

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Crimes and Campaigns

In the heart of Bucklesberry, on the corner of Kennedy Home and Jenny Lind Roads, stands the old Jenny Lind Store. Restored by owner, George Foss of La Grange, Jenny Lind's notoriety and name recognition rivaled that of greater Bucklesberry in days gone by.

One of the earliest records of its existence is found in an 1883 issue of the *New Berne Weekly Journal* which reported that Thomas Henry Sutton (1863-1948) was building a cotton gin near Jenny Lind. The Store may well be 140 or more years old.

Sometime after the turn of the century, Jenny Lind took a turn for the worse and was reduced from a country store to what may have been a saloon. A current Bucklesberry resident recalls a time in the 1930s when she was forbidden by her parents to go inside the Store because of rough characters and wayward activity there. It even had swinging doors like saloons from the nineteenth century, legendary Wild West. Clearly, not a place for young'uns.

By the mid-1900s, under different ownership, Jenny Lind returned to its country store roots and sold canned goods and small groceries once again. In the early-1960s, some locals remember buying ice-cold Coca-Cola® in small glass bottles for eight cents there. Creamy, orange sherbet Push-Ups® were also a favorite. The wheel of hoop cheese and the large container of Tom's® cookies that sat on the counter next to the cash register were hard to miss.

Jenny Lind was more than a country store, though. It was a place where locals gathered to catch-up on news of the day, talk about crops, and so on. Nonetheless, the Store has a mixed history. Although it served the Bucklesberry community well for many years, it attracted criminals on occasion:

1900, September 27: "Last night about 9 o'clock Job Deaver killed Will Caudell by shooting him with a pistol. The homicide occurred at Deaver's home near La Grange. Caudell had become very intimate with Deaver's daughter, and had been warned by the father several times to let his daughter alone. Caudell and Deaver with several others, were at the Jenny Lind Store, in Bucklesberry, last night when Caudell left the crowd and went off. In a short time Deaver, suspecting Caudell, went to his home where he found Caudell with his (Deaver's) daughter and killed him. Deaver returned to the Jenny Lind Store, told the crowd there he had killed Caudell, and disappeared...." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

Despite dark moments from the past, there were times when Jenny Lind was viewed more favorably. For example, it was a political focal point in Lenoir County and the culminating site for campaign stumping in election years:

1920, October 5: "With every speaking [political speech] a barbeque. To the spiels of the Lenoir County Democratic office seekers, all of them officeholders, will be added the squeals of Lenoir County porkers but no suggestion of pork-barrels. It will be a 'different' sort of campaign to open at Sand Hill October 8. The hearty husbandmen of Lenoir will not be expected to 'swallow' the oratory of the official swingers around the circuit on empty stomachs. Pigs aggregating thousands of pounds in weight will make the supreme sacrifice to help Democracy maintain its supremacy. After the Sand Hill pow-wow the candidates will take a rest over the weekend....And, as Democratic campaigns in Lenoir County have always ended, the canvass will wind up at Jenny Lind. We know where Jenny Lind is, but the tradition demands that the last word and the biggest hog be reserved for Jenny Lind..." (*The Daily Free Press*)

Not surprisingly, like other large gatherings in Bucklesberry, including family reunions, political events at Jenny Lind back then revolved around tasty, culinary delights for which the community is well known.