

HAROLD CADE

Interview 202a

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ABSTRACT: In this telephone interview with Patsy Colbert, Harold Cade reminisces about growing up in Diboll during segregation and attending Diboll's segregated black school. A 1944 graduate of H.G. Temple School, Mr. Cade joined the military and studied at Prairie View A&M University before becoming a life-long educator in other areas of Texas, particularly in cities along the south Texas Coast.

Patsy Colbert (hereafter PC): Today's date is June 25, I'm Patsy Colbert and I'm here at the History Center in Diboll, Texas and I'm interviewing Mr. Harold Cade in Victoria, Texas via the telephone today. Mr. Cade we know that you were not in school during the integration years. This project is part of our ongoing project of integration history of the Diboll Schools and the H. G. Temple School. We know that you were one of the first students to graduate from H. G. Temple High School and so we appreciate you helping us with this project today. If we could we will just begin if you can tell me when and where you were born?

Harold Cade (hereafter HC): I was born in a little place called Bon Ami, Louisiana but when I was a baby my parents moved me to Fastrill, Texas which was a log cutting community and then when I became able to walk and so forth we moved to Diboll. I was there through my high school years.

PC: Okay, so you were actually born in Bon Wier [Bon Ami] and then you moved to Fastrill?

HC: Right.

PC: Okay, do you remember anything about living at Fastrill?

HC: Oh, I remember...not hardly, I remember what we called the commissary store. It was just one store there for the people that worked and so forth. They had an elementary school there for the blacks and there was one teacher at that time. I was in the second or third grade when I left there, so the whole camp moved to Diboll so we have been there ever since. There was an electric plant that we got our electric lights from. Then, we had a general practitioner I suppose, but he took care of all the medical deals and if we had any serious sickness I suppose they were either sent to Alto or Rusk. They were the closest cities.

PC: And what year were you born?

HC: In 1925.

PC: In 1925 and how old were you when you moved to Fastrill?

HC: Oh I don't know I was still a baby I guess.

PC: Okay. Then you lived there until what age at Fastrill?

HC: Seven years old.

PC: Seven.

HC: Yes ma'am, maybe eight.

PC: Okay, seven or eight. Did you actually start to school there?

HC: Yes that is the reason I was in the second grade when I left.

PC: Okay, wow! How many students were in your class, do you remember?

HC: No ma'am, I don't know, I guess 20 or 25, you know, it was quite a few in the days, quite a few.

PC: It was a large logging camp. We know it was there for many years before they moved to Diboll. Now we know that Fastrill Camp closed in about 1941. Is that when your family moved to Diboll?

HC: Yes.

PC: So your father worked for Southern Pine Lumber Company?

HC: Yes ma'am.

PC: What did he do actually?

HC: I really don't...he was a log cutter for one thing but when they weren't cutting logs he worked for other jobs. I never did find out because the summer time mostly we were, my daddy's home was in Jasper, Texas and that is where we would go back in the summer and work on the farms and whatever down in the community called Huff Creek.

PC: Okay.

HC: So, I was in and out there.

PC: Is there anything else you remember about living at Fastrill?

HC: No, ma'am not particularly.

PC: You were pretty small. Mr. Cade what is your educational background?

HC: Well I started out teaching and I taught science in the high school area. The black school we had grades nine through twelve. I taught five years in Lockhart, Texas and then we moved to Victoria and I got a job here at a place called F. W. Gross was the name of the high school, F.W. Gross, G-R-O-S-S High School. I went to school, to back up for me, I went to the service, I came out and went to Prairie View. I got a degree in agriculture education, then I had a master's degree in administration and supervision. I finished there in 1951, got out and I've been teaching ever since.

PC: Okay, so you actually graduated from the H. G. Temple School here in Diboll?

HC: Right.

PC: And, what year did you graduate?

HC: 1944.

PC: 1944. What was the name of the school when you graduated?

HC: H. G. Temple.

PC: Okay, so it had already changed names then from the Diboll Colored School?

HC: Yes ma'am.

