

**Marianne Bailey**  
**Interviewed by Bob Haft**  
**The Evergreen State College oral history project**  
**November 2, 2021**  
**FINAL**

**Haft:** This is November 2, 2021, and I'm with Marianne Bailey, and we're going to talk about her experiences before, during and after Evergreen. Let's just start with your background, your family history.

**Bailey:** Sure, that we can do. I was born in New Jersey, and relatively not rural exactly, but not far from the fields and thoroughbred horse farms and things like that, so it was pretty. In my grandparents' home—and my grandparents cared for me a lot my first year; they were both immigrants in their youth, and they met literally on the docks, one from Ireland—my grandmother—and one from Germany, my grandfather.

**Haft:** I didn't know your grandmother was Irish. I'd never heard that. And?

**Bailey:** And they married, and my father—he had a younger brother, and my Aunt Anne was their sister. There were three children. Aunt Anne married very late in life, so I knew her mainly when I was a little girl as an interesting woman who worked in New York City and had her own apartment, and I stayed with her for a couple of weeks every summer.

**Haft:** What did your folks do? What did your dad do?

**Bailey:** My dad was a lawyer. My grandfather became the postmaster in the town where I lived as a child.

**Haft:** What was the town?

**Bailey:** It's Little Silver, New Jersey, in the middle rural part of New Jersey. That's where I grew up.

**Haft:** Your grandparents were living nearby as well?

**Bailey:** In the same house when I was a baby. During the war, my mother lived in the old Wichmann (my grandparent's) house with her mother-in-law and father-in-law. They all took care of me. I was a spoiled brat, I'm sure. Four people to fuss over me.

I was in New Jersey until my parents divorced, and when they divorced, I was in, I think, third or fourth grade. My mother moved back to Utah where she was born. She came from an old Mormon family. She met my dad at Hillfield, an Air Force base in Utah where he was stationed during the war and where she worked and had won a bathing suit competition and been chosen to be "Miss Hillfield."

That's how they got together. Otherwise, you can't imagine. He was a good, Catholic boy and not particularly religious, but his family was, so he was brought up a Catholic. Mom was brought up in this little Mormon town in the mountains in Utah.

**Haft:** What a switch that was for you as a kid, though.

**Bailey:** Yes, it was a hard switch. I was there until, like I said, third or fourth grade. Then I moved with Mom back to Utah, to a tiny town where her older sister lived. That's the little town where I lived through junior high and high school, finished elementary school.

That was weird. It was a big shift. There wasn't another Catholic in the county. [laughter] People looked at me. Are there horns? That's what Mom said they did with her just because she'd been married to a Catholic. She doesn't seem to have horns. [laughing]

**Haft:** What was the school like that you went to in Utah?

**Bailey:** There was a school bus, and the school bus picked us up from the little, tiny town, with a store in it and a post office, run by my aunt, Mom's sister, in the town. The ranch was just outside that town.

There were two other little towns, and those three or four towns sent their kids to a bigger town called Delta, and that's where the high school was, so we rode the bus.

**Haft:** Were you pretty isolated as a kid?

**Bailey:** Yeah, pretty isolated, both physically and psychologically. The ranch was outside even these little, tiny towns. My stepfather was very private; one had best not be found poaching on the ranch, and the word got around and that's how he liked it. He was known for patrolling the ranch with his guns at night. Boy, if he saw car lights somewhere in his fields within sight of the house, he was out of there on a motorcycle or a Jeep with guns. People came and hunted and stuff, and he was afraid they'd end up shooting one of his black Angus.

Mom, recently divorced, moved to this little town with me and my tiny sister to live with her sister, the postmistress, who was a lovely, kind lady, and that's how she met this guy who was 6'6" or something.

**Haft:** You're kidding.

**Bailey:** She fell in love with him and married him, and so we moved from staying with my Aunt Clee in the tiny town to the ranch house. It was great. He had cowboys there who came in for meals, and a cook that cooked the meals for the cowboys.

**Haft:** What was your relationship with him? Was it a good one? Were you afraid of him?

**Bailey:** A little bit. You didn't want to screw up and have him get mad at you. Once, I left my bicycle lying in the front porch, between his office, which attached only by a roof to the house, and the house. I think he stumbled on it once and the bike ended up in the river that flowed by the ranch.

