

**Transcribed by: Ms. Treneattia Rozena Bowman  
Gladys Bailey (Paper Interview Format)**

**(Mrs. Bailey speaks)**

Today is May the twenty-second, two-thousand six. I am Mrs. Gladys Bernice *<non-transcribed middle name>* Bailey. I am a retired school teacher from the Mount Airy School System. And I am under the request of the African-American and Historical and Genealogical Society of Surry County, and I am going to take you on my educational journey. I will try to follow the format that they have given me as closely as possible.

I received a B.S degree from Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma in nineteen thirty-eight. I began my teaching career in a 4 teacher school in Harris, Oklahoma. Now one of the things we want to remember about teaching schools in those states is that there were three dominant institutions in every community. It was the home, the school, and the church. So we didn't have to worry about transportation or anything like that, because we walked. Except in this case sometimes in the Spring, when the Red River overflowed we went to school in a boat, a mickey *(leeky)* boat at that, dipping water out with the bucket. And then when it got really out of the banks, I swam a horse to dry land, which was an adventure that I was really glad to change within the next 2 or 3 years, when I moved to North Carolina.

I went to school at Winston Salem State, it was teachers college then; in order to become certified to teach in North Carolina. Now my first job teaching in North Carolina was at Westfield, and my principle was Nina Steele; it was a two teacher school. It was during that time when they wanted to do away with the small schools; it was during that time and they wanted to consolidate all of them into a larger school. And so they closed out the school at Westfield, and closed out the school at Westfield, and they closed at the one teacher school at Payne town where my mother was teaching, and transferred her to the Ridges Westfield, and they transferred me to Sandy Level, where Mrs. Janie Thomas was the principal, and there were two of us, two more of us; so there were three by this time.

I stayed there until they continued with the consolidation of schools, and closing out schools. And they moved me by that time to J.J Jones High School and while I was at J.J Jones High School, and I taught the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, by this time my mother had been transferred to J. J Jones High School, and she taught the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Mr L.H. Jones was the principal at that time, and during the 8 or 10 years that I was there some of the teachers that were there with me was: Mrs. McKay, Mrs. Chapman Richardson, Chapman, Mr. Taylor, Eleanor Jones, G.I Jones, and Joseph Bradshaw, Earl Setsor, and James Wham, Kinney Morgan, Levi Gee, Karl Hargraves, *condia Harrel* *<non-transcribed first name>* Johnson, there was Mrs. Bernice Witherspoon, *Cardellia Nance* Khadijah Dance, Mrs. Fannie Gentry, Mrs. Geneva Gee, Mrs. Emma Edwards, Mrs. Loris *Gwyn* (non-transcribed last name), David Galloway, and Irene Taylor, and I could go and on and on with the number of teachers that were there during my time. I also assisted in the high school music department with Mrs. G. I. Jones. I was also chosen to represent the school, to be sent to teach in an experimental school in Winston Salem, called the advancement school, and we used unique methods and no books for teaching children who were potential dropouts in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, that was a very, very interesting experience.

During the time that I was with Jones, I joined the Winston Salem Alumni Association, although I was not a graduate of Winston Salem Teacher's College, but I do know that because I can't give the exact date of when it was organized, but I do know that they received a gold certificate from Winston Salem State, and this gift certificate is dated October twenty-first, nineteen forty-nine, and it was given to this Surry County Club for their esteemed merit and service that they had rendered to the association and they recognized the club members in nineteen forty-nine and nineteen-fifty, and they were: Mrs. Ruth Anderson, Mrs. Bernice Cox, Mrs. Wilvera Delaine, Mr. Carl Hargraves, Mrs. Katie Hatcher, Mrs. Johnny I. Johnson, Mrs. Geraldine I. Jones, Mrs. Verta Lee McClendon, Mrs. Janie W. Thomas, and Mrs. Lucille Yarborough. That's the Surry County

Alumni club sponsored many activities, and events for a fundraising purpose of giving scholarships to children who were interested in, and worthy of the scholarships to attend Winston Salem teachers college. We were very, very activity in a number of roles in that capacity. After many, many years it became quite an issue to go into desegregation, into the integration. And there again that was another move, to see to it that black teachers were placed in all of the white schools, at least 1 or 2 teachers per school. I was sent to South Main school, and I stayed there for 10 years, and then I was sent to Tharrington, and Tharrington also was coming into consolidation of 3 schools: South Main, Rockford Street and Bannertown, and those three schools became Tharrington.