PC: Now, we know that Professor Bradley was the principal then and he began the accreditation process somewhere around 1942. Do you know anything about that process and how long it took?

HC: No, I do not.

PC: Do you know if you were the first graduating class?

HC: We were told we were the first graduating class under the name of H. G. Temple.

PC: Okay, do you remember anything about the naming of the school to H. G. Temple?

HC: No, because up until that time, I don't know the school went I guess up until the ninth grade and those children that finished in the ninth grade they went somewhere else. Those that lived there went to Dunbar in Lufkin. I do know that.

PC: Did you ever have to go to Dunbar for a short time and then have to come back?

HC: No, I was in the first class that started it.

PC: Okay, so you started to school in Diboll under the Diboll Colored School at that time, your elementary years. Is that correct?

HC: Now you know I've been trying to look that up since you told me that day before yesterday. I'm not sure. I don't remember it being Diboll Colored School. I remember it being H. G. Temple School all the way.

PC: Okay, do you know what year you moved to Diboll from Fastrill?

HC: No ma'am, I asked my sister the other night but we can't remember. She had some papers down in her bank vault. She was going to try to go down there today or Monday and try to get them and call me.

PC: We know that Fastrill closed in 1941.

HC: I don't know.

PC: I was just wondering how many years you went to school here before you graduated? Do you know what grade you were in when you came to Diboll?

HC: I went to school there ninth through twelfth I know.

PC: You did go the ninth through twelfth?

HC: Yes.

PC: Okay, well we know, like I said, in 1942 according to an early *Buzz Saw* newspaper article that Professor Bradley began acquiring accreditation and then we know that this 1944 was probably the first graduating class but, we just are not sure how long it took for that process.

HC: I'm not up on that. I never knew anything about the accreditation. Well, they might have told us back then but it never sunk into our heads.

PC: Okay, see before the accreditation it just was called the Diboll Colored School. Then when they acquired accreditation then they chose the new name the H. G. Temple School. So, I was just wondering did you go to school under Diboll Colored School?

HC: Ma'am is that authentic?

PC: Yes sir.

HC: Is that on record?

PC: Yes sir. According to the Angelina County School Board minutes which we have in our possession it was the Diboll Colored School and then when they acquired accreditation and according to that newspaper article that I mentioned, then they chose a new name for the school and they named it after Mr. H. G. Temple, who was the general manager here then and they selected the name H. G. Temple High School.

HC: That is all a blur to me because even in playing in our coach called what we called the days deal, the middle school with basketball and so forth we always thought we was Temple School. I am not arguing with you one way or the other.

PC: Right, we are just going from this newspaper article that Mrs. Bradley wrote. Do you remember the Bradley's?

HC: Yes ma'am, I worked under them after I got out of college.

PC: Was he the principal when you graduated from high school?

HC: Yes, he was.

PC: Okay, what can you tell me about Mr. Bradley? What do you remember about him?

HC: Man he was a fine uplifting man and he wanted people to learn and do right. He was a strict disciplinarian; he was very, very smart, he and his wife both. Fact of business when I got out of college he gave me a job at Lockhart. He was principal down there then.

PC: Oh, okay.

HC: In fact of business then when he came to Victoria I came here with him to Gross High. He was still the principal and he was the principal when he died here. So, he was a great leader.

PC: Okay, what about Mrs. Bradley? Did you know her?

HC: Yes that was his wife. She taught too, she was a history or social studies teacher.

PC: Okay did she teach you?

HC: Yes ma'am.

PC: Okay. Well we know from the records they were very instrumental in the progress and advancement of the H. G. Temple School. Now, after you graduated in 1944 where did you go?

HC: I went to the Navy.

PC: How long were you in the Navy?

HC: Approximately three years.

PC: Okay, and then after that did you start attending college then?

HC: I got out in about the summer and then I couldn't get in until the fall of course and I stayed under the G. I. Bill. I had financial help and I went to school in Prairie View. I stayed through there until I got my masters degree in 1951. I've gone to school in the University of Colorado and North Texas State with different stipends and so forth. But, I didn't retain a degree there but I got different hours and so forth, advanced studies in Boulder, Colorado and Denton, Texas.