Actually, he was really kind to me. He said, "M.A., why don't you take some flying lessons? C'mon, let's go get you some flying lessons." Me. He called me M.A., Marianne. I said, "Sure," and so he and I began every Saturday to drive up north near Salt Lake City. It was a good drive—took a couple hours—but the man who had taught him to fly relatively recently taught me, too. That was extremely kind of him, and I got to know him better on those drives up and back.

**Haft:** Was your father a pilot for crop dusting, or just to move from one place to another?

**Bailey:** You mean my stepfather.

**Haft:** Yeah, your stepfather.

**Bailey:** No, just for the pure fun of it, and because the ranch was so big. It was a big, old family ranch. Lots of property, stretching way into the desert out toward Nevada. To keep track of stray cattle and that, he had a little plane and he'd fly over and look for cows.

**Haft:** He has his own plane?

**Bailey:** He had his own plane, yeah, so I went flying with him sometimes, and I took lessons. But I was a junior in high school, and when you're that age, you're so preoccupied with your friends, things like that. I didn't take full advantage of it. I wish I had.

**Haft:** What was the school like? Was it all a Mormon school?

**Bailey:** Everyone in the school except me and two girls who lived way out on the desert and wore clothes like Quaker children. Their hair was very long. Maybe they didn't believe in cutting hair. I don't know if they were Seventh-Day Adventists or Quaker or what their little—it was some little village in the desert all by itself, and the kids must have had a parent who drove them in and stayed with some friends in town during the school. But those girls and I were the only weird, demonic creatures [laughing] in that Mormon town.

**Haft:** Was there pressure for you to convert?

**Bailey:** Oh, yeah. Something simple in high school. Remember how in high school, you had assemblies, or once a week, someone would perform something? Students who sang or danced or whatever. Everyone would assemble in the auditorium for those things. They always started them with a prayer. A teacher would come stand near me to see if I was bowing my head and being prayerful. [laughter]

**Haft:** Wow.

**Bailey:** I had a couple times a principal insist that I come to his office and that I kneel and pray. The kneeling part made me really uncomfortable, so I told my mother and she told Bill and it never happened again. [laughter]

**Haft:** What were your interests academically as a kid?

**Bailey:** I was in love with literature. I remember reading Lord Byron and just couldn't believe how wonderful it was. Odd that I ended up with French, in a way, but not that I ended up with literature and poetry. I was editor of the literary magazine of this little, tiny high school and wrote poems. I was a dancer, and that was extremely important to me until I got arthritis.

**Haft:** When did you start dancing? When you were in New Jersey, or only when you moved to Utah?

**Bailey:** Only when I moved to Utah. When I was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade I made the acquaintance of an older lady who had taught ballet and still did, and used her children, whom she tutored all their lives, to demonstrate because she could no longer dance. She was arthritic. So, I took ballet lessons. That was an important part of growing up. I loved dance. And to show off at assemblies.

**Haft:** Did you have good teachers, do you think, at that time?

**Bailey:** Most teachers were farmers first, teachers second. In high school, I had one good teacher. She was an English teacher, luckily for me.

**Haft:** Same with me. Two great ones.

**Bailey:** Yeah, it's funny how it's so clear who's a decent teacher and who isn't, when you're a kid even.

**Haft:** It seemed to me that the English teachers that I had were always so much more liberal than everybody else.

**Bailey:** Mm-hm.

**Haft:** Maybe because they were more literate. I don't know.

**Bailey:** Maybe. I don't know what that is, but I had the same experience. For example, I had migraines through my teens and twenties and early thirties. As I got older, they went away. But it was a problem, and I had teachers who reduced my grade because I'd just have to leave classes. But the English teacher always took my side. She was very kind about that.

**Haft:** When did the migraines start? When you were in Utah?

**Bailey:** They started when I was in Utah, and they went away completely with menopause.

**Haft:** That's a long time.

**Bailey:** That's a long time, but they lessened as I got older.

**Haft:** When did you first take French? Was that in high school?

**Bailey:** In this weird little town—and the ranch was outside three or four miles of this town, and then spread out into the desert—my mother made friends. My mother had some hard times because she had been divorced, and then she married Bill, who was as much an atheist as you can conceivably be, and he had nothing to do with the town.

**Haft:** He wasn't Mormon at all?

**Bailey:** Not at all. He despised it, really. He wasn't religious. I think his parents were Episcopalian or some extremely liberal religion like that.

