

Student Wynne Saffer

I attended Loudoun County Schools from 1955 through 1967. I was at Aldie Elementary from 1955 through 1962 (grades 1 - 7) and Loudoun County High in Leesburg from 1962 through my graduation in 1967. I rode a bus with only white students on it to Aldie from my home on Watson road (route 860). The bus route ran south on Watson road (I was one of the first ones picked up) to route 50, then east on route 50 to Lenah road (route 600). We'd turn south on Lenah road to Braddock road (route 705) and take Braddock west to route 15. Our last passengers would be picked up on Braddock road. The bus would drive north on route 15 to Gilberts Corner and route 50, then turn west on route 50 and drive into the town of Aldie and the Aldie school parking lot. When I went to Aldie Elementary, the Aldie High school building still stood, but the high school was closed (consolidated with Loudoun County High). By the time we arrived at Aldie the bus had 25 - 30 students. As a young boy, it always seemed strange to me that the kids of the Black family that lived across Watson road from us rode a bus to Douglass Elementary in Leesburg, while I rode a different bus to Aldie. My bus driver was an adult, though high school students did drive some of the buses at this time. The driver kept the bus at his home. He may have been a framer that supplemented his income by driving a school bus. This was not an unusual arrangement in the county. I estimate the one way trip from where the bus picked me upon Watson road to Aldie Elementary to be about 11 miles and took about 1 hour to cover. I never paid any attention to the make, model or year of the bus, it was just an LCPS yellow school bus to me. The bus was in pretty good condition as I recall, though it could get cold in the winter. I guess when you're opening the doors every so often to board passengers, it would be difficult to keep the heat in. My dad built a private shelter out by Watson road so my older brother and I could get out of the wind, snow and rain. The county didn't erect shelters for students. At this time the only paved roads on my route were routes 50 and 15. Braddock, Lenah and Watson roads were all gravel. In my seven years at Aldie Elementary, my bus never got stuck in mud or had an engine failure. Some days my dad would drive my older brother and me to Aldie Elementary on his way to work in Leesburg. It would be too early for us to gain entrance, but we sometimes met the driver bringing milk to the school. I've never forgotten this, but on one of those occasions, the driver told me that chocolate milk came from brown cows. I never rode the bus to Loudoun County High. When I was in the 8th and 9th grade, my father would drive us to Leesburg on his way to work. We'd walk the mile or so from the parking lot where my dad would drop us to Loudoun County High. In the afternoons we'd ride the school bus to the parking lot and get off with other white students and wait for my dad to pick us up. When I was a sophomore and junior, my older brother had a car so I rode with him to and from Loudoun County High. In my senior year, I owned a car and drove myself to and from high school. When I started high school there were only two high schools in the county, Loudoun County High and Douglass. Both were in Leesburg. Integration had just started. There were 4 or 5 Blacks at Loudoun County High in 1962, one was in my Physical Education class¹.

¹ From Sep. 21, 2020 interview with Loudoun County Historian and former LCPS Student Wynne Saffer conducted by Nathan Bailey