



## ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

### INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

CONSULTANT: Annie P. Bailey

DATE OF BIRTH: March 13, 1918 GENDER: Female

DATE(S) OF INTERVIEW: May 19, 2008

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Consultant's home in Ft. Sumner, N.M.

INTERVIEWER: Diane Williams

SOURCE OF INTERVIEW: NMFRHM \_\_\_ OTHER: Taiban Comm. History Project

TRANSCRIBED: No

NUMBER OF TAPES: Two

ABTRACTOR: Donna M. Wojcik

DATE ABSTRACTED: June 26, 2008

RECORDING QUALITY (SPECIFY): Good

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Rural living in Taiban, N.M., area

DATE RANGE: 1918-2008

## **ABSTRACT (IMPORTANT TOPICS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE):**

### **TAPE ONE, SIDE A:**

Bailey was born at home in Taiban, N.M. Her father was born in Cooksville, Tennessee and her mother was born in Wise County, Texas. Her maternal grandfather came to the United States from France. He worked on the Santa Fe Railroad and settled in Taiban because it had appealed to him when he had been through there while working on the railroad.

Her paternal grandparents were from the Dallas area. She recalls visiting them in the family car. The car is described as a 1917 Ford pickup that had been extended, covered, and had benches along the sides for seats. She describes it as “what buses looked like in those days.”

Her father dug or drilled wells for settlers in the Taiban area. In those days water could be reached at twenty or thirty feet. “Now you have to go about three hundred feet,” she says. In 1917 he built a concrete building that he used as his shop. He sold and repaired farm equipment. At that time, homestead plots were being sold to large ranches.

During the Great Depression years, people were not improving plots or drilling wells, so her father put a small grocery business in the front of the concrete building. The repair shop was located in the back of the building. Later on, he built a three-bedroom, one bath, and kitchen home along one side of the store and moved his family into that.

Letters and cards kept the family in touch with relatives in other areas of the United States. While living on the homestead Bailey and her siblings contracted scarlet fever and were quarantined. Their father stayed in town to run the business. To enable him to keep in touch with his family “he strung a cord” (a phone line) so he could communicate with the rest of the family. Soon other ranchers wanted phone lines, so Bailey’s father told them that he would put in a phone at no charge if they would run the lines. Bailey recalls that the number of rings, a party line of sorts, identified the individual lines. When Farmer’s Electric came into the area, they took over the lines that her father had put in.

Bailey graduated from Taiban High School in 1934. Schools in Taiban were kindergarten through grade twelve. Most area children started school at age five, but Bailey’s mother wanted her to start when she was six years old. She skipped kindergarten and went through all twelve grades in ten years. Her mother was a teacher, but never taught her own children in the classroom. Her mother had married before she had finished high school, but took additional classes to finish what she missed. She passed the teacher’s test and received her license to teach.

Bailey graduated from high school on her sixteenth birthday. At the time her mother was teaching at the school at Alamogordo Lake. There were a lot of Hispanic children in her class. Bailey went to help her teach them because she had taken Spanish classes and could communicate in their language. She used her Spanish speaking skills in the store as well.

Student numbers at the Taiban school began to dwindle, so students were bussed to Ft. Sumner because the school there had a higher rating. Bailey’s parents wanted her to be a teacher, but after attending New Mexico Normal University [now New Mexico Highlands University], she decided that she did not want to go to school anymore and returned home. On her way home she saw that a bakery was in need of help, so she applied, got the job, and worked there for two years. Higher education was important to her parents, and her siblings all received some higher education. After she was married, Bailey earned a business degree through correspondence courses offered by a school in Lubbock, Tex. She was able to better help with the store business.

She recalls that the homestead “had everything.” There were chickens, goats, sheep, always a cow or two, and a garden. She does not recall if any of these were sold for additional income. Her father hired a housekeeper to look after the house because he did not want his wife working too hard. Mother worked in the garden, read books, and crocheted. When the Depression hit, the housekeeper was let go, and the grown children did a lot of the work. Bailey’s mother was a good cook, tatted, crocheted, and quilted. Bailey recalls making quilts when she was a teenager.

The family attended church. “We never missed,” Bailey says. The church belonged to the Presbyterians, but the Methodists had built a parsonage to house their preacher. Bailey attended church until she graduated and went to work in the bakery. She began attending the Baptist church and within two weeks was teaching a Sunday school class.

