Henry Holliday

Henry Holliday was the son of Jim and Ella Massey Holliday and was born on February 13, 1909 on the Henry Turlington Farm at Turlington’s Crossroads between Erwin and Coats, North Carolina. Mr. Henry had asked Henry’s mother Ella to name her son Henry after his name and they agreed to that.

Henry had one brother named (James) Malcolm Holliday and two sisters, Myrtle Holliday Davis Rice and Adijah Mae Holliday who died as a child. Henry‘s grandparents were Robert and Phebbie Holliday and his great grandparents were Stephen and Emily Holliday born in 1824. When Henry was nine years old, his mother Ella died, and when he was about eleven years old, his Daddy Jim Holliday died. After his parents died, he went to stay with his aunt and uncle, the Reverend Arthur and Mary Shaw Massey Sanders.

Henry went to school at Rolling School (Rowland School ?) and then Turlington Grove near the town of Coats, North Carolina until the Fifth Grade. He lived for a while in Four Oaks and in Durham, North Carolina before moving back to live with his grandmother Mrs. Lizzie Ryals Massey in Dunn, North Carolina. Henry left Dunn and returned to Erwin where he stayed with Mr. Oscar and Laura Ryals who had a store and they owned a farm where Henry worked.

Henry met a beautiful girl named Ammie Shaw. Ammie’s parents were Reverend Ransom and Peggy McLean Shaw. Ransom was 42 and Peggy 35 years old when Aimee was born. Her grandparents were Marshall and Ammie McKoy McLean born in 1856 and her great grandparents were George and Peggy Johnson McLean born 1823. Ammie had two brothers-Willie (Billy) and Clyde Shaw and three sisters-Nellie, Rosie Lee Shaw and Lula Jane who died as a child. They discovered later in life that they had a half brother.

Henry met Ammie at a well where she was carrying water for Mrs. Sally Holliday, Leonard Holliday’s daughter and Henry’s great uncle. They dated for two years. Henry was 21 years old and Ammie was 16 years old. Ammie’s parents were very strict. Her father Ransom was a preacher. Henry asked Ammie to marry him over and over until one night she agreed to marry him. She knew that she would have to slip away to marry him because her parents would not allow her to marry. Ammie and her three friends came up with a plan. They were the only ones who knew what was going to happen that night. The friends’ names were Rosie and Isabella McKoy and Beulah McKoy Blackmon.

One night Ammie slipped on her clothes and threw her slippers out the window. Her friends Rosie and Isabella got them for her. Ammie told her parents that she was going to walk them a piece down the road to their home. Ammie went to their house and their sister Beulah Blackmon gave Ammie her wedding dress to get married in. Henry and Amy then went up the road to Mr. Oscar Ryals’s house and he carried them to the house of Henry’s uncle. His uncle was Reverend Wiliam Holliday who was a preacher in Coats, North Carolina. Henry’s Aunt Mattie Scott Holliday and Jim Miller were the witnesses to the ceremony and signed the marriage license papers. Reverend William Holliday married the couple at 9:00 that night.

Somebody on that night who knew what was going on told Ammie’s mother Peggy Shaw who alarmed the neighborhood that night. Reverend Ransom Shaw was pastoring a church called Smith Chapel in Four Oaks in Johnston County, North Carolina. (Notes stated Sampson County). Pastor Shaw was having services there that night.

The following morning when her father found out he said that he was going to get her back. The following morning which was on a Monday, her father, Reverend Ransom, went to the Lillington courthouse to take out two warrants-one on Oscar Ryals for $200.00 (2,00.00 in the notes)for taking his daughter to Coats and saying that she was 18 years old and one warrant on Henry for stealing his daughter and marrying her because she was under age. The trial was set for the following week. The judge threw the case out because the couple had already slept together as man and wife.

A lot of the people said that their marriage would not last six months. They stayed married over 64 years and never parted. Ammie told the Lord that she wanted four boys and four girls and that is exactly what she got. They stayed in a little red house where her son Lewis Holliday’s house is now. Then they moved into the house where Sister Nellie Mims stayed and then moved to a house belonging to a white man named Anderson Sawyer and then they moved to Johnston County to a house belonging to Jim McGee. They returned to Oscar Ryals’s house and then back to the homeplace where Nellie lived. Then they moved a house belonging to white Jeff Turlington and later to the house belonging to white Willie Lucas. They also lived in a house on Highway 210 that belonged to a white man named Buddy Doll Stevenson. They may have returned to the Sawyer house before moving to Coats and later to Clifton Byrd’s house. They stayed in a house belonging to Mamie and Harm (Hiram) Stewart for ten years before moving to a house belonging to Fred McLeod. Mr. Stewart sold the farm that the couple was living on.

In 1936, they had their first child and named him James Otis Holliday. His siblings were Johnnie Lee Holliday, Henry Lewis Holliday, Ella Pearl Holliday, Susie Laura Frances Holliday, Peggy Jane Holliday, Delores Ann Holliday, and Ransom Holliday.

Ammie decided that she was not going to move any more so she began to say up her money from her children working on the farms and made plans to buy her a house. There were still four children at home at this time. In 1964, Henry and Ammie bought their first home –a three bedroom house on the land that her father Ransom had left her. Aimme died in 2004 and Henry and Henry Lewis Holliday have also passed.

Author unknown