

Oral History 4425 Adairsville Project

Linda Bass Interview

Conducted by Paige Jennings, Ellie Cottle, and Dr. Jennifer Dickey

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Transcribed by Paige Jennings and Ellie Cottle

PJ: So, did you grow up in Adairsville?

LB: Well, that's sort of an unusual question to ask. When you think of growing up, you usually think of where you spent your childhood. Well I spent my childhood, most of it, in Carrollton, Georgia just down the road. But I guess I really grew up here because when I moved here, even after I had graduated from college, I wasn't but 20 years old. And I had lived at home, when I went to college, because West Georgia was at the top of my street. So, I just walked to school every day, went through three years straight and I lived at home, so I still had my parents there. So here I was, thrown into a situation, twenty years old and I moved into a new community. And I actually have grown up, I think, here because I have learned a lot about life and about this community. So, I guess you could say that I did grow up here. At least, I have spent my entire adulthood here.

PJ: And why did you choose to move here?

LB: The day that I graduated from West Georgia, I had found out from my future father-in-law that the French teacher here at Adairsville high was leaving. So, they had an opening in French and that was my major. So, I came up, and I interviewed, I think it was two days after graduation. I interviewed with Mr. Lacey, who was the founder of Great Locomotive Chase, was the principal who interviewed me for the job. So, I came here to teach French at the high school.

PJ: Did you meet your husband here?

LB: No, we actually met at West Georgia, when we were seniors. And this is where he grew up or spent his teen years. From the time he was a teenager he lived here. This is where he was from and it just so happened that there was a French job available. So, we dated our senior year in college and in the first year of teaching.

PJ: And did your children grow up here?

LB: Yes, I have one daughter, and she grew up here. She grew up in the house that we still live in.

PJ: And were there any prominent people that, kind of made, an impact on you when you first moved here?

LB: Oh, trying to think. Well other than the people associated with the school, at that time, my life pretty much revolved around the school and the people here. And of course, as I said, Mr. Lacey was the principal. He's the one that hired me, and I've met a lot of people that first year that I taught that are still dear friends to me. And so really, that's about the only people that I can think of right now because being a new teacher, I spent a lot of time after school hours preparing for school the next day. I didn't get a whole lot of chance to have a social life for a year or two until I got things going at school.

PJ: When you weren't at the school, were there any places that you kind of hung around a lot when you first moved here?

LB: There weren't a whole lot of places to hang around in Adairsville. Now we're talking about fifty years ago, I moved here in August of 1968. At that time, most all of Adairsville, as far as business, was right here across the railroad track, what we now call the historic downtown. There was a Dairy King and there was a little cafe right behind the downtown called The Little Rock Café. That was just about the only place to eat in Adairsville. And so, I hung out in my mobile home most of the time because there wasn't a whole lot else to do in Adairsville. Now we would go to Rome, to the movies, and places like that to shop. Calhoun and Cartersville. But there wasn't much in Adairsville at that time. And like I said, I didn't have a whole lot of extra time because my first couple years of teaching I had to do a lot of preparation for classes. Especially my English classes, because there was so much to read in literature and things like that, and I had to know more than the students did the next day. So, I spent a lot of time at home preparing for my lessons and all.

PJ: How has Adairsville changed over time, would you say?

LB: Well, it has grown. What I tell people is that, when I first moved here, if you wanted to buy a birthday card, or even wrapping paper and a bow, I would have to go to either Calhoun, Cartersville, or Rome. Well, I take that back, there was a five and ten cents store here that probably sold those things, but I'm not sure how long they would have been on the shelf. We just didn't have a lot of places to buy things. We had one grocery store, the S&H Supermarket. There was not much on highway 41 at that time,

besides a couple of little, small motels, gas stations, and car dealerships. There wasn't really a whole lot to do here for young people and there's still not a lot, but at least there are places to eat and places to shop now without having to go. And I can buy my birthday cards and wrapping paper in Adairsville now.

PJ: What did you enjoy the most when you first moved here, about Adairsville?

LB: I never lived in a community quite this small. Carrollton's not a big town, but compared to Adairsville, it is. It's more like Cartersville. I kind of liked that it was a small town; everybody in school knew each other and most everybody in the community knew each other. And it was a safe place, is I guess the best way to say it. I never have felt afraid since I've lived here. I've always felt safe and secure. I think that's one of the best things about it.

PJ: Was there anything you weren't too fond of when you came here or was kind of a hard thing to adjust to?

