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Interview with
Captain A. Y. Allee
February 21, 1969

Place of Interview: Carrizo Springs, Texas

Interviewer: Robert Cuellar

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Oral History Collection

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Captain Allee: I became a Ranger February 6, 1931 under Governor Ross Sterling. W. W. Sterling was Adjutant General. In 1935, under Governor Allred, the Department of Public Safety was formed and all state criminal law enforcement officers, including the Rangers were combined. The D.P.S. is functioning as such at this time. I was appointed a Texas Ranger Captain in 1947, of Company "D" which is the border company. It is called the border company due to much of the area being on the Texas-Mexico border.

Mr. Cuellar: Now, what is the main objective of the border company, the main job?

Captain Allee: The main objective in this border company is the same as it is over the entire state-criminal law enforcement. The enforcement of all laws of Texas, the protection of life and property and to serve all the people when called. We assist local officers when they call us on any type of law enforcement. Many sheriff's departments are under-staffed and have inexperienced and slightly trained officers. Thus, they must have help often. I assign a Ranger or more to assist these officers when possible and for as

long a time as they need help. Our calls are many and there are times when it is hard to be as many places as we are called. Some calls are on murder cases, cattle thieving, rape, burglaries, felony swindle, kidnapping and the many other law violations. Daily reports are made on all Ranger activities, cases worked on, miles traveled, type of work, and with whom they work, called by whom, and all details of their work. These reports are kept on file in my office and in the D.P.S. office in Austin.

Cuellar: That's not open to the public?

Allee: No, that's not open to the public, it's as it is in your files. The thesis or work each does is not open to the public. Law enforcement reports are more necessary to be kept from the public for reasons anyone would know and understand.

Cuellar: Thank you very much.

Allee: You wonder why I picked up this scrap book my wife has kept since I became a Ranger. It contains dates and names I sometimes need to check on when giving an interview.

Cuellar: What is the man power of Company "D"?

Allee: Company "D" contains ten men--Captain, Sergeant and eight Privates.

Cuellar: What area do you cover?

Allee: We cover a large, thickly populated area. It starts at New Braunsfels on the North, on to San Antonio, Bandera, Uvalde, this county, down the Rio Grande River to Brownsville, the coast to Corpus Christi and Port Lavaca, and all the area in between these places I have mentioned. There are thirty-nine counties for this company to work. I don't do as much work in the field as I used

to unless the men need me. I am busy in the office with assignments of the men and conferring with them on their cases. I have been in this area so many years and know many of the people on both sides of the river, so the Rangers ask me to assist them when they need help. Many sheriffs ask for me, but I have good officers under me who can do a fine job and I am in constant contact with them.

Cuellar: Concerning the Crystal City elections. Of course, you remember it's been five or six years already, but who called the Rangers in or who asked the course of procedure?

Allee: Well, a letter was written by the City Council, also, one by Sheriff Sweeten. I think the City Manager, Jim Dill, and several more citizens requested we come to Crystal City, as they anticipated a good deal of trouble. There had never been any race trouble there, but with the politics used in the city election on which the entire councilmen were defeated there was a great unrest and feelings were strained. There was much outside agitating and undesirable characters from various places were planning to move in and try to ply their trades. I was raised with Latin Americans and learned the Spanish language from those living on our ranch before I learned English. I talked with an accent that got me nick-named "Dutch." I feel that I understand the Mexican people and value the friendship of them. But, there are law violators in every nationality and they are all the same to me in enforcing the law.

Cuellar: Do they still call you Dutch"?

Allee: Not many--just the ones who knew me when I was a child. You asked me who took the biggest interest in the Crystal affair; it seemed that the PASO Organization and Teamsters Union had a hand in it. Ray Schaeffer of the Teamsters Union was in and out of there, Carlos Moore and others worked with them. There were accusations of vote buying, but I am not saying that was so. No doubt some poll taxes have been bought in Texas, but proving it is another thing.

Cuellar: What! Buying poll taxes for voting?

