

## **ADA SINGLETARY**

Ada Singletary is the oldest resident that was born and raised in Gum Springs. The New Gum Springs Civic Association named Mrs. Singletary as the Grand Marshal for Gum Springs Community Day & Parade. Gum Springs is the oldest African American community in Fairfax County and will be celebrating 185 years of its founding on June 16, 2018.

The Civic Association obtained an interview with Mrs. Singletary on May 14, 2018. The following is portion of that interview:

### **What is your birthdate?**

March 22, 1920

### **Where was your family home?**

I was born and raised in house along Old Mount Vernon Road which is a part of Gum Springs that a lot of people don't know. The road to our house was the same road traveled by George Washington. The area is now overgrown.

### **Why did you move from Old Mount Vernon Road?**

My grandfather purchased 9 acres and gave each child 1 ½ acres. Two of us are the remaining owners from the Hamilton-Gray family and we live on the same street.

### **What is the significance of your name?**

I was named after my mother.

### **Did you have a nickname?**

I was often called "Ponytail" because I wore my hair in a ponytail.

### **How many brothers and sisters do/did you have?**

I have/had 3 brothers and 4 sisters

### **What school did you go to and what was your favorite subject? Least favorite subject?**

Gum Springs School which was located off Route 1. The area is where Greater Morning Star Apostolic Church and Ernie's Crab House was located. My favorite subject was reading and least favorite was history.

### **When you were a teenager, what did you do for fun?**

I loved dancing and photography.

### **How did you meet your husband?**

We met at Ft. Belvoir at a dance contest.

**How many children do you have?**

Three sons.

**What's your most cherished family tradition and why is it important?**

Family reunions. Family reunions allows family members to stay connected.

**What's different about growing up today from when you were growing up?**

We traveled by horse and buggy. There were only one or two cars in Gum Springs. I could walk in the area any time day and night. We raised chickens and hogs and went to church every Sunday. We did not lock our doors and knew everyone on our street. We got our water from springs and wells.

**What is your typical day?**

Watch TV, nap, watch my soap operas, have dinner and then it's my bedtime.

**Are you religious?**

Yes. I've been a faithful member of Bethlehem Baptist Church since I was baptized at 12 years by Rev. Tripplett.

**What is your best advice for a young person?**

Put God first. Walk hand-in-hand with God and take care of yourself.

**What do you want or wish for your 100<sup>th</sup> birthday?**

Good health and to be in my right mind.

**Do you have any special sayings or expressions?**

Hold to God's unchanging hand.

**What kinds of things bring you the most pleasure now?**

Going to church and having excellent health.

**What are your concerns for the future?**

Being able to attend church and keeping my faith.

**How do you feel now about growing old?**

Nothing. I'm blessed to be old.

**What's the hardest thing about growing old?**

Missing family members who died.

**What's one unique thing about you that most Gum Springs residents know about you?**

That I was a walker and walked everywhere including from Gum Springs to Ft. Belvoir. I never learned to drive.