LB: I guess the only thing was the fact that if you wanted to buy clothes, shoes, or anything like that, you did have to go out of town, because there just wasn't the places here. I think, years before, maybe in the early 60's, late 50's, when the town was more bustling, there were places to buy clothes and things. That was the main thing that has changed and that I missed the most.

PJ: You mentioned that you were a teacher. When did you decide that you wanted to be a teacher?

LB: I think it was in my blood. My daddy was a teacher, a high school teacher and coach. There were eight kids in his family growing up, seven of them were teachers. Like I said, I think it was in my blood.

When I was in the 9th grade, I wanted to be an airline stewardess. But I was 5' 10", and back then, there were limits to how tall you could be, so that was just one of those dream jobs I wanted to be. Then I came down to reality and I just felt like teaching was what I was going to do. It's what I was born to do.

I never thought about teaching elementary school. I guess because my daddy was a high school teacher, and I was always around more high school students because I would go to sports practice with him, when I

wasn't playing, games, and things like that. I just thought that I would teach. I didn't think about, when I went to college, elementary education. I wanted to major in a course, and then get my secondary education to go along with that. When I first started college I thought, "well, I'll major in math," because I did pretty good in math, in high school. Well, I took one math class and that changed my mind. Well then, I thought, "History! I like history," and I had made good in my first history class at West Georgia. The history professor that I had was married to the French professor that I had. So, when I started taking French, which I had only taken in high school, Madame Alsip told me, "You need to major in French. History is too boring." And so, here I am. I majored in French, and I was lucky enough that I was able to use my major for thirty-five years of teaching.

PJ: Besides the teachers that were in your family, were there any other teachers, growing up, that inspired you to become a teacher?

LB: Yes, I had some pretty good teachers. My French professor at West Georgia, she was a little feisty lady. Very petite. She would sit at her desk with her legs crossed, and of course all the boys in class would take French, whether they wanted to or not, just to be in her class. I thought it would be neat to teach French because it's something fun. I know some of my students probably didn't think it was a lot of fun, but I tried to make French as much fun as I could. She [Alsip] kind of influenced me. And then in high school, at Carrollton High, I had a history/social science teacher that everyone loved. He could have been a stand-up comic, had he [Alsip] not become a teacher. He was, I think, very influential in that he made class interesting and fun. There were teachers that I had through the years that were influential, but I think that there was just something in my genes about being a teacher.

PJ: And when you came to Adairsville, which of the Adairsville schools did you teach at?

LB: Well, there was only one. When I came, where the new Adairsville Elementary School is now located was Adairsville Schools, grade one through twelve, were all on the same campus. Now there were several different buildings on the campus, but we were all grades one through twelve. The school was small enough to have one campus for all the school. Which, now we have a high school, middle school, and elementary school just in Adairsville and two more elementary schools that are feeder schools into Adairsville. We've definitely grown a lot. In fact, when I first came here, I would tell people that I taught at Adairsville High, but the sign said, "Adairsville School," because it was just one school, grades one through twelve.

PJ: So, you taught primarily high school grades, like ninth through twelfth?

LB: I have taught as low as seventh grade, and as high as twelfth grade because of my certification for French and English. I went back two summers after I graduated and after I started teaching my first year, I went back for two summers at West Georgia to get certified in English. So, my English certification is grade seventh through twelfth as well.

PJ: So, you taught French and English?

LB: Yes.

PJ: Did you teach any other classes?

LB: Well, I had the yearbook for several years. At first the yearbook was just an extracurricular activity but then later on they put it into the curriculum. So I had yearbook and newspaper, I guess you could call it journalism, and that's pretty much it as far as teaching classes.

PJ: Did you oversee any of the clubs or organizations while you were teaching?

LB: Yes, over the years that I taught, I was the one-act play coach for several years, of course the advisor to the yearbook and newspaper, and I also at one time coached the academic bowl team. And I was the coach, I guess you would call it, of the mock trial team. I'm not sure how I ended up with that, it should have gone to a social studies teacher, but I ended up with mock trial and did that for several years. Now, not all these were going on at the same time, this was over a thirty-four-year span of time at Adairsville. I think that's pretty much the extracurricular activities that I was involved in.

PJ: Were there any classes, as a whole or individual students, that stood out to you over the years?

