

Agnes Bridgeforth on Teaching at Holt Elementary

AB: I started teaching at Elkton, way back years ago. And I enjoyed every moment. When the moon would be shining I would take all the students that lived in the Elkton selection or section and we would walk up to Miss Violet Swinea's, which would be a mile or more. And we would sing. She would pop corn and we had a good time and we would stay about thirty or forty minutes, while the moon was shining, and we would come back where we stayed, which was Mrs. Minnie Bledsoe's....We would also walk down to Mr. Driver's residence. He had children who were going to school in Elkton, and we just enjoyed the visit at night. Because both places, the popcorn and peanuts were served, and we just had a good time...

CT: How many students did you have at Elkton?

AB: Around 50.

CT: 50, wow.

AB: Because Elkton is highly populated. And when they would all come, I had 8 grades only there, and they were the first group of students who wore red caps and gowns for commencement. . . But I enjoyed my years at Elkton, and I didn't want to leave, but the school board member, president, said I had to go. So, I came to Pulaski, and all my years teaching were spent in Pulaski, with the exception of those years at Elkton and one year at Zeke's Chapel, they called it, but that was my first year. And I had to pay, I got thirty eight dollars and a half a month my first year. . .

CT: Did you teach all eight grades?

AB: No, I had only 7th and 8th. My sister had the 1st and 2nd, and Mrs. Janet Daly had the 3rd and the 4th. So I only taught the 7th and the 8th.

CT: But did you teach all subjects?

AB: All subjects for the 7th and 8th. But my favorite subject was English.

AB: I have to tell you about walking to school from Elkton.

CT: Good.

AB: To Holt's Elementary. Now the school was named for Ray Holt. He had given more money to help the Negro children. . . And the school was called Holt, Holt Elementary. . . When I would get off the Greyhound bus, we, my sister and I, would get off the Greyhound bus down in the town of Elkton, we had to walk from the bus station to the Bledsoe home. . . And we would walk to school every morning from Mrs. Bledsoe's, across the bridge, up the hollow. Not up the hollow, but up the road to the school, which was up on the hill. And we, my sister and I walked every day.

Agnes Bridgeforth Bus Ride to and from Pulaski

AB: We used to go down on the Greyhound bus on Sunday afternoon and sometimes we would have to wait for the bus and at that time Negroes couldn't ride anywhere on the bus. And the bus driver wanted us to get into the bus on the back door [recording sounds like "bridbow"]. And we refused to climb on Coca Cola cases in, to get into that door.

CT: What door was that?

AB: The back door of the bus.

CT: Oh, OK.

AB: And we had, we told him, if we, the driver, that if we going to ride the bus, we had to go in the door, the front door, and he had, he made all his customers come off and let us on. He knew we had to ride in the back of the bus before he loaded it. But for some

reason, he did it. And we refused to get on the bus from the rear, stand on CoCola cases, no no, that wouldn't do.