**Haft:** Your mother must have suffered from that, too, then.

**Bailey:** My mother was born a Mormon and born in Utah, but she had seemed to more or less satisfy people if she went to church, and she did that and Bill didn't begrudge her that for sure if it kept the peace. It was mostly for us, for my sisters and me, so that we weren't shunned entirely by the kids in town.

**Haft:** But there was a stigma of divorce?

**Bailey:** There was a stigma of divorce, a serious one. But once she married Bill, people were afraid of him, too, and a lot of the men in the little town worked for him as cowboys. He grew his own grain and corn and things like that, so he could hire some of the people who did farming. That helped, I think.

**Haft:** Did you have chores to do on the ranch?

**Bailey:** No, I didn't ever. The only thing we did, my mother and I and my younger sisters as they got older, took care of taking milk to the little doggies because they didn't have their mothers and they needed to be bottle fed for a while. That's the only thing we did.

And Bill had a couple gentle horses that we could ride if we wanted. I didn't do that as much as I wish I had, but I enjoyed it when I did.

**Haft:** When did the idea of going to college hit you? At the moment you arrived?

**Bailey:** I always knew I'd go to college from the time I was old enough to understand it. At first, I wanted to be a lawyer like Daddy, but he didn't want me to. When I was young enough to conceive this idea of going to law school, he didn't think women should be lawyers. Period. After that, when I chose to go on and study the things I did, he was happy and proud of my degrees from France and all, but he regretted a lot that he had discouraged law school. I don't. I wouldn't have liked it.

**Haft:** But you maintained a good relationship with him.

**Bailey:** With my dad, yes, I did. I didn't say, but I spent every summer after the divorce with him in New Jersey.

**Haft:** His parents were still around so you had those grandparents there, too?

**Bailey:** No. Sadly, those parents—who had brought me up as a baby, took care of me because my mom was working and my father was working and in law school—they were quite elderly, and they died when I was just six or seven.

**Haft:** You spent three months of every year in New Jersey?

**Bailey:** At my father's, yes.

**Haft:** What a switch.

**Bailey:** It was a big switch. I got used to flying and I just would go alone until my younger sister was old enough to come along. She never really liked being in New Jersey as much as I did, but I liked it a lot. My stepmother—who broke up my parents [and] was considerably younger and quite pretty—took me to the beach almost every day. We lived relatively close to the Atlantic shore.

**Haft:** You told me once about a nanny you had. That must have been when you were still in New Jersey.

**Bailey:** That was when I was still in New Jersey in my youngest years, like from birth up until . . . let's see . . . probably seven or so. We were in New Jersey, and my grandparents had become—I think my grandmother had died and my grandfather was very weak and not doing well. Mother was working. She was modeling. She was having fun.

My dad had some legal work for a lady. Maybe one of her children had had some trouble with the law or something. I think it was along those lines. She was such a lovely woman. Her name was Myrtle Basie, an aunt of Count Basie. She brought him up at her house with her kids, so Dad knew her well. She came and was my nanny for years. I can remember being in a little-kid fight with a neighbor and running to her, and she'd put her arms around me. It was like the world was good again. [laughter] She was such a lovely person.

**Haft:** Count Basie's aunt. How wonderful is that?

**Bailey:** Yeah, it was cool. And I saw him and his friends when I'd go down to her place sometimes, like if Mom couldn't be home. I remember one time I'd gotten a tooth pulled and Mom didn't want me to be home alone, so she took me to Myrtle's. The young Count Basie and some other guys in his band were visiting at her house. It was really exciting. It was fun. I knew they were famous and that they were musicians, but that's all I knew. Yeah, I had some interesting experiences as a kid.

**Haft:** Jumping ahead then to when you were thinking about going to college, what did you imagine? Did you want to get out of Utah?

**Bailey:** Oh, I wanted to get out of Utah for sure. Originally, I wanted to be a lawyer like Daddy, and he discouraged me at first, and afterward, he apologized to me. He was also not real happy that I got

married really young. I got married just out of high school, so I didn't go back East. He had all kinds of connections. You can go to this school. You can go to this school back East, and I said, "No, I'm going to get married, but I'm going to school." I think that he didn't believe me at first. You know how, as a father, you would feel, but I did, so it satisfied him when I went to the Sorbonne, I think.

