

## The Aldermans Of Carroll County

# A Love Of History Has Lead To The Publishing Of A Book "Carroll 1765-1815-The Settlements"

By BARBARA SUMMERLIN  
Editor

HILLSVILLE, Va.—When John Alderman speaks, history buffs listen.

This remarkable man, now 78, has been gathering information about his native Carroll County for more than 56 years. He has tucked it all away in the chambers of his mind in such an orderly fashion that a single question will generate a flow of information as if a computer button had been pushed.

Alderman attributes his wealth of knowledge to the many hours he spent as a youngster hanging around his father's general store. In later years, he would go on to earn a law degree from Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tenn.

His years of working around his father's store put him in contact with plenty of old-timers, ready to give firsthand accounts of Carroll County history. One such individual was Henderson Goad, a favorite of young John Alderman.

Goad was born in 1825, and had very little formal education. But, he remembered many conversations shared with first-generation settlers to Carroll County and passed them on to John. Goad was present when Carroll County was organized in 1842 and young John Alderman loved to hear the accounts of how the men would gather at the home of James Stafford and plan the structuring of the county under the leadership of Josh Hanks.

Hanks, Alderman recalled, was the oldest member of the group and had been a soldier in the Revolutionary War. He fought at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse and at one time was the sheriff of Grayson County. Alderman says that he verified all of the fact Goad had told him years later through public records.

Alderman is proud of a vast collection of Civil War records and resource books accumulated over the years. He has researched his facts as they relate to Carroll County with such ardor that when he rests back in his chair — eyes twinkling — you get the feeling he was there when the armies of the North encountered the Rebels.

With great pride, he speaks of how Carroll County furnished the largest percent of its population to the war of any county in the South. Out of a population of 8,030, 1,900 were actually fighting in the ranks. "That's one in four," Alderman says proudly. He added that there were more Carroll County boys killed in the Battle of Drewry's Bluff (near Richmond) than from any other regiment.

Alderman recalls many conversations with Green B. Mayberry, the last survivor of the Civil War from Carroll County. Mayberry lived to be 102 years and 6 months old, says Alderman. Until his death, Mayberry's memory was clear. He told of the reunion of veterans in Gettysburg — a trip made possible when the governor made appropriations for all veterans to attend and take one person with them.

### Early Schooling

You would hardly suspect that John Alderman was turned off to school. But he was. His school attendance was very irregular, he says. He finished the third-grade the first year he started. Then he became so bored that he didn't care if he went or not, preferring to work in his father's store. Young Alderman stayed out of school for the most part of five years before actually going back to finish high school. But, he says he has always

been a bookworm.

It was because of his love for reading that he passed an oral examination and gained entrance to Cumberland University School of Law without having a college degree. The answers he gave to two questions, both dealing with knowledge of the founding fathers, so surprised the judge that Alderman did not have to take a written examination. He went on to earn his law degree and to open his own practice. He also served 12 years as commonwealth attorney for the State of Virginia.

Alderman, who still maintains his law practice in Hillsville, is proud of his heritage. He has traced his roots to his great-grandfather, Jacob Alderman (sometimes spelled Olterman), who came to this country from Germany. His name appears in a collection of records of German immigrants who arrived in Philadelphia on the Patsy Rutledge. His great-grandmother was a Fadenland from Holland.

Jacob Alderman was 17 when he arrived in America, and being a Moravian, settled in Old Salem. He later migrated to Carroll County. Thus, the lineage of Aldermans began along the southern borders of Virginia and North Carolina.

Alderman's wife, Elizabeth Perry, also has close kindred to the Carroll County region. Her grandfather arrived in the county in 1806, having come down from Montgomery County for his health. He was a medical doctor.

### Like Father Like Sons

Alderman is particularly proud of his two sons, Dr. George Taylor Alderman, Vice President in Charge of Personnel at Youngstown State

University in Youngstown, Ohio, and John Perry Alderman, U.S. District Attorney for the Western District of Virginia. Both, according to Alderman, have inherited a love for history from their father.

John Perry completed a 460-page volume of Carroll history last year, "Carroll 1765-1815 — The Settlements". Of the 1,000 volumes published, only a few are left.

In the preface, Alderman tells why a plan to assimilate 100 years of history on Carroll County had to be reduced to the first 50 years: "For twenty-five years I have abstracted, compiled and indexed the old records of the area, and now what ought to be the guest bedroom in my home serves as a room for the Carroll archives," says the book's author. The book will serve as the backbone to many families with ties to Carroll County and is worthy to be added to the collection of any local historian.

John Alderman is proud of his son's book and will not readily admit that he had anything to do with it. But it is obvious his love of history and his wealth of information provided the impetus for his son's pursuit.

Alderman says that he probably should be retired, but he just isn't ready. His only grandson, John Owen Alderman, will graduate from William and Mary Law School in May.

In talking with John Alderman, you get a feeling that he is taking care of the deep-rooted history of the Alderman family in the sloping Virginia countryside until another Alderman comes home to continue the tradition. Maybe, just maybe, it will be his son or grandson.



John Alderman reflects on the many stories and experiences associated with his beloved Carroll County.

Rhonda A. Horton is the dau. of Sollie Arthur Alderman Jr., called "Junior." He is the son of Emily Alderman, who was the daughter of Sarah Isabelle Alderman. Sarah's father and mother were James Alderman and Nancy Phrater (m. in 1839). James Alderman is the son of John Alderman and Hannah Sutphin. John Alderman's father is Jacob Alderman who married Rosanna Fadenland of Rowan Co., NC. Jacob dates back to 1773, one of the earliest settlers of Carroll County. Rhonda's mother is Vivian Odell Burnett Alderman. Her parents were Ewell Roosevelt Burnett and Veva Myrtis Boyd Burnett. (Simple Pleasures - Sept-Oct 1993)