At that time, Taiban had several grocery stores, a depot, grain mill, two motels, and “lots was going on.”

**TAPE ONE, SIDE B:**

Bailey was the president of a Methodist organization that arranged for ministers to come to Taiban for Sunday services. Most of the area residents attended services on Sunday regardless of what denomination was preaching.

Her family had always been Democrats. Bailey served as vice-chairman of the Democratic Party in DeBaca County for twenty years. After the chairman resigned, she served in this capacity for thirty years; she only quit when she was in her late sixties. Her parents had been active Democrats. Taiban residents honored and admired politicians. One of the town’s memorable residents was Allan Daw, who ran the railroad depot.

When asked what young people did for fun, Bailey recalls two teachers from Dunlap who invited the area youth to attend dances in their home. The teachers owned a Victrola phonograph. Teens also attended ball games such as basketball and softball. Although the Taiban school had a football field, she does not recall that it was used for anything except track meets. School events were important social activities in the community. Families often socialized with neighbors. Bailey remembers playing dominoes. Card games were considered “illegal” by her parents, because poker was gambling.

Her husband proposed marriage when he was getting ready to return to Missouri for a month to work. Bailey told him that she would not marry him until he returned. When he returned he did not immediately bring up the subject of marriage. One night he announced that he wanted to go to Clovis to get married. They went to the courthouse for their license and decided to see if the pastor of the Methodist church across the street from the courthouse could marry them. He did, and they returned to Taiban. She does not recall exactly how she met her husband, but does recall that his mother would often visit the bakery where Bailey worked and would always mention her son. In the early 1940s parents did not monitor courtship. Dates consisted of dances or going for rides in the car. Bailey says she had a good relationship with her mother-in-law.

The couple married in 1941. At that time her husband was working in a grocery store in Ft. Sumner. The owner hired Bailey to do the accounting. When she realized how little her husband was making, they decided to talk to the owner about it. After the owner got angry the Baileys decided it was time to start a business of their own. They rented a building and opened a grocery store. The store was sold when Bailey’s husband entered the Navy. After the war a new store location was sought and the business restarted. Bailey’s son and daughter now run the store.

During the war Bailey’s husband was stationed in San Diego, Cal. She went to Los Angeles to live with her sister and brother-in-law. She would catch a bus to see her husband when he was in port. She

eventually found a room with kitchen privileges in San Diego. She got a job at Douglas Aircraft, with the understanding that she could leave whenever her husband made port, “no matter what time of day or night.” Workers at Douglas were mostly men. Bailey was in charge of machine shop trainees. After the war, the Bailey’s returned to Taiban.

She does not recall any problems that required them to use credit. “We always tried to pay bills on time.” A business was not difficult to start and maintain because they were known in the community. Credit was offered to store customers in the store’s early days. An application had to be filled out, and the amount of credit given was based on the applicant’s income. She remembers that her husband wiped one woman’s credit bill clean after her husband abandoned her.

The store generally employed four or five additional workers. Bailey’s children would work in the store after school. She enjoyed working with the customers, employees, and salesmen that came in and does not recall anything unpleasant.

Living in a rural community is unique, she says, because “you know your neighbors, business associates, and the people you attend church with. She does not see much of a future for rural living. There are “too many vacant businesses and homes, and people have just moved away.” There are not enough social activities for the youth.

**TAPE TWO, SIDE A:**

The church building in Taiban was built in 1908. The original bell tower was removed when someone tried to relocate the church, and the tower was never returned. Bailey remembers that the church bell would ring a half hour before Sunday school began and that they could hear it at the homestead, over a mile outside of town. Evening services were held when the parsonage was occupied, but after the preacher moved to House only morning services were available.

The church is described. The inside was painted, and there were no pews. Attendees sat on cane-bottom chairs. The floor was only carpeted in the center aisle. It was heated with a stove that burned both wood and coal. She recalls that the lights were kerosene. At the time of this interview, the church still has no electricity.

The train depot was built in the early 1900s. After diesel power replaced the steam engine, the depot was abandoned. Bailey recalls that mail arrived on the train, was picked up, and taken to the post office to be placed in the individual mailboxes.

Bailey recalls that her father was prejudiced against African-Americans. He would not sell food or gas to them and would “run ‘em off.”

**TAPE TWO, SIDE B:** Blank