

Bailey, Neil Alexander ^[1]

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By James Stewart, NCSU Libraries, 2016

10 Nov. 1861-16 Mar. 1928

Neil Alexander Bailey* was the first African-American agricultural extension agent in the state of North Carolina. He was born in Harnett County, North Carolina, the son of Edward and Phillis McLean Bailey. He attended the Fayetteville State Normal School ([Fayetteville State University](#) ^[2]) from 1880 to 1883.

Beginning in 1884 Bailey served as a public school teacher for twenty years while also working as a farmer. In 1908 he earned a B.S in agriculture from the Agricultural and Mechanical College ([North Carolina A&T State University](#) ^[3]) in Greensboro. He was one of only eighteen graduates from A&T that year.

Bailey was hired on November 1, 1910 as a "U.S. farm demonstrator" or agricultural state agent and worked in Guilford, Randolph, and Rockingham Counties until December 31, 1915. A requirement for the position was that he have his own horse and buggy for travel. He was noted for his promotion of corn production, and he wrote on this and other subjects. Bailey's office was located on the campus of A&T while he and his family resided at different times in Pittsboro and in Randolph County, NC.

His first wife was Thenia Alston Bailey (1852 - 1912) a native of Chatham County, and they had two daughters, Florence (1890 - 1971) and Victoria Sankey Bailey (1894 - 1926). Following Thenia's death Neil Bailey remarried to Lucy Minon of Guilford County in 1913.

Bailey was a member of the [A.M.E. Church](#) ^[4], the [Republican party](#) ^[5] and the [Royal Knights of King David](#) ^[6].

The former Neil Alexander Bailey Agricultural Building in Pittsboro, North Carolina was named in his honor.

** Some sources identify him as "Neill" or "Neal" Bailey.*

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Subjects:

[Black and African American People](#) [12]

[Agriculture](#) [13]

[Biographies](#) [14]

Authors:

[Stewart, James](#) [15]

Origin - location:

[Harnett County](#) [16]

[Chatham County](#) [17]

[Pittsboro](#) [18]

[Guilford County](#) [19]

[Randolph County](#) [20]

[Rockingham County](#) [21]

From:

[NCSU Libraries.](#) [22]

User Tags:

[North Carolina Agricultural \(Cooperative\) Extension Service](#) [23]

3 September 2016 | Stewart, James

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[1] <https://ncpedia.org/bailey-neil-alexander> [2] <https://ncpedia.org/fayetteville-state-university> [3] <https://ncpedia.org/north-carolina-agricultural-and-tec>
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<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn83045120/1954-06-19/ed-1/seq-6/> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/african-americans> [13]
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<https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmon-10> [21] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmont/r> [22]
<https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/ncsu> [23] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/north-carolina-1>