PC: You made a career out of education?

HC: Yes.

PC: Well, that is wonderful. Now, can you tell me who else was in your graduating class from H. G. Temple?

HC: It started out with quite a few but when we graduated in the twelfth grade it was only...I can only remember three people. There was a lady named Joy Mae Jones, I think she is a Smith now and a lady named Rosie Anderson and Harold Cade.

PC: Okay, so there were just three in that class?

HC: Yes.

PC: Do you have a photograph of your graduating class?

HC: No, I had one somewhere but I can't find it, but I have some papers down in the bank vault and I couldn't get in today. I'll have to wait until Monday or Tuesday.

PC: What do you mean papers, like your diploma or something?

HC: Right.

PC: Oh, well that would be wonderful. We would love to have a copy of that.

HC: Well, if I have it, I'll just send it to you.

PC: That would be great.

HC: If I have it I'll send it to you.

PC: Okay.

HC: The reason I think it might be there because they were deteriorating so I put it in the vault.

PC: Who were some of the other teachers you had at H. G. Temple?

HC: I can't remember her first name, Mrs. Henderson, H-e-n-d-e-r-s-o-n, a lady by the name of Inez Smith McGough and a lady by the name of Gilbert. I can't think, she was a Johnson.

PC: Mrs. Gilbert, I believe she was a homemaking teacher.

HC: Yes, I think she came there and was teaching something else beside homemaking. Maybe the last year she was strictly homemaking, I mean the twelfth grade when she started strictly homemaking, a lady by the name of Lena Atchison.

PC: Okay.

HC: And then a lady by the name of Lillie Simmons and a Ruby Simmons.

PC: Did they have any activities that you participated in during those school days?

HC: We only had what we called then U.I.L. activities and that was math and, well the ones we participated in were math competition and they had solos. I didn't participate in that, music type deals. And of course we had basketball. We didn't have track then, we didn't have any place to practice and so forth. But, a few years later I understand they got a track teams, but and they didn't play football until after I left.

PC: Oh okay, so they didn't have the football program then. But, they did have basketball?

HC: Right.

PC: Did you participate in basketball?

HC: Yes ma'am. As a matter of fact I was the captain of the team there for two years.

PC: Okay, what kind of equipment did ya'll have as far as the school, like the playground; can you describe the building of the school for me?

HC: Well we just had simple classroom desk that is about all we had in the classroom, the desk. A few science apparatus, not too much that they talked to people in and the playground equipment we had open spaces and basketball goals and we...parents and whatever made other things for kids like swings and so forth. That is all we had, but we were happy we were trying to...our parents were preaching to go to school, so that is what we did.

PC: Right. What about the actual school building itself, can you describe the school building, the condition you know, what it was made of or anything specific you remember?

HC: It was wood, timber made out of lumber. We had...I don't know how old you are, but probably before your time but we had wood heaters and so forth. We would get out the boys got the wood in the winter time to keep the building warm. Later on they got gas or some kind of steam heaters or something there, but that was after I left.

PC: Okay.

HC: I'm still talking from memory.

PC: It's been quite awhile ago hasn't it?

HC: It sure has.

PC: Well, what about playing basketball, did y'all play other schools during that time or did y'all just play basketball for fun?

HC: Oh no, we played other schools but at that time it was Camden and Chester, Corrigan, Livingston, Leggett, San Augustine. We would practice games against Dunbar but they were so much larger than we were we weren't in the same...I guess we called it league at that time they call it districts now.

PC: Right, okay.

HC: We even had chances to what they called the Negro Interscholastic League and people who won the district they had playoffs and finally ended up in the state championship being played at Prairie View campus itself on a Friday and Saturday.

PC: Oh, okay. Were y'all the Temple Tigers then?

HC: Yes ma'am.

PC: Okay, so you remember that y'all made it to state and played in a state tournament?

HC: We didn't ever get the chance to make it, we really had the original playoff down in Beaumont, so one of those teams down there would knock us off but we would always attend the other players.

