

farmed in a predominately black community called Mullins Flat.

“One thing I guess I can appreciate my granddad and grandmom for is they didn’t have a formal education but made sure I went to school,” Love said.

He attended the first through the third grades at Silver Hill School off what is now Dodd Road in the area of the historic Redstone test site on Dodd Road.

His mother’s parents sharecropped on about 20 to 30 acres. They farmed cotton, corn, vegetables, potatoes and made molasses, brooms and chair bottoms, Love recalls.

His grandfather, Jessie Penny, was “probably the next to the last person to give up the horse and buggy. He drove that horse and buggy till he got too old,” Love said.

Peddlers, called “rolling stores”, would come by once a week to sell household goods, candy and gum. Love would walk the approximately two miles to school which lasted from morning to noon. “We moved several times but most times in the general area,” he said.

They first moved to near where the post airfield stands today and would walk Saturdays to “where the Space and Rocket Center is on Highway 20, caught a train—the “Old Joe Wheeler”—into town, and rode back in the afternoon.” The trip cost a dime.

“I farmed till I was 13, then I felt it was time to give it up, and I left the farm and moved into the city,” Love said. He

moved back with his mother in Huntsville.

His mother, a native of Mullins Flat, had been working in Chattanooga where her sister lived. Her parents left Mullins Flat before the army came, Love said.

He recalls how his grandfather would drop him off in the nearby black community of Pond Beat so Love could visit his father’s parents.

His father’s parents lived in Pond Beat, located to the south of Mullins Flat in the area of where Building 7100 stands, until after the Army arrived, Love said.

Love went on to graduate from Council High School and Alabama A&M University. He worked 10 years with the Huntsville Parks and Playgrounds Department and two and a half years as a juvenile probation officer for Madison County Family Court before coming to Redstone in 1972.

He has a married son and married daughter and lives in Huntsville with his wife Helen.

“My roots are here, man,” he said [while on Redstone Arsenal].