LB: Oh, yeah, there've been several. I won't call any out by name because I'm sure I would leave out someone, but there have been several students that made teaching enjoyable. At the time, they may not tell you what influence or effect you had on them, but later in life, they will sometimes tell you what impact I might have had on them. I was influenced by them, as well, by the way they acted, or did or didn't enjoy my class. So, I really don't want to name any names, but there were quite a few students over

the years that I will say were kind of special, that you might remember better than other students.

PJ: Have you kept in touch with any of them over the years?

LB: Well Facebook has helped, but no. There's not anybody that I just sit and call, or that calls me, or write letters to, because people don't write letters anymore. But no, no one that I correspond with on a regular basis, but I do see on Facebook and hear from on Facebook.

PJ: What were some of the challenges you faced when you started teaching here in Adairsville?

LB: Well, first of course, being a twenty-year-old and having kids in high school that were almost as old you are was quite a challenge. Of course, I had to establish some sort of discipline and then I had to, of course, at least pretend I knew more than the students did, so I had to do a lot of preparation for those classes. So, that was sort of a hardship to begin with because I had nothing to go by. I had to establish my own teaching techniques and keep up with my things that I used in class. And then, of course, after several years, when I had taught just about every grade level of English, I had notebooks for English Lit., World Lit., American Lit., and it made a lot easier. Those first few years of getting established as a teacher and establishing some sort of behavior system in the class were quite challenging.

PJ: Do you think any of the challenges you had were specific to Adairsville? Just from being in this community?

LB: Well, I think a lot might have had to do with the socioeconomic level of the community being a little bit different than the socioeconomic community that I had come from. A lot of students here, just, were never exposed to certain things that you might have been exposed to, like I was exposed to, growing up. My mother was originally from England, so when I was six years old and eleven years old, we went to England to visit my relatives for the summer, maybe not the whole summer. So, at an early age, I had gone over seas and for a lot of kids here, they may not have ever gotten out of Georgia. But, in the thirty-four years that I taught at Adairsville, and I also taught one year at Cass, I took student groups to Europe eight different times. My first group was in 1977, and my last group was in 1998. We went every two, three, or four years, it just depended, and for them, that was really an eye opener. I was able to show them something that they may not have ever seen before and you can tell students things about French culture, French food, or French life, but until

they see it themselves, it doesn't really soak in. I think I had an advantage in that I had been places and done things, that a lot of student might not have ever gotten to do and hopefully I allowed some of them to get out of their comfort zone and explore some of the world. And I'm not sure if I answered exactly the question that you asked [*laughing*].

PJ: What has changed about the education system since you first started until you retired?

LB: They say now that it's a lot harder to be a teacher than it used to be, and it was pretty hard back then. Now, the overall education system has changed. We have so much outer influences coming in and there's so much to do about standardized tests and test scores, and certain ways of teaching, that part has changed, I'm sure, considerably. I've been out of teaching for several years, so I'm sure there's a lot more teaching techniques out there now than there used to be. One of the big changes was technology. When I first started teaching, we had manual typewriters. Of course, they had electric typewriters, but I had a little, old manual typewriter that I would work on. And if I had to type up a test, I would have to take this paper, which we called mimeograph paper, you would put it in the type writer and type. And one side had this purple back on it, you ran that through a mimeograph machine to make copies of tests. Now, I never took typing in high school, but I got to where I could type pretty fast with my index fingers. But I wasn't always very accurate so if I made a typo, I had to X it out and move on. So, after computers came on the scene, making tests got to be a lot easier for me because I could make corrections. I think the technology, definitely technology, changed from 1968 to the present. Of course, now-a-days, they do so much on computers, but I think the big challenge and change was in technology and how we, or they, are able to incorporate the technology today in teaching and learning.

PJ: And did you become close with any of the teachers in Adairsville?

LB: Oh yes. I am very close to one particular teacher. We go to Florida every year, have a little girls' trip out. My daughter and her youngest daughters are kind of best friends. So very close to one particular teacher and still close to several other as well, yes.

PJ: And when exactly did you retire from teaching?

LB: Well, formally, I retired from teaching in 1998. That was my thirtieth year, and I retired then but then I went back. I stayed out a year and then I went back and taught four more years at Adairsville, part time. They allow

retired teachers to come back and to teach half a day. I could draw my retirement and draw a salary from the county. And then I stopped again, and then was out for a year before Cass High called me about going down there to teach French classes. I taught down there for about a year. So, I've been out of the classroom now for thirteen years, but I've been officially retired for twenty. Been drawing teacher retirement for twenty years.