PC: Now, when you graduated was Professor Bradley the principal then?

HC: Yes.

PC: Okay, do you remember any principals before him?

HC: No, I don't remember anyone before him. I don't remember who they were.

PC: Okay. And, just backing up for just a second what you are remembering is your school days here in Diboll at the Colored School were just more your high school years?

HC: Yes, because what I was going to tell you it seems...from what I remember even though all the schools were together, if we had a merit school we had one teacher type deal and we went to that room and that is where we spent our time.

PC: Yes, well if you were born in '25 and you were seven or eight years old when you moved from Fastrill to Diboll that would be around 1933. And then you graduated in '44 so you would have had a few years here.

HC: Yes, but the principals at that time were teachers also.

PC: Right.

HC: They taught classes and for many years, two or three years at least, the principal whoever he was the man there was just one of the other teachers because we went into our classroom and sometime it would be two or three classes in one room. So, the teacher was responsible for that. I'm talking from memory.

PC: Right, that is why I was trying to help you out there and refresh the time frame that we are speaking of, you would have still been in elementary school when you moved to Diboll from Fastrill.

HC: I don't remember who the other man was.

PC: Well, we know there was a Mr. Kenyon here for a short time.

HC: Well he came after Mr. Bradley left.

PC: Okay, that is right. Okay, well anything else you want to share with me about your school days there at the school, going to school here in Diboll?

HC: No, I don't know anything else to be authentic. If I can get these papers and so forth I'll be sending them to you and sending my application in for this magazine to be getting too.

PC: Okay. Now, did you know anything about the Hurdle family?

HC: No ma'am only what I heard of them. I didn't know anything about them.

PC: Okay, you were not here during that time.

HC: I am sure they were there when I came but I don't remember anything. I guess I was too small or in my own world. I don't remember them.

PC: Now, after you graduated and left and went to the service then went to college and started your own career, did you ever move back to Diboll to this area?

HC: I never moved back but I was always there. I was there every summer sometimes to see some people and so forth. I have friends that still live there and work there.

PC: Okay.

HC: A lot of people that started off with me in the elementary...not a lot but, quite a few of the boys that started off with me in elementary school, working. They didn't finish school. They were not in my graduating class but they were in our classes back in third, fourth, fifth grade so to speak.

PC: Okay. Do you have any siblings?

HC: I have Louise who graduated in 1945, we were talking about, Louise. To answer your question, yes ma'am, I have three sisters and two...well I had two brothers. One is dead now, so I have one brother living and four sisters living.

PC: Okay, can you name your siblings for me?

HC: Louise Cade, Teal Cade, well they different names now. You want their real name...Teal was a Robinson, Louis is a Miller, Janice Cade and Jereveline Cade.

PC: Now did they all go to school here in Diboll?

HC: They all finished there.

PC: Are they mostly younger than you?

HC: They all younger, the one that is dead is the only one older than me and he didn't go to school there.

PC: Do you know when any of your siblings graduated from the school, what years other than Louise? You mentioned Louise graduated in '45.

HC: I think Jereveline graduated in 1946 or '47, but I'll make sure and send that to you Monday or Tuesday.

PC: Okay. Did you have a favorite teacher?

HC: Oh not really, I guess Mr. Bradley was my favorite if I just had to pick out one. Mr. Bradley was my favorite teacher.

PC: Do you know anything about a Mrs. Mark being a principal around 1938? Does that name ring a bell, Mrs. Daisy Mark?

HC: No, I remember now that you bring it up I remember the name Mark, I don't even remember what she was though.

PC: Okay. Were you ever involved with the early Juneteenth celebrations in Diboll?

HC: No more than just help celebrate it. I never helped prepare for one, but I remember helping celebrate and enjoying the festivities about it.

PC: Yes sir. Were your parents involved with it?

HC: Yes ma'am, well I guess because they had to work, they would work at night getting things ready, the meat and the floats ready, but what part they played I don't know.

PC: Okay, nothing particular that your dad was involved in that stands out in your mind?

HC: No.

PC: Okay, did you go to the Sunday afternoon baseball games here?