Allee: There are lots of ways of buying poll taxes and lots of involvement in such. Carlos Moore, with the Teamsters Union in Fort Worth was quite a fellow. He left the impression with everyone that he was a lawyer and got away with it pretty doggone good. Finally, I asked him where he practiced law. He said, "I'm from Fort Worth." I came home and looked in a state directory of all Texas lawyers, but, hell, I couldn't find his name. So, I told him he wasn't a lawyer and never had been. He laughed and said the people thought he was. I stay out of their politics and I figured it wasn't any of my business as long as no law was violated. Everything went off fine until the night of the election, then, there was a lot of yelling, cursing and such. They would go down to the little cantinos and drink a few beers and really get stirred up and drive by homes, especially the mayor's, and yell all sorts of things. The old timers and even young fellows were getting out their guns and things were becoming serious. So, I got Carlos Moore and told him things were getting out of hand. I told him I had been there

and worked with both sides and kept the peace, but the way things were going we are going to have to close these beer joints. I said, "Tell your people if you want to, but with tempers flaring someone will get hurt if they aren't closed." I've been an officer long enough to know that it's, usually, the innocent who are hurt--a by-stander or passer-by--not the offender. I closed the joints and all calmed down finally. Most people of all races thought that had been the thing to do, but, as usual, some criticism was made toward me, I'm accustomed to that, however, as some folks cuss an officer, especially a Ranger, until they need one and then they call loud and long. I know people in Crystal City as I lived there when I was a small boy and we ranched near there. My first deputy job was in that county under Sheriff W. E. Riggs. There are fine people there and as in all towns some law violators and thugs and Sheriff Riggs made a fine officer.

Cuellar: What was his name?

Allee: Riggs, W. E. Riggs. When I worked as a deputy there--there was no set salary--just fees--and finally, I told Eb I was going to Austin and get into the Ranger Service as I had wanted to for some time. He said, "Hell, I'll go with you." I knew W. W. Sterling who was the Adjutant General and, also, Governor Sterling. You weren't around in that year, 1931, were you?

Cuellar: No, not yet, (chuckle).

Allee: We both went to Austin and were lucky enough to get in the Ranger Service and that's where I've been ever since. Riggs became a Deputy U. S. Marshall later as the pay was better. We have had a

devil of a time getting state wages up to where anyone could make a career of Ranger work, but I have dedicated my life to the State of Texas since I took that oath of office. I wanted to make a career of this work regardless of the pay. I knew I'd get by as long as the ranchers had frijoles and tortillas and other food. Of course, my wife, Pearl, Mrs. Allee has taught school all these many years and teaches here at the present time. She was teaching in San Antonio when I met her. Since then she has taught in Denison, Crystal City when we first married, in Corpus Christi and here for twenty-five years. Having Ranger Headquarters here has been better than in Harlingen or Corpus Christi as they have been since I have been Captain. That was in 1947.

Cuellar: When are you planning on retiring?

Allee: I have to retire October 1, 1970, due to a 65 year ruling of the D.P.S.

Cuellar: That won't be long now.

Allee: No, that won't be long. It will go by pretty quick. Time passes fast when you are busy.

Cuellar: While in Crystal City did you have any dealings with a Mr. Schaeffer from San Antonio?

Allee: I didn't have any dealing with Ray Schaeffer outside of talking to him a few times. I have a Ranger stationed in San Antonio, Zeno Smith, who retires this year who has had a lot of dealings with Schaeffer. He went to Washington to testify before a Senate Investigating Committee in reference to some of Schaeffer's activities. I did talk to him the night of the Crystal City

election when things were getting rollicksom and people were worked up to a pitch and they were blaming Schaeffer and others for agitating things and I knew he could be in a dangerous spot. I asked him if he wanted to go with Carlos Moore and me when I closed the cantinos and he said "no," I told him the best durn thing he could do until things calmed down was to get out of town as it seemed he had really done his part in getting things in a hell of a mess. He did leave town and only came back a time or two later on. There was a boy from San Antonio there who looked a lot like you.

Cuellar: Did he?

Allee: I don't remember who he was with.

Cuellar: I promise you I wasn't there.

Allee: Well, it would have been fine if you had been there.

Cuellar: Must have been Martin Garcia.

Allee: No, I know him. He was from Kingsville.

Cuellar: Oh!

Allee: Martin Garcia was supposed to have been attending St. Mary's University in San Antonio studying law. I don't know whether he did or not, did he?

Cuellar: I don't know him.

Allee: Well, I doubt that he did, though he said he did. He got into Crystal City thing pretty deep. I don't know what he got out of it. He told me he expected to get some kind of a job out of it. I told him that if it was there that there would have to be some changes as not even the mayor or councilmen received a dime salary.

Some of them did not know this when they were elected and were quite disappointed, especially Juan Cornejo.

Cuellar: Right.

Allee: The other city employees get paid.

Cuellar: The city councilmen do not get paid at all?