PJ: You said that your daughter attended school in Adairsville. Did she have any unique experiences that you know of? What was her experience like with you teaching in the high school while she was a student?

LB: Probably like it was with my daddy being a teacher and me being a student. I had my daddy for two years of algebra. My daughter had me for two years of French. I treated her just like my daddy treated me, just like one of the regular students. Of course, sometimes she could get a little extra help at home, if she had a question that she didn't understand in French, I was right there to help her. But I didn't let her see any tests or anything like that ahead of time, which my daddy never let me see either. And I think other than that, her experience was just like any other students. She got a fairly good education from Adairsville and then went to Berry for college, graduated from Berry, got her master's degree from Berry. She now has her sixth-year degree, but that's from a different institution.

PJ: You mentioned that you returned to teaching for a little bit after retiring. What else have you been up to since retiring?

[Train interrupts briefly]

LB: You asked me but what all I've done...well, when I was teaching, like I said, I spent so much time with preparation for classes and extracurricular activities, I didn't really have a chance to do anything civic wise or community wise. When I first retired in 1998, I joined the Sans Souci Women's Club at that point. In those twenty years, I have served as president of that club five different times. Then, for three years, I was the Adairsville representative of the library board for the Bartow County Library System and then for six year – well, probably eight years – I was on the Downtown Development Authority. And I served as the chairperson of that for six years. And then, most recently, I was on the Historic Preservation Commission. I was on that for four years, my term just ended in September on that. So, right now, I'm not on anything except for the Sans Souci club and then I am a member of the Bartow County Retired Educators' Association. I spend a lot of time going to club meetings [*laughter*].

PJ: What made you want to join Sans Souci?

LB: I was invited. A member invited me, and I had ridden by here for many years going to school. I had come to one of the meetings years before and made a presentation, one of my trips to Europe, I had done a slideshow, and that was their program one time. So, I had come here for a program and had been invited to join but didn't at that time because I was busy with everything else relating to school. Later on, I decided that I might enjoy it, so I decided to join.

PJ: And why did you decide to stay so active in the community after you retired?

LB: I was too young to just do nothing. When I first retired, I was fifty years old. My husband was still teaching, he taught until 2005, so he taught for thirty-seven years where I retired with thirty. I guess I just wanted something to do and I also worked, the first year that I retired. I worked at the little newspaper office – we don't have one anymore, but we did at that time and I worked there at the local newspaper office for a year since I had that background in journalism. I just enjoy being involved in the community.

JD: Linda, could you tell us a little bit about the Sans Souci Women's Club? A little bit about the history and what they do now in the community, its role in the community?

LB: Ok. Well the Sans Souci Club was formed in 1914, and it was basically a social club for a group of little ladies whose husbands were out working. They just wanted to get together and play cards, maybe have lunch, or tea, have something – refreshments. So, they established the Sans Souci Women's Club. The name, Sans Souci, is actually French and it means "without care." That's kind of what they wanted, a care free life to play Rook - I don't know if they ever played Bridge, I know they played Rook, - and so that's how it was formed. Over the years, it evolved from a social club to a service club. At some point, and I'm not sure when the library was in this building - when it first started being in this building- but for many years, this was the Adairsville, well it was the Sans Souci Library. It was the city of Adairsville's library, but it was run by the Sans Souci Women's Club. I assume the librarian and the assistant librarian were members of the Sans Souci. When my daughter was growing up, when she was elementary and middle school, this is where we came to get books – summer reading. And how it became a library, sometime between World War I and World War II, the Sans Souci Women's Club got involved with this lending library program. The book mobile was kind of a later development of the lending library. The community, especially small communities, would have access to library books through a lending

library. It started out as a lending library and then grew into a city, public library. Up until 1994, this was the public library but I'm not sure what year it became the public library. Then, after the library moved out, we still support the library. We give them a donation every year and we help in any way that they may need us to help out. Not sure what year we started volunteering at the depot, but our big money maker now, and our big community service, is being docents for the city of Adairsville at the Depot museum. We also give out a scholarship every year to an Adairsville High senior. We've done that now for twenty- four years maybe- twenty-four, twenty-five, somewhere in there. Trying to think what else, but that's kind of what it started out as, a social club, but then it soon became a service club. We still get together once a month and socialize. We don't play cards, but we get together, and have dinner, bring potluck dinner, and have programs and so forth. We still make contributions and programs in the community.

PJ: Are a lot the members of the Sans Souci former educators?