HC: Yes, I sure did.

PC: Okay, what can you share with me about that? What do you remember about that?

HC: Well we thought we had good teams and so forth. As a young boy would grow up most of them that were physically able would be playing ball and of course people would be coming in there to work from other places. We had good teams, in fact of business we were kind of feared all over the country in places. We had people named like Randolph, Big Jim, Q. T. Bussey, C. P. Griffin and naming some of them I know I'm missing them.

PC: They were pretty popular weren't they?

HC: They sure were, very, very good baseball memories and so forth. For some reason they don't play it like they used to.

PC: Right, now did you have to pay to get into the games?

HC: Oh yes, I don't remember what, but you had to pay and money was scarce back in that time. That was the only way to survive I guess, but we'd pay or do some work or something. The kids would do work most of them to get in there.

PC: Oh, okay. Well, what businesses do you remember being here in Diboll when you were growing up here?

HC: Oh, not too many businesses. The pharmacy was there, cleaning and pressing business and of course the grocery stores were there. In fact of business that is about all I remember.

PC: Do you remember shopping at the commissary store or going to the commissary?

HC: Right, the commissary you could find most anything. At that time most all of it was down in kind of a one building type deal. The post office and all and then the train station was all right there in one area.

PC: Right, now we know this was segregation years when you lived here of course, so were you treated well when you went to the commissary and treated well by the white community?

HC: As far as I know and could tell we were treated great. We didn't know any difference and so forth. Everybody seemed to get along, all this late stuff when people couldn't get along, but people got along and worked with each other and go out and fish together and everything else. Fact of business we played ball together.

PC: Oh you did?

HC: Until we got up and grown we...they would have their teams and we would have ours but we would play each other you know.

PC: Did y'all play over there at the park over by the school?

HC: I don't remember going over there, we played at the park by the school here, I say here, the school at H. G. Temple, a big park.

PC: So the black teams played the white teams?

HC: Yes, occasionally yes ma'am.

PC: Okay, was the Rodgers Skating Rink here then when you were here?

HC: No, I was gone when that got up.

PC: Okay, okay. Well what was life like growing up in Diboll?

HC: I guess to me back in there it was great, you know, I didn't think there was anything like it. Young people now wouldn't probably like it because everything was separate. We didn't have swimming pools. I don't know whether they had any for the whites, but

sometimes we would swim together down in certain places in the river and we would fish together. If we got any really, really bad needs they would help us out.

PC: Right.

HC: I had a great time as far as I'm concerned.

PC: Okay, what race relations do you remember experiencing in Diboll?

HC: Just like I said, I don't remember except them going our way and we going ours and that didn't bother us then. But...

PC: Everybody got along?

HC: Everybody got along. We had...we knew our schools weren't as good as theirs was, but after a while we were down working so that didn't bother us too much.

PC: Okay.

HC: But we had to get out of it. We had to study hard to find to learn what we did have.

PC: Right, so you could go on to college and get a good education and not have to work at the sawmill I guess.

HC: Well, that was kind of fun too 'cause coming back there in the summer when I was in school and they would give us a job if you wanted to work. It was hard work, but at least you could save a few pennies for the next fall.

PC: Okay, so when you were off in college you would come back to Diboll and work at the sawmill during the summers?

HC: Yes ma'am.

PC: Saved up your money for college?

HC: Right.

PC: Now, share with me your teaching career at Victoria.

HC: Well, I started out teaching here and coaching. It was a segregated situation. It was a school called. F. W. Gross High School and we taught here about 10 or 11 years and then integrated. Then I went to the all white school as a teacher and a counselor at Victoria High School and I stayed there seven years and I became assistant principal. Then we built another school which is named Stroman High School.

PC: Say that name again.

HC: Stroman, S-t-r-o-m-a-n.

PC: Okay.

HC: So we have two high schools here, then we had two high schools and an opening came up in the junior high for a principal and I was interviewed and several others were interviewed. Anyway, I got the job and I stayed there nineteen years before I retired.

PC: Okay, so you were a principal at Stroman High School?

