

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Springtime 1898

Like animals waking from hibernation, folks are ready to move about and stir when winter turns to spring. Back in the day, when life was much simpler, and there were fewer forms of entertainment, Bucklesberrians really welcomed warm weather. Even working in the fields provided relief from being cooped up in houses with close quarters during the cold months of the year.

In addition to planting crops, springtime naturally brought about more social activity. Ideally, day-to-day life and events among folks would have been recorded in personal journals and diaries. But sources like these are rare.

Newspapers, though, routinely published social columns. Reporters were eager to write about what people were doing in the famed Bucklesberry community, one of the oldest in Lenoir County. The springtime of 1898 was no exception:

1898, April 13: "The cold weather has damaged the fruit crop very much. Rev. H. H. Goff baptized ten converts Saturday morning, near here. Neuse River is on a swell. I think we will get a few white shad." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

1898, April 18: "The wheat crop is looking promising. Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Sutton went to Jones County yesterday to visit relatives. Tobacco plants are looking well. Some of our farmers will begin setting out next week. Rev. E. C. Forlines held prayer meeting at Hickory Grove Church Wednesday night. Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Ivey went to Goldsboro Tuesday and returned the same day. The war question has caused much excitement among [some folks]. One fellow said: 'I'm not gwyne ter town any more till de war question is settled, for fear dat I might be taken up and sent to Cuba.'" (*The Daily Free Press*)

1898, May 3: "Mr. J. W. Foss went to Kinston today. Mr. Henry Goff has been spending a few days with friends here. Mr. W. S. Uzzell went to Goldsboro Saturday and returned the same day. Two of the Goldsboro riflemen passed here last Thursday looking up volunteers. Mr. B. H. Dawson, of near Institute, spent Thursday night at Mr. W[illiam]. M. Sutton's. Mr. K[irby] E[dward Sutton] and Rev. T[homas] H. Sutton of La Grange, spent last Friday at Mr. Josiah Sutton, Jr.'s. The recent cold spell damaged the corn and fruit crops somewhat, but not as much as was expected. A good many of our friends attended Crumpler's meeting at La Grange Saturday night and Sunday. Saturday morning, as the sun was rising, a good many of the young

boys met at Mr. Josiah Sutton's to trim down an acre of woods for the purpose of building a Free Will Baptist church, which will be built immediately. Mr. Josiah Sutton gave \$50 and one acre of land, which we appreciate very much. It seems that the love of God has been shed abroad in the hearts of a good many young people." (*The Daily Free Press*)

Clearing woodland for a new church proved to be a significant historical event. It documented the founding of White Oak Grove Original Free Baptist Church, still standing in Bucklesberry today and ministering in the immediate area and beyond.