LB: We have a lot that are, but its not all that much connected to the school. For several years, we had a pretty good number of members. Around fifty members, but a lot of those have died out, moved away. Now, we're getting some younger women in but they are still young enough to work. We've got a nice little hodge podge of members. Our oldest member is middle-eighties maybe, and our youngest might be in early forties, I guess.

PJ: And do you guys primarily help with education programs?

LB: We do the backpack buddies program, and we of course give a scholarship. Last year, of the year before last, we actually gave the five schools, five schools that are associated with the Adairsville community, we gave each of them a donation of a thousands dollars in the summer, before the school year started, to use to purchase whatever they thought to be appropriate at their school. We didn't do that last year, but we may do that again, sometime in the future. So yes, we still support the schools, we still support the library. And of course, we support the city of Adairsville as well, through the Depot.

JD: So, the Depot, the city basically pays, makes a contribution to the club and then the members staff the Depot. You serve as the docents?

LB: Yes, right. They decided that that would be cheaper than to pay for a full-time curator. We worked up a contract, this is either our fourth or fifth year to do this, and yes, they pay us so much a month, and we man the Depot.

JD: And then you use the money from that to help pay for the scholarship. Tell us a little bit about the scholarship.

LB: When we first started out with the scholarship, we wanted to give it to somebody who was going into library science but then that began to fizzle out after a little while because there aren't a lot a people going into library science anymore. Then, we said that we would give it to someone who was going into education, and we did that for a while. Now, we don't really have a specific. I know one time we gave it to a young lady that went into nursing. Sometime in January, early February, we take applications to the high school and the counselors will give out the applications to interested students. We might have as many as twenty-something applicants or we might have. I don't think last year we had very many, eight or nine applicants is all. And we have a committee, that will read each one and score them. Then, we'll decide which person we think is the, you know, the best one.

JD: So, it's a competitive process. And then the students, basically can take this Sans Souci Women's Club scholarship and go wherever they want to.

LB: Yes. When we first gave it out for many years, when we gave it out it was just an initial scholarship. I think when we started out, it might have been just five hundred dollars because, before we did the contract with the city for the Depot, we had a hard time earning money. Bake sales, and those sorts of things, didn't go very far. But now that we have nice little source of income, we're able to not only give the one thousand initial scholarship, but we also have what we call a recurring scholarship. We will give that particular recipient five hundred dollars, each of the next three years, if they maintain a certain average and re-apply. Send in an application and a transcript of their grades, a little update on how they're doing. So our first, I think it was our 2015 recipients, well this year at the beginning of this school year is the fourth payment we've made to the first time we started the recurring scholarships. So we had one now that's gotten \$2,500 from us over a four year period.

JD: Do any of those scholarship recipients come back to Adairsville to live?

LB: I'm trying to remember. Well, I know the ones, yes, the thousand-dollar ones, yes, a lot of those have come back to Adairsville to live. As far as the recurring scholarship we'll have to see because like I said this year is our first one to go through four years with the scholarship. We'll see what she's going to do. But yes, we have a lot. The nurse that I mentioned, she's back in Adairsville but the last time I heard she was actually at the hospital in Carrollton.

JD: That's a haul.

JB: Yeah, unless she's changed, but yes, a lot of our recipients are still in the area.

PJ: Is the scholarship given primarily to women?

JB: Not necessarily, we have had some guys. No, you don't have to be a female just to have it. I don't know if guys brag about being the recipient of the Sans Souci_Women's scholarship, but we have had some male recipients. But most of the time it is for some reason, it is female.

JD: I have a question for you Linda, about when you came here 1968, its post segregation

LB: Yes.

JD: Tell us a little bit about that. The schools were fairly newly integrated...

LB: Yes

JD: But maybe 3 years or something.

LB: Not even that much. When I graduated high school in 65 it was, we was still segregated. When I went to West Georgia of course, it was integrated, but very few African American students. I think it was in 67, maybe the 66/67 school year, maybe they did a little, or maybe it was 67/68 school year. I know I've talked to a couple of former students at Adairsville who are kind of caretakers of the church across the street from our house which is an African American Episcopalian church and they were among the first volunteers to come. The year before total integration they did a little volunteer - they asked for so many volunteers to go to Adairsville and so many volunteers to go to Cassville - because at that time there were just the two county high schools. And, of course, prior to that time, the African American students had to be bussed to schools in Cartersville. So they did the volunteer thing and that might have been just the year before I came the 67/68 school year because when I came in 68 it was fully integrated. And everything went very smoothly. We've had a lot of good race relations here in Adairsville. No major problems at all and it's been a very pleasant experience.

