

A BIOGRAPHY

Amy Bailey was born on November 27, 1895 at Walderston in Manchester. She was the daughter of William Bailey and Anna Louise (Nee Beckford). They were both outstanding school teachers and it is from them that Amy gained from an early age her love for teaching.

Amy attended Mt. Olivet School and Shortwood Teacher's College from which she graduated in 1919. She became ill at this time and while resting before taking up a teaching post, Amy taught herself shorthand. This skill was to be useful because with it she was able to take on the post of shorthand teacher at Kingston Technical School in 1919. She remained at that school until her retirement in 1958.

For Amy Bailey teaching was not the mere passing on of knowledge. She was a firm believer in the development of what she termed "the inner man". Self Respect, Self Control and Self Knowledge, were all part of her curriculum.

In 1938, her pleas to the Governor Sir Edward Denham, directly led to Technical School students being allowed into the Civil Service. During the 1930's when racism was rampant in Jamaica, Amy Bailey campaigned for the right of Jamaicans of every colour to be employed in stores and offices. She wrote many letters on the subject in the press, interviewed employers and urged students to attain excellence with which to override prejudice.

Besides fighting for racial equality Miss Bailey was also interested in the liberation of women. She was co-founder and first chairman of the Women's Liberal Club, an organization which fought for the rights of women both in and outside the home. Miss Bailey was also instrumental in introducing teaching of birth control into Jamaica from as early as 1936.

The main focus of Amy Bailey's life work has always been the improvement of the lot of the ordinary working class girl. In an attempt to break the vicious cycle which began with unemployment because of being unemployable due to lack of training etc she spearheaded the formation of the Housecraft Training Centre in 1946. Miss Bailey later became superintendent and manager of the Training Centre whose main aim was to train young girls in the arts of housewifery so that they would be more employable and better able to manage their own homes.

Miss Bailey is a member of the Shortwood Old Teachers' Association and has served on the executive of the Bureau of Standard's, the Social Welfare Board and the Price's Commission.