

# Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

## What Mean These Trees?

The Old Testament prophet, Joshua, posed a question like this to the Israelites after they passed through the Jordan River into the land of promise. Upon crossing miraculously on dry ground, Joshua directed a man from each of the twelve tribes to place a stone on the other side of the Jordan with this admonition:

"When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever." (Joshua 4:21-24)

As these stones were a memorial, so can old trees be a tribute to the past for a community, its people, and its early happenings and traditions.

The handful of very large, old trees in Bucklesberry, then, raise the question—what mean these trees? Read into them what you may, but old trees can symbolize longevity, strength, aging with grace, weathering storms of life, and, most importantly, God's faithfulness and goodness to the people of a community.

Some of the old trees in Bucklesberry may have grown from volunteer seedlings. Others were planted deliberately with future purpose, for example, to provide shade from the hot sun back in the day when so much of life and work on a farm was outdoors.

Planted sometime around the eve of the Civil War, the large pecan tree on the corner of Dawson Mill and Frank Barwick Roads in Bucklesberry (pictured) may have served this purpose. The tree is situated directly across the road from the former homeplace site of Thomas (1826-1894) and Julia Moore (ca. 1832-unknown) Sutton. Locals may remember a series of tobacco barns that all stood in line next to this tree years ago.

Trees were also reference points for establishing land boundaries in Bucklesberry from its earliest beginnings and well into the twentieth century. A 1757 survey in the Clellan Sutton Collection reads:

"North Carolina Surveyed for John Sutton a plantation containing two hundred and seventy five acres of land lying in the County of Johnston...Bucklesberry beginning at a white oak Thomas

Uzzells corner land...to a red oak John Rouse corner then along his line...to a water oak then...to a hickory then...to a maple then...to a pine then...to the land at said Sutton lives on (taken up by John Giles) then along the lines of said land to Uzzells line & then with the same...."

Possibly the oldest tree in Bucklesberry today, planted some 200 or more years ago, is a pin oak standing directly off the Jenny Lind Road within a quarter-mile of the restored Jenny Lind Store. Other old trees in the neighborhood include the following:

- Live oak tree across the Jenny Lind Road from the home of Janet and the late James Allen (1935-2007) Brown.
- Pecan tree by the Harold Sutton Road at the former homeplace site of Harry Manley (1894-1986) and Lillie Estelle (1892-1962) Sutton.
- Pin oak tree by the Harold Sutton Road at the former homeplace site of John Ormond (1899-1954) and Nancy Wartens (1903-1998) Sutton.

Amazingly, these old trees have withstood dozens of hurricanes and severe storms. Some were gathering places for neighborhood picnics and barbecues over the years. As memorials to the past, Bucklesberry's old trees deserve recognition and admiration.

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[Caption to accompany photograph]

Pecan tree, corner of Dawson Mill and Frank Barwick Roads, Bucklesberry. Estimated to be about 160 years old, the tree was planted around the start of the Civil War.