Now it is during that time that we sort of felt like we weren't able to put everybody in the category in which they were prepared because in like in South Main; they had a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, so I was given the appointment of teaching special education of which we had never had that before, so I had to go back to school become certified to teach special education, which meant that I went to Appalachian-took classes from Appalachian State at Boone, and I became certified in that area. Some people regarded that as being demoted or put down, because they didn't regard that as a regular class persay. I consider that one of the greatest moves of my career, because having had to work to become certified, made me even more in position to be consultant, diagnostician, a counselor as well as a classroom teacher. And some of the things that I was able to do was to conduct workshops, and teach the teachers how to recognize students who needed extra special help. And so it is important to me to project to them the importance of not being demoted, but being upgraded persay.

And can I briefly say that I had a problem in earning respect with that position, because it allowed me to be selected by my peers as teacher of the year and I represented the City of Mount Airy, and tried to do my best so that they would not be ashamed of me, and was fortunate enough to win, and being the teacher of the year for District 4, which included Surry County, Forsyth, Yadkin, and Stokes, and I represented the teachers of all the 4 counties, so I considered that quite an honor to be elected by my peers to represent them.

I did not have a problem, as was asked on the form format with what do you think, or how well did you-was you recognized by the superintendent? I cannot recall how others were recognized by the superintendent; I had no qualms whatsoever about it. And I would like to share 1 of 2 letters that I received. One letter was dated June sixteenth, nineteen seventy-five, and it starts out: To Whom It May Concern, Mrs. Gladys W. Bailey has been a teacher in the Mount Airy City Schools for twenty-one years, it has been my privilege to know her and to observe her work for several of those years. She is one of those few people that I have worked with whom I would classify as a Master teacher. There seems to be no end to her patience with children, and her genuine love of children. Mrs. Bailey is quiet spoken, which has a marvelous effect on her personality that children respond to immediately. She works tirelessly to prepare herself to meet the needs of her students, she avails herself of workshops, seminars, and college courses in often to enhance her effectiveness. Me and the Mount Airy City School system are tremendously proud of this teacher, and feel indeed fortunate to have her on our staff, sincerely Robert E. Children, Assistant Superintendent.

The second letter that I received is even more touching; I think and meaningful to me. And this letter is dated June twelfth nineteen eighty-four. And it says, dear Mrs. Bailey, what an honor it is to have a privilege of placing a letter in this wrap-up, and what a pleasure to been an invited to help honor you on your birthday. I am so proud to be among many others who call themselves a special friend of a very special lady. You and I go back a long way of friends and colleagues, I remember those days many years ago, when a young school administrator made it all the worth, and friendliness when beginning that relationship with the Mount Airy City Schools. I found that warmth and friendship in beautiful people as yourself, who befriended me, and became a very important part of my professional and personal life. Sometimes our business is very difficult as you surely know, but I could always depend on you for comforting words, and a broad smile. You will never know how much your friendship and your loyalty means to me. You have given your life to the betterment of children; there is no better commitment than that. You have been a friend to hundreds along the way; there is no greater need than that. You are one of those rare individuals who light up our lives, when in your presence. Please accept a hearty happy birthday from an old friend, Sincerely, Robert E. Children, Superintendent. I treasure these because I have

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always been, and I always will be concerned about the future development of our future students, who will be the future citizens of tomorrow. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Gee, Mrs. Dr. Evelyn Thompson for encouraging me to share this moment with you. Thank you very much.

*<tape breaks>*