PJ: Did segregation have any impact when you first started teaching in the schools since it had just kind of occurred?

LB: Not really, no, not really. I mean it was the way things were, you know, and we had to accept it. Not that it was something you didn't want to accept, but it was just a new, I think the students were more frightened than the teachers were by any means because this was a life changing occurrence for them. But everything seemed to go very smoothly. I think a lot of them kind of had to test us to see how we felt about the situation, but it didn't take them long to see that she accepts us for what we are.

JD: Were there very many African American teachers in the school when you got there?

LB: When I came, Mary Carreathers, who I think you've already interviewed last year, she came the same year I came, and Joan Curtis who was the science teacher, came. There might have been a few in the elementary, I can't remember. Even though we were all on one campus, they did their thing, and we did our thing in different buildings, but we had two high school teachers. And when I saw we were all on one campus, when I came to Adairsville the buildings consisted of the two-story high school, which they the called the high school building that had been built in 1967, so it was just a year old, but it did not look new. It was not like today's new schools. And then there was another building on campus that had been built in, like 1957. There was a little complex of buildings it was kind of where the main the front door was and it had a wing that came out that complex was built in 1920s, early 1920s, and then there was a tall two, almost three-story building that was built in 1901. So those buildings were still on campus when I came. And I had just graduated from a new high school three years before and kind of come into an old school situation, but it wasn't bad. Of course, I was in the new one-year old building, but everything was kind of new for me, and I'm not real sure why I got off on that when we were talking about integration.

JD: I don't know but that was an interesting tangent though I actually had a note here about "tell us about the buildings on the school campus" and you just did that.

LB: I just did but then there was also, besides those main big buildings, there was several wooden structures, and I don't ever remember going in those wooden structures, I don't know why. But the band room was like in a wooden structure, they had a cannery, building because the agriculture teacher in the summers would let people come in from the community and they would can their vegetables and all, so they had a cannery, and we had of course the shop building. Those were all in wooden structures on the campus. There was also a little cement, concrete building that sat in front of the newest part of the school. That from what I understand was the home economics department before it was moved into the new building.

And I think the year I came that little cement building was kind of a field house for the football team. Our football field ran east and west at that time rather than north and south as it was when we had new buildings, when the old buildings were torn down and the new buildings were built up they changed the football field and we got a nice, wonderful stadium. But you wouldn't call the football field in 1968 a stadium. It had the home stands, might have had, I don't know if it even had as many as ten rows, but the press box was this wooden structure that sat up on tall posts and the visitors section across the way probably went from the forty yard line to the forty yard line here and must have had maybe three rows of seats. It was not anything fancy by any means. But strange enough, we won many football games on that field. But, yeah, that's what the old school was like, and during the school year they started demolishing some of those old buildings to start building new buildings. Before they tore that building down to build the new elementary school, it consisted of the 1957 building, the 1967 building, and then, in between those two, was a section that had been built in 1976 and another that had been finished in 1977.

JD: What was the population of Adairsville when you moved here?

LB: Oh, probably not even half of what it is now. Now it's close to 5000 so if it was even 2000 that was probably a big guess. I think there were maybe 250 students in high school.

JD: Do you remember when I-75 was completed?

LB: Yes.

JD: It was after you moved here?

LB: After I moved here, in 1968 the interstate stopped at highway 140, and people would get off, and highway 140 was a two-lane road, and they would get off and come up the two-lane road and get on 41, which was also a two lane road until, you got to Cassville, then it became four lane. But yes, I remember that, and I remember the first Christmas that I was here, traffic was just bottlenecked here and they said it was just lines crawling up the interstate. Someone said it took them an hour to get from Calhoun to the Adairsville exit then because it was just crawling, because back then I guess it was probably just two lanes on the interstate. But two lanes of interstate traffic had to merge into one lane on highway 140 and 41. So you didn't want to try to get out on 41 and try to go anywhere at that time. There wasn't much on 41 at that time to go to but, yes, I remember how exciting it was when they moved, they then moved it up to they completed the part from Adairsville to, is it exit? Where 411...

JD: Right

LB: Whatever exit it is that 411 is on. I don't know if that is 2...

JD: Its around 290

LB: It's not 290, I'm not sure. Maybe it is 290. But anyways, where 411, where the Booth Museum, I mean the Tellus Museum is now.

JD: It's the one north of 290. It's 293, I believe.

