

**KK-CD-012-007**

**Interview Summary**

**Interview:** Nancy Covington and Henry Roney

**Date of Interview:** 6-8-08

**Interviewed by:** Michael Kline

**Place of Interview:** Presbyterian Home of Hawfields

**Summary by:** Ann Hobgood

Ninety-five year old Nancy Roney Covington relates her memories from her nursing facility in Hawfields, N.C. She was born on a Pleasant Grove farm where her family raised tobacco, wheat, corn, and watermelons. They had tenant farmers who her father taught to become independent. Nancy first attended a one-room school and then a two-room school called King's School. The approximately 20 students played games such as blackman's bluff, drop the handkerchief, and hide and seek. She loved school and attended with many cousins. Nancy later attended Pleasant Grove School where she rode seven miles on the "school truck." The truck driver, high school student James Barnwell, went on later to form Associated Transport, hauling Alamance fabrics to New York. Nancy recalled the roles of women and men in her youth. Women took care of the house and gardens, weeding, canning, cleaning, and sewing. Nancy helped her mother with chores such as preserving fruits and vegetables and making jams.

Nancy's mother, Caroline Elizabeth Anderson, was raised in Pleasant Grove and married James Roney in 1911. Her family received a land grant in Orange County in 1778. Caroline and James lived in the Jacob Holt House. Nancy does not remember much about going to Cross Roads Presbyterian Church except attending every Sunday with family and eating good food on plank tables at homecomings.

She met Alex Haley when he came to N.C. to research his "Roots." Nancy feels that the Civil War was not about slavery but about rivalry with northern cotton mills. She states that blacks and whites always got along well in Alamance County, but she believes whites should marry only within their own race because it's "tradition."

Nancy's family is related to the Duke family who gave Duke University its name and founded Duke Energy.

Henry Roney is Nancy's youngest brother (DOB: 9-16-23). He attended Pleasant Grove School for all 11 grades and was valedictorian of his class. He graduated from Davidson College and Columbia University. He worked in education for 44 years (headmasters and principals of various public and private schools). He recalls the difficulties of the Depression for farmers and sharecroppers and going to Danville, VA to sell tobacco. Henry discusses the formation of "Texas" in Alamance County and the relationships between Indians, blacks, and whites. He says that it was founded by the Holts who had fathered children with Indian and/or black women.

During Henry's youth, black people attended Crossroads Church where they sat at the back and ate in a separate area during homecomings. In the community, he could remember the Sydney School, which his father attended, the Stainback Store in Cross Roads, which sold dry goods and coffins, his Grandfather Watson's store, and the post office.

Nancy continues her interview by telling about the sawmill and blacksmith shop in Pleasant Grove. She added more about the difference in the roles of men and women in her earlier lifetime. Women stayed home, sometimes sold eggs to buy cloth for clothes and quilts, and sometimes dipped snuff. Men journeyed to buy food and supplies, talked about crops and weather, and smoked pipes.

Nancy explains more about "Texas." The "High Yellows" who lived there were given land, tools, animals, and supplies by prominent families (unnamed). When people asked where those mothers had gone, people said they had gone to "Texas."

Nancy discusses various aspects of the seven Indian tribes in Alamance County, Stonewell Springs healing waters, and separate meeting areas for Indians and whites at Granite Mill.