**Haft:** Where did you go first?

**Bailey:** I went to the University of Nevada, Reno. Bud was working in those days in Reno, Nevada.

**Haft:** The college was in Nevada?

**Bailey:** In Reno, Nevada, and that's where he had been living and working since he graduated high school. He's three years older than I. I got my undergrad degree in Reno, Nevada, and I finished my master's degree in French there, working two years as a T.A.

**Haft:** Your undergraduate degree was in literature?

**Bailey:** It was in French. It really was. Oddly, enough, there were several French professors who were French, and I got on really well with them, so I was able to do a degree. I learned the language.

**Haft:** Native French living in Reno?

**Bailey:** Yeah, living in Reno. Hard to imagine, isn't it, in Reno of all places. But I learned the language well enough that I was accepted at the University of Washington with a T.A. and came up here. Bud grew up here in Washington.

**Haft:** You got into the UW, so you had to relocate.

**Bailey:** I got into the UW. I got a job as a teaching assistant, which you know how that is. It's extremely helpful, and it's something that is available, especially to students of languages because they need lots of tutors and lots of teachers. If you're good enough, you teach beginning French.

**Haft:** What year was this? What year did you start at the UW?

**Bailey:** I don't think I can do years.

**Haft:** What year did you graduate from high school? That was '67 or something, wasn't it?

**Bailey:** Yeah, it would be the same as you, Bob. That would be '67. I started maybe in winter of that year, not in fall. I was getting married and such in Nevada. I did that until I graduated. We were there through four years, and we both graduated. Both of us worked. I worked mostly teaching beginners. I also worked in a drugstore all through that time and Bud worked in heavy equipment.

**Haft:** Bud left a really good job, it sounds like, in Reno.

**Bailey:** Yes, he did.

**Haft:** He went to UW.

**Bailey:** He came to UW to study philosophy, and I came to UW and kept up with my French. I met the two people, a married couple, who invited me to come to Europe and offered me a job.

**Haft:** When you were a graduate student?

**Bailey:** I was a graduate student in Seattle.

**Haft:** Where did you live in Seattle? Do you remember?

**Bailey:** Yes, in Ballard. It was pretty nice. Ballard was real tame. Lots of elderly people with very well-kept Scandinavia-looking houses.

**Haft:** You and I and Debbie were all at the University of Washington at the same time.

**Bailey:** You're kidding me.

**Haft:** No.

**Bailey:** But you were doing art history.

**Haft:** I was doing physics.

**Bailey:** No, you were doing physics.

**Haft:** I was trying to get into medical school.

**Bailey:** Oh, you were?

**Haft:** But Debbie took French from some Egyptian woman.

**Bailey:** Yeah, one of the TAs. Yeah, I was in the TA room with a couple kids from Africa, a couple Near Eastern people, and a few other Americans, a couple French. There was a big crew of TAs at UW.

**Haft:** Tell me the story of this couple and their offer to go to Europe.

**Bailey:** Sure, I will. There was something I was going to tell you that I thought would amuse you and I can't remember what it was.

This couple had worked at UW for several years before. I don't know how they ended up there except that the Dean of Humanities or something had made friends with them in Europe and invited them. "Wouldn't you like to come to the US for a few years and teach?" They both did French and literature. I think the man's name was Constantine Christofides.

**Haft:** I know Christofides because he was an art historian.

**Bailey:** He was the art historian, right. They were friends with Christofides and he said, "C'mon, we'll get you a job there. Why don't you just try the US out for a while?" Because she was French, and he was German. Which country are we going to work in? They enjoyed the US, and that's where I met them. I liked them a lot, and I guess they liked me okay.

**Haft:** They invited you to Europe. I think they liked you a lot, too. [laughter]



**Bailey:** And he, Dr. Leiner—he was German and she was French and she ran things—he was very efficient and smart, and he was invited to take charge of the French Literature Department at the university in Tübingen in Germany. So he essentially had a department to fill up of his own and a crop of students to teach. She was also invited to work at the Sorbonne when she wanted to work in Paris.

That's how they left and wrote back and then they wrote back and invited me to join Herr Leiner in Germany in this town, Tübingen, at the university that celebrated its 500<sup>th</sup> year that year. Five hundred years. That's something.

**Haft:** Wow.

**Bailey:** Bud agreed to go and study philosophy. I thought it sounded fun. I had a German grandfather. Why not go? But I didn't know German yet. Lucky for me, I learn languages pretty fast.

**Haft:** Let's hop momentarily back to your childhood. Was there no German spoken either by your parents or grandparents when you were growing up?