LB: Right it's the one north of 290. It may be, yeah, I think it is because I think Cassville is 296 the Cass-White and were 306, but yeah, they moved it up there and then of course they, and when I say it ended in Adairsville, the north, coming south, you picked it back up at the White-Water exit in Marietta. They had to come through 41, they had to come through Cartersville and Marietta, almost parts of Marietta to get back on it. So yeah it was very nice when they opened it up.

JD: I remember 1977 when it finally opened all the way from Chattanooga. You could go Chattanooga to Atlanta on 75 without getting off.

Why do you think Adairsville has grown so much? So, it's more than doubled in size.

LB: Yes, it has. Well I guess its proximity to I-75 has helped even though I- 75 has bypassed our downtown which it does all towns, but we have since grown towards the interstate. As I said when I first came here everything was downtown. You had very little on 41 and nothing on 140 except houses and farm land and some gas stations. I think our biggest boom has really been in the last twenty-five years maybe when they finally doubled, made the four-lane 140 and then started building more things, fast food restaurants, of course. But we've gotten some new industries in town which has helped bring more people into town. When I came here there was one subdivision and it was located on the west side of town a couple miles out of town—one subdivision. Now I couldn't even tell you how many subdivisions we have in town. It's sort of become a place to live even though it might not be the place where you work. It's the place to live and close enough to Atlanta, Chattanooga, Rome, Cartersville, Calhoun, for people to commute. And I think that's helped it grow.

PJ: You mentioned earlier the football stadium became a really big thing.

LB: Yes.

PJ: What's the impact sports has had on the community?

LB: Well, it's had a pretty big impact. I don't think Adairsville had many winning football teams, seasons, prior to 1968, and I would think that integration has helped in that respect. The first year I was here, I'm not sure, we may have had a winning season, but we didn't advance too far. But in '69, '70, '71 and '72, Adairsville played for the state championship for four straight years. When I first came, we were in class C, that was our classification. The smallest classification you can have. Then they did away with class C, we moved up to class B. We had played three state championships in class C, and we moved up to class B, and we played one in class B. And then of course they did away with class B, and now the smallest is class A, but we are a triple A school now. But yeah, we had four state championship games—didn't win, but the fact that we kind of became a winning, started having winning seasons in football. And it seems like football always sort of dictates. The community kind of gathers around football teams more than they do probably any other sport. But yeah the sports kind of became alive in those late '60s and continues. Sometimes we have lean years; sometimes we have good years. And it's not just in football now, we've played state championship games in baseball—haven't won. I think in all the years I've been here we've only won one team state championship, and that was in wrestling in 1996. We were the state whatever classification we were in at the time, double A maybe, champions in wrestling. That's the only team state championship. We had individual state champions in track, and in wrestling. But as far as a team state championships, that's the only state championship trophy that Adairsville has. And of course, they do really well now with their Junior ROTC program. They win a lot of state and national titles with that. But as far as the sports, it's really kind of developed. And 50 years ago, we had football and basketball, they started the baseball team that year, I think the 68/69 school year they started a baseball team and track. And now they have quite a few more sports as they've grown.

PJ: You mentioned that you think the football team benefitted from desegregation, do you think sports helped with desegregation?

LB: I'm sure it did. And it wasn't just in Adairsville, I think that happened everywhere, because you got high quality athletes coming in, and everybody likes to win. And when you start winning, they accept. That gets everybody excited. So yes, I think that helped a lot. I know we had at least two running backs that could just outrun anybody else and that was exciting to see, to win games. I think that's one of the things that helped

make integration more acceptable. I think the sports helped a lot in that field.

JD: Linda, I know from working with you for the last couple of years that you have a wealth of knowledge about the history of Adairsville.

LB: In some areas, I'm sure.

JD: I know a lot of it was just living here but is that something that was a side interest of yours and you've just picked things up along the way, or have you studied it?

