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Roger & Lucy Jeffries

Interview with Carrie Kline April 25, 2008 at the home of Mr. And Mrs. Roger & Lucy Jeffries

Roger Jeffries was born in 1935 on the Caswell/Alamance County line. His father and grandfather owned one farm in Alamance County and two in Caswell County. Jeffries stresses that there were far fewer residents of Pleasant Grove then. He attended Pleasant Grove School for twelve years. The family lived in a two-story home with parents and grandparents and the six children. Jeffries farmed and worked at Burlington Mills. In July the Jeffries will be married 50 years. Outsiders knew Pleasant Grove as a community of respectable, self-sufficient small farmers. "I wouldn't want to grow up nowhere else," says Jeffries. Everyone knew everyone, and there was no crime. Roger Jeffries defines the parameters of Little Texas. Legend has it that most of the old-timers carried guns.

Lucy Jeffries was born in 1940 and raised by her grandparents. Everybody in the community was family. Walking to school was fun, with many children near in age living closely. Lucy went through school in Pleasant Grove. Roger explains that there were two schools, one for Indians and blacks, and another one for whites. Lucy enjoyed being close to her grandfather while he hunted small game for food or killed hogs on the farm. He was a carpenter, building houses, furniture, chairs and fiddles. On Christmas she recalls waking up everyone in the community and visiting. She recalls a childhood when people visited and sat with the family of a sick person all night. Her grandparents were Primitive Baptists.

Roger recalls the days of Carbide lights. He describes sleeping in the tobacco barn in the summer, cooking in the flue. The family went to town just once or twice a year, having raised or traded locally for all their needs. Saturday night would mean sitting with the neighbors while they picked guitars. His father was the first in Pleasant Grove to own a T-Model Ford. He owned a mechanic shop where men of the community gathered for camaraderie and perhaps a drink. The Jeffries family had a family living on their land and helping on the farm. He recalls the first party-line phones. "I can buy a case of Pepsi today easier than I could buy one for a nickel back then." Jeffries recalls working in the field from earlier in the morning to late at night. Mr. and Mrs. Jeffries point out that the old people, with little or no education, figured out how to do everything they needed. They could raise gardens, crops and families, and invent household and farming tools. "They made the patterns," Roger stresses, by which we are living today.

Lucy paints a picture of annual Church Association Days, almost a carnival, with preaching, roadside stands for food and photos and courting. She recalls that her father could stop nosebleeds. Roger chimes in that there were people who could "take the fire out" when someone was burned. Both agree that those with special gifts couldn't reveal their technique or they would lose their power. They speculate that these healers used special Bible verses.