**Bailey:** My grandparents spoke some German, yes, but I don't know how much I actually learned, though. I spent a lot of time with them because Mother was working, and Father was in law school or working.

**Haft:** You were at the UW to do a doctoral degree?

**Bailey:** Yes. I did a year and then got that invitation and said, "I'd like to go to Europe."

**Haft:** What an opportunity.

**Bailey:** Yeah, it was really just luck. I guess the gods. I was serving the gods even then.

**Haft:** It was more than just luck.

**Bailey:** I don't know, but it worked out, and they weren't exactly the easiest people, but they took to me. I became a child of the household, I guess.

**Haft:** Did you live with them?

**Bailey:** No. Bud and I went and got an apartment in a little village to the south of this university town called Tübingen with a charming, elderly woman, Frau Link, who had lost her husband when she was quite young. When we met her, I think it was very close to her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. When I last saw her, it was after her 90<sup>th</sup>. She had a house with an upstairs that she rented to us. I was so fortunate, as it turned out, as she became so much more than our landlady. A former school teacher, who each morning sat at her little table and corrected any errors she found in the daily newspaper. She took us by the hand and introduced us to all the merchants, the Metzger (butcher), the baker, the general store owner, the beer delivery man. What a special day that was! Each day when I got home she greeted me and conversed with me in German. That helped so much in learning the language.

**Haft:** Did Bud speak French or German?

**Bailey:** Some French. He studied French. In those days, a lot of colleges made you learn one language beyond your own. He had French, but he didn't have German—that was hard—but he picked it up pretty well.

**Haft:** What a leap of faith for you to go to a school in Germany when you were expected to learn in German.

**Bailey:** To speak German. And on top of that, this Dr. Leiner, who had a department to fill with assistant professors, TAs and so forth, said I had to teach. Teaching in French was fine when I taught the upper division students French Literature. But then, after a year or so, they assigned me classes that were lower division studying French but taught in German. That was hard.

**Haft:** I'll bet. How long did it take you, do you think, to become fluent in German?

**Bailey:** Living there is different than studying it. I got by perfectly fine after about six months. However, I was extremely fortunate; besides Fra Link's tutorials, the secretary in the University Department where I worked was a very kind lady and became a very good friend. She insisted that each noon hour we sat and talked; this helped so much in my German vocabulary and fluency. Beyond that, in our "department" enclave of offices at the University, at any moment at least three languages were being spoken. We were all fluent in all three and that offered the perfect way to keep all the languages alive and improve our fluency.

**Haft:** Wow. How long were you there then?

**Bailey:** Let's see. I should know that. I believe it was six, maybe seven, years.

**Haft:** Really? Did you get a degree out of that experience?

**Bailey:** I had the choice. At first, I was enrolled to take a degree from Tübingen, from this German university. The husband, Dr. Leiner, who'd given me this job—I had the job as an assistant to him and I taught lit classes, one in German and one in French—wanted me to take my degree from there, but his wife, Jaqueline, the French woman, said, "I want her to go to the Sorbonne," and she won. In the end, I really did want my degree in French and from the Sorbonne.

**Haft:** But Bud got his degree from Tübingen in philosophy.

**Bailey:** No, he did graduate work at the U.W. and took classes in Tubingen but quit to take a much needed job at IBM teaching English.

**Haft:** How did you finally make your way to the Sorbonne?

**Bailey:** The wife of the man who ran this department at the German university was Jaqueline, who was a professor of French, and who had a job at the Sorbonne after they moved back to Europe. She had

taught me French lit when I was at the University of Washington. She just took over and said, “All right, you’re going to go here. You’re going to talk to this man. You’re going to be enrolled here.” She made it really easy for me.

**Haft:** But she knew everybody at the Sorbonne, as her husband had known everybody in Tübingen.

**Bailey:** Yes, and so I had both these universities as options. It wasn’t my own brilliance or anything. It was just I happened to know these two people who thought I had some promise.

**Haft:** I think they chose you for a reason, Marianne. You can’t deny it. You can’t be so humble about some of these things. You’re a brilliant person. So, you both moved to Paris. Or did you?

**Bailey:** We didn’t officially move, but there was an apartment there. We were so lucky. Jaqueline had owned an apartment in Paris for decades which she shared with us.

**Haft:** Why don’t we take a break?

**Bailey:** Yeah, okay.