HC: I was assistant principal there. I was a counselor and then became assistant principal.

PC: Okay, and what year did you retire?

HC: In 1993.

PC: Okay. I understand from our conversation recently that they just named a school after you.

HC: Yes, they named a new school after me. In fact of business they are opening up in August, whenever school opens this fall. I just went out there this morning. They are putting the furniture in and planting shrubbery. They are opening up two high schools and a middle school. The middle school is named Cade Middle School.

PC: Well, that is wonderful, congratulations on that! That is wonderful!

HC: Thank you very much.

PC: Well is there anything else you would like to share with me today that I haven't asked you about? About you're growing up here in Diboll or anything else?

HC: No that is about it, but if I think of something I'll write it down and when I send you this other information I'll send it to you.

PC: Okay, well just backing up just a second I want to be sure that I understand you correctly that the way you remember it now is that you just remember that it was always H. G. Temple School to you, right? You don't really remember...

HC: I don't remember it being another name, no.

PC: And you don't have any recollection of that process of Mr. Bradley working toward that accreditation? You would have been in your high school days already when he started in '42 and I just wanted to make sure that I understood you correctly that you

don't really recall anything particular of what Mr. Bradley did or steps he took to acquire that accreditation?

HC: Whatever he did he was trying to upgrade the school, well whether or not, he was trying, he and the superintendent...I've been trying to think of his name. I think his name was Pate, but maybe it's the one before him, they was trying to upgrade. That is all I remember they were trying to upgrade it you know. If that is what it needed, when I say upgraded, we had different courses different to our curriculum because we somewhere down the line we added a band teacher. We got a band and we ended up with shop or Ag teacher. I don't remember which. But, I don't know, the only names that have been stuck in my mind, I guess because it's been H. G. Temple. I don't know.

PC: Do you remember what grade you were in when they got a band?

HC: Well they got a band director. It took them a while to get a band though before they could get enough people 'cause it used to be that he didn't work in the school system, a man named...we called him Professor Jackson. He worked up there.

PC: A great man of music.

HC: Right, so he would mostly we thought he just could teach piano but when the man came there he found out he knew something about the other instruments also.

PC: Yes sir. So, you remember Professor Jackson teaching you music?

HC: No, not me my sisters. I'm not a music deal. But, I just remember that vaguely since you asked me about the upgrade and things. I assumed that's what...

PC: We know from the records they added the homemaking class and they had to have a certain number of students to meet the accreditation regulations, I guess. Then they added the homemaking department. And, again all of this is referring to a 1947 newspaper article that Mrs. Bradley wrote. We just haven't really clarified the year that the accreditation was approved by the state. But, we do know from you and other records that 1944 was probably the first class of graduates.

HC: I know when I went to Prairie View some of my room...in the dormitories people that came from other small communities, some of them had to, we didn't have to do this so, I assumed we were already accredited, they had to take some type of examinations if their school wasn't...I thought it was large enough but it might not have been accredited, a special exam. Somebody from the state would give it and if they didn't pass they couldn't get into college.

PC: Okay, but you did not have to do that because you had actually graduated from an accredited high school?

HC: Well, I didn't even know, we didn't know what it was because I called Mr. Bradley and said, "We going to have to take a test?" And he said, "No you don't have to do it."

PC: Okay, well that is great.

HC: But, I don't know all this what you telling me is true but, that was either withheld from us or it just wasn't put on the news like it is today.

PC: Right, right.

HC: It's just in my mind.

PC: Well maybe through this project we will be able to collect more history of the H. G. Temple School and you know the graduating classes. That is really a big part of our focus and our goal with this project is to just collect as much history of the Diboll Colored School and the H. G. Temple School as we can before it's lost. That is our goal.

HC: Okay, if I can be of any help I will but I was gone then. I'll send what I have to you.

PC: Okay, well Mr. Cade is there anything else you would like to share with me today?

HC: No, I don't know anything else.

PC: Well, if you think of anything you can always give me a buzz and I'm sure I'll be back in contact with you. Mr. Cade I just want to thank you for joining me for this interview today.

HC: All right, thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW