Meeting, California State University, Bakersfield, California 1977-02-07
https://archive.org/details/caolaam_000137

Physical Description: Cassette tape
Physical Description: Run Time: 31 (min): 11 (s) Side A
Physical Description: Run Time: 31 (min): 16 (s) Side B

Description
The Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee meets with the California State University, Bakersfield, Black Student Union to discuss the history of Allensworth on the occasion of 1977's Black History Month. Chairman Al Green delivers a slide presentation on the work of the Advisory Committee, the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park, former Allensworth pioneers, and the struggle to bring the park to dedication. Green also discusses the United States Bicentennial, the contributions of African American soldiers beginning with the Revolutionary War, and Colonel Allen Allensworth’s military career. Questions are taken from Student Union members.
The March 12, 1977, official meeting of the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee includes Margaret Wheaton’s historical review of Allensworth, Cornelius Pope’s presentation on the park’s interpretative functions, George Pope's brief report on maintenance work, the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park staff report, and Grandvel Jackson’s report on cooperative associations and the reorganization of the committee.

Continuation of the March 12, 1977, official meeting of the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee. Concerns regarding the lack of visitor facilities under the present development plan are discussed. Eugene Lasartemay presents the Treasury report. George Pope presents a report on the California State University, Bakersfield, Black Studies project course assigning a student to research the original dates of construction of buildings considered for reconstruction in the Allensworth State Historic Park.

Continuation and final remarks of the March 12, 1977, official meeting of the Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee. Cecil Berkley reports on the leasing of farmland within the Allensworth State Historic Park. Lois Carson presents, on behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee on Planning, recommendations for how to accept donations of plant life.

The April 2, 1977, Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee official meeting includes reports on efforts to assist the townsfolk of Allensworth to become beneficiaries of the park, including a docent program involving the Allensworth Citizens Council. Grandvel Jackson presents analysis of proposals for reorganization of the Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee and responds to Betty Williams’ proposed organizational structure for an Allensworth cooperating association. Cecil Berkley and Royal E. Towns present on behalf of the Publicity Committee.
Allensworth Advisory Committee Meeting, Allensworth, California [Tape 2]

Physical Description: Cassette tape
Physical Description: Run Time: 60 (min): 29 (s) Side A
Physical Description: Run Time: 46 (min): 29 (s) Side A

Description
Continuation of the April 2, 1977, Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park Advisory Committee official meeting at Allensworth, California. Cecil Berkley and Royal E. Towns present a report on behalf of the Publicity Committee. Allensworth residents Samuel Pierro and Joseph Hines present on the soil and cotton farming conditions in the town. Eugene Lasartemay presents the Treasury report. Marcella Ford reads a report on collecting artifacts for interpretative use.