LB: Yes. Well no, I think how I got into this history thing, and I'm certainly not the town historian by any means, because there are a lot more people here that know more than I do. When I served as the downtown development chairperson, the visitors bureau wanted to have a walking tour here and it was going to be November the first of whatever year it was that we did it, and we had these little brochures. We had the information that we had put out on the houses for when we were named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1987. Somehow or another, I just was able to write little blurbs about a lot of the old historic houses in town, and since it was November the first, we thought we tied in with Halloween from the day before, so we called it "History and Haunts Tour." I talked to several of the owners of these houses on Park. Park Street has a lot of ghosts by the way, and there were so many houses that had ghost stories, spirits, associated with them so we made it a History and Haunts Tour, and that's really the only way that I got involved with the history was with that. My husband has lived here since he was in the 8th grade, and he has witnessed a lot of changes and a lot of times he would tell me about things and so forth. But a lot of it just evolved from getting the information together for the History and Haunts Tour. But I mean it's fun. It's like I was telling somebody the other day, I grew up in Carrollton and Carrollton is a big town, but it has history I'm sure. But I never really learned the history of that town. And this, to be such a small town, it has a lot of history. I mean, Pretty Boy Floyd spent his early childhood years here. I mean, how many towns can say that America's most wanted gangsters lived here for a while and was born right outside of town. We have the rich Indian history, the Cherokee, and we have the Civil War history, and the history associated with the Great Locomotive Chase, which of course is Civil War history, and the old 41 Highway with the chenille trade, the chenille business coming out of that. To be very small, it has a very vast wealth of history associated with it. And it's kind of interesting and fun to get involved, and I didn't major in history in college but that doesn't mean I'm not interested in history.

PJ: Could you tell us a little bit about the history of the house you currently live in?

LB: The house that I live in now, that we've lived in for forty-four years, was built around, on the little sign out front it says around 1900. It was built by John Schmitz, who built the first Adairsville school building—the one that was the 1901 building. He built that, and he built several houses around town, and George Hayes that you interviewed earlier, that was his great grandfather. He probably told you a lot about John Schmitz. But the house was built around the turn of the twentieth century. I don't know a lot about the first owners. The little history sign says it's the Hamilton House. I don't know if they are the first people that lived in the house or just where that name came from. But in the nineteen, I'm going to say the late 1930s and the early, early 1940s, it was a funeral home. And it was the first funeral home in Adairsville. Mr. Whitworth was the funeral director. He made caskets in the upstairs part of one of the buildings he owned in town which was a furniture store on the bottom floor and he had his caskets upstairs. But our house was the funeral parlor. Our house has a bay, a wall that bays out, that's our living room, well that was the viewing room and years ago one of my real good high school friends who lived in Fairmount later moved to Fairmount, she brought her two sons to visit one time and one of her sons was sitting in the couch in front of that bay wall and he looked up and saw that curved wall, he said, "oh I feel like I'm in a casket" and I said "well." Then I had to break the news that this was the viewing room for the funeral home. He came back a few years ago and did some work for me, I don't know if that scared him too much, but he did come back and did some work. But by that time, he was a grown man. But anyway, it was a funeral home for a while and we bought the house in 1974 and have lived in it ever since and made a lot of inside renovations to it. But yeah, it has a little bit of history. And you interviewed Clint Coker earlier and he told you about the brothers. The two Sayher brothers that one shot the other, well the one that died, his body was at our house. And their mother, Addy Sayher, who was Barnsely's granddaughter, when she died her body was at our house as well. We have a little bit of a connection to Barnsley Garden.

PJ: Did you know about the history before you got the house?

LB: I guess we did, I don't remember when we learned about it because back then in 1974, I don't know if you had to be told if there was something like now, I think they have to tell you if there is something funny about the house. I don't remember who told us that and I don't remember if it was before we moved in or after we moved in. But we've been there ever since, nothing ever bothered us. I guess the dead can't really scare you,

when they got there, they weren't searching for anything. They were already, their souls were already where they were going.

JD: Thank you so much, Linda.

LB: Alright.

PJ: Thank you.

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Abstract: In her oral interview, Linda Bass discusses her early life in Carrollton, education at West Georgia, and eventual move to Adairsville. She provides a detail retelling of her time as a teacher at Adairsville High School, as well as a detailed history of the school, including integration and architecture. Bass describes the history of the Sans Souci Women's Club, and the contributions the club has made to the community of Adairsville, the construction of interstate 75 and its effect on the economy of Adairsville, and the history of her current home, which was once the funeral home.

Biography of Linda Bass: Linda Bass was born in Alabama. At the age of four, she moved with her parents to Carrollton, Georgia, where spent the remainder of her childhood and where she graduated with a degree in French from the University of West Georgia. At the age of twenty, Bass moved to Adairsville, where she taught French and English for thirty years before retiring and becoming an active member of the community. Today, Bass is a member of the Sans Souci Women's Club, where she has served as president multiple time, and is a member of several committees that serve to preserve and teach the history of Adairsville.