Allee: No, they have other jobs to make a living or be paid by some organization. The present mayor, Paulino Mata, teaches school. Some people have tried to get me crossways with the PASO and LULACS, but, they are not going to. There's never been a one of them come talk to me about anything--not a one at the head of either.

Cuellar: Really?

Allee: Now, I don't obligate myself to any one--the PASO, LULACS, TEAMSTERS or any organization. I have one obligation and that is to the Lord.

Cuellar: How was Cornejo able to hold the mayorship, actually?

Allee: I just don't know. I think he was the local representative of the Teamsters Union for a long time. Then they had some falling out. Rumor said he wouldn't listen to them and they put him out and he began to lose out and "fall apart." What per cent of the people there belong to the Union, I don't know. Probably 30-40 per cent at Cal-Pak Canning plant there.

Cuellar: According to the papers you were involved in a bit of trouble with Cornejo. What was it about?

Allee: Oh, heck, Cornejo claimed I banged his head against the wall. He sued me for \$15,000 and the case was tried in Federal Court in Del Rio with a jury. The case was settled in my favor.

Cuellar: You said the jury was all women.

Allee: No, I said competent men and women were on the jury. There was a little difference about some untrue statements Cornejo had given the papers--I told him I didn't want to hear any more lies and that was what I meant. He claimed I banged his head against the wall. He called his "advisors" and they sent a plane for him and flew him to Houston where they had him file charges. Anyone knows that if a fellow's head is banged against the wall that there will be some bruise or sign and that all kinds of pictures would be made to show at the trial. You know that. Anyway, I won the suit and everyone knew and could tell he was making up the charges. Chris Dixie, the Teamster lawyer who was Cornejo's attorney was a good one but I just didn't do what they charged and I won the case. I have had lots of suits filed against me, but have won all of them. It seems officers are on trial instead of the criminal.

Cuellar: There are other elections coming up again, Captain, have they contacted you to go up there and help them with them?

Allee: No, they haven't contacted me. It's coming up in April and they will probably contact me before then, they request help through the proper channel. They make their request to me and I call Colonel Speir in Austin, the Director usually leaves the decision up to me and if I have an available man or two I send them.

Cuellar: Does it have to go to the governor's office?

Allee: No. That's not necessary, usually, it just comes to me and I talk with Colonel Speir. I am responsible for law enforcement in my working area as far as the Rangers' work is concerned. I go talk

to those needing assistance, or they come here or just call or write me explaining their need. If I see a real need for help, I'll do my best to either send someone or go myself. Crystal City is nine miles from Carrizo Springs and I can be there in a short time. Before, they sent letters to me and copies on to Colonel Garrison--one of the finest directors a State could ever have--and he and I talked over the situation and knew the officers there had to have assistance. He always expected a captain to use his own judgment, but wanted to know what was going on and he expected a good job to be done by all involved.

Cuellar: Speaking of politics there. How do you think those people are going to learn about politics or will they?

Allee: Well, Robert, politics is like anything else the more you see and hear the more you know about it. The Latin Americans in South Texas have been letting a few of their people and the Anglos run things. Many of the officials, sheriffs, judges, J.P.'s, commissioners and etc.--are Latins, especially in Laredo and the Valley. The uneducated or less educated ones, usually, listen to others about voting--though some have definite ideas about it. Some of them feel the Anglos are prejudiced against them, but many have been helped by them when they really needed it. The political angle didn't mean much to them until of late. They do want an education for their children. This area is not as far advanced in salaries and amounts and kinds of work as some places and many have to go up North to work. They learn lots by traveling and make good money there. Some like it, but others prefer not to have to leave

this area. They are sometimes used to gain high offices for both Latins and Anglos and then ignored until another election.

Cuellar: Isn't that what they call "political bosses"?

Allee: Well, more or less. It's that way with lots of politicians. They do a lot of things to get anyone's vote but are not being responsible to their supporters. It seems things are going to get worse if some folks behind desks don't think right and quit agitating people of all races. Everyone needs to do some serious thinking, unselfishly, right now.

Cuellar: That's about right.

Allee: Things aren't so bad in this area about jobs, but, you can't get most of the folks to work. It's almost impossible to get anyone to build fences and other ranch and farm work. The shortage of workers is because the folks go North or just won't work.

Cuellar: Why do you think that is?

Allee: I don't know unless better wages up North, but it costs lots to go there and children miss school, too. Some come back and repair their homes and look for work here but most don't want to work until they go back North or go on welfare.

