

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Hickory Grove Church (Part 38)

Six times the Court rejected claims from former pastor, Rev. Bushrod Washington (B. W.) Nash and the Union Baptist Association to recover Hickory Grove Church property alleged to have been deeded to them. First filed in 1889, the final judgment handed down in 1910 permanently settled the matter. Bucklesberry's first church would retain its property.

The twenty-one years of legal wrangling clearly took a toll on Hickory Grove. As one of three churches in the La Grange Circuit of the Methodist Protestant (M. P.) Church Conference, Hickory Grove went through extended periods without a pastor, paralyzing its ability to minister to the congregation and the community.

As a result, when the Conference inexplicably omitted the La Grange Circuit from its annual listing of pastoral appointments for 1916, Hickory Grove's affiliation with the M. P. Conference effectively ended. The Church was left denominationally homeless.

Despite its unexpected separation from the M. P. Conference, Hickory Grove immediately found a new home with the Methodist Episcopal (M. E.) Church, South Conference in 1916. With it came spiritual rekindling under the pastorate of Rev. K. F. Duval:

1916, November 2: "Rev. K. F. Duval has just closed a most successful meeting at Bucklesberry [Hickory Grove]. There were thirteen additions on profession of faith, and the Church has been greatly revived." (*North Carolina Christian Advocate*, Greensboro)

Weeks earlier Rev. Duval also conducted successful meetings at Trinity Methodist Church of the Falling Creek community and at Institute Methodist Church, north of La Grange:

1916, September 28: "Rev. K. F. Duval has recently closed a successful meeting at Trinity Methodist Church at Falling Creek. Of it the *La Grange Journal* says: 'This was one of the most satisfactory meetings that has been conducted by Rev. K. F. Duval for some time. There were fifteen additions to the Church. It was one of the best meetings held at this Church in many years according to some of the oldest members.' This meeting was followed by one in Institute on the same [M. E. Church, South] charge." (*North Carolina Christian Advocate*)

Relatively new to Bucklesberry and the La Grange area, Rev. Duval had been appointed pastor of the La Grange Circuit of the M. E. Church, South earlier in 1915:

1915, January 14: "Greater La Grange....We have been on our new charge, La Grange, over a month and have visited all our eight churches. Three new ones—Piney Grove, Seven Springs, and Zion—were added to the circuit last Conference. This accounts for the above title [Greater La Grange]." (*North Carolina Christian Advocate*)

Hickory Grove was not among the eight member churches indicated in this report, however. In 1915, as Rev. Duval was getting settled into his new assignment, Hickory Grove was still associated with the M. P. Conference.

Exactly when Hickory Grove officially aligned with the M. E. Church, South Conference is uncertain. But it was likely between the early part of 1916 and the November revival held by Rev. Duval the same year.

The transition to M. E. Church, South affiliation in 1916 marked the end of thirty years of operation as an M. P. Church for Hickory Grove. Chartered in 1860, it initially operated under the Baptist banner for the first quarter-century.