Cuellar: Do they make enough to live on the rest of the year?

Allee: If they don't they draw unemployment pay or welfare. Some buy cars and etc. and their money is soon gone. That's what brings what is called the "wet backs" from Mexico over here. They are starving in Mexico at times and slip over here to work. The ranchers and farmers used to process them and could keep them for certain lengths of time. Their wages were less than is paid

people here, of course, but it has been a problem to get any help. They are furnished a place to live, electricity, food and etc. and in some cases even have their meals cooked (3 good ones a day) and taken to them, their shaving needs, clothes, tobacco and other things given them.

Cuellar: Can you arrest one of them if they come by here?

Allee: I can arrest anybody who does an unlawful act, but sometimes these workers are permitted to stay at a certain place awhile by the authorities under certain conditions. I always call the immigration men and tell them some are here or take them in, however, very few ever come by my place. I have had some real experiences with those who have been left here. You have to lock up everything and always get clothes, shoes and other things for them, then they get paid and often take off without saying a word.

Cuellar: The Texas Rangers in the government, has this organization changed from time to time?

Allee: Yes, it has changed. The methods are more modernized and better equipment is used. The two-way radio, fast automobiles and quite up-to-date laboratory work. We still have our horses and trailers around this area and we use them. We have walkie-talkies and use them when we are out of our cars working or on horseback. We have airplanes and helicopters. The Model T Fords have changed, too.

Cuellar: I've read recently where some people say the Texas Rangers are outmoded. Do you think they ought to be done away with? Or should I talk to you about that?

Allee: No, I don't think they are outmoded or that they will do away with

the Texas Rangers. I think as long as there is a Texas there will be Rangers. Their duties and ability to cross from county to county and the help they give county officers make them necessary to the preservation of life and property in this great state.

Cuellar: You do?

Allee: I think we will always have them. Back in 1823 the Texas Rangers were organized under Stephen F. Austin. He paid them as Texas wasn't a state then. He commissioned them to enforce all laws and to protect the settlers. From time to time there were different numbers according to their need. They were called Rangers because they ranged over the state or large areas. From the beginning there have been people who wanted to get rid of them and even tried to get bills passed in the legislature to either merge them with other agencies or get rid of them. Some say the Latins are afraid of them. No one fears Rangers if they are not violating laws. I have as many calls asking my help from the Latins in my territory as from Anglos and some of the finest citizens I know are Latins, but all races have law violators. I believe in justice and safety for everyone in this fine state and the sheriffs can't provide that without our help. They have been hampered by county politics. We are not shackled with it, though, right now the politicians are doing their best to get us into politics and to "tie our hands" in law enforcement. We go, we act regardless of untrue charges against us. We must not let anyone or anything intimidate us. People depend on us and we don't have to count on votes for our jobs, but we have a job to do and

we do it.

Cuellar: Well, do you mind if any of this information is withheld from anyone?

Allee: I don't want a darn thing withheld. I don't want anything to cause a political situation or published in a paper or magazine, but for your school I have no objections to other students having access to it. Really, I'm not quite the bad character some papers have tried to make me seem. I do believe in law and order and that the damn criminals are going to have to respect our laws and the officers who enforce them or the law abiding citizens will have no protection. The majority of people agree with me and want to see the laws enforced and there will come a time when they will be right in there helping, regardless of color, race, or creed. There will always be an element that will do anything they can get by with. These days of trying an officer instead of the criminal and of some people and organizations trying to make something bad out of every arrest an officer makes can't last forever. The public, in general, will tire of such newspaper sensationalism. I was in San Antonio at a hearing last December where I was questioned on my activities. Even the U.S. Representative said the hearing was a political affair and "rigged" to please local politicians.

Cuellar: Right.

Allee: By gosh, my life was threatened three times in fifteen minutes. They said they were going to kill me if I appeared at the hearing. It came mostly from a bunch of highly excited kids, but I know

there are plenty of thugs, too, who would feel real important if they could kill a Ranger, especially me as I have had contacts with so many of them. Many white-collared politicians will get some punk to do a job they are afraid to do. I will say that the Rangers don't let threats bother them. They use caution and common sense, but they must never take a step backward or God help the people they take an oath to protect.

Cuellar: February 21, 1969, this is Robert Cuellar of North Texas State University speaking with Captain A. Y. Allee, Company "D", Texas Rangers, Carrizo Springs, Texas.