

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Ninth Spring

Formerly called, White Hall, Seven Springs was part of broader Bucklesberry in the 1800s. The town had two popular resort hotels by the turn of the century. Rural Retreat Hotel at Ninth Spring was located about a half-mile west of Seven Springs Hotel. Both touted mineral-rich spring waters with purported healing powers.

Situated on 250 acres, Ninth Spring was discovered and originally owned by T. A. Whitfield. In 1897, Hiram J. Ham purchased the property and constructed the hotel the same year. A 1900 letter to the editor of the *Goldsboro Weekly Argus* provided an inspirational, uplifting description of Ninth Spring:

1900, September 6: "Who has ever spent a week at the picturesque 'Rural Retreat' (Ninth Spring) and not felt the benign influence of this quiet abode and departed with other than the joy of 'twas indeed good to have been there?' If there is one spark of the love of the beautiful, or the faintest gratitude to the great Creator for His handiwork in forming the lovely hills, the valleys, and clothing the sighing trees with the tinted foliage that in viewing and dwelling above, lift man's soul above the common plane of mere existence and draws him up toward the beautiful beyond, then 'twill awaken here, and expand and quicken his heart and aliven his hopes, and give him a grander and more glorious conception of God's purposes concerning the children of men."

"It must indeed be a hardened nature that can sit down by these cooling Springs, drink deep of their sparkling waters, and listen to the music of the little brook that glides merrily by, on its winding course, to mingle its glad song and crystal ripples with the rushing waters of the murky Neuse, and ere long to join the restless ocean and be lost amiss the briny waves of the mighty deep, and not in some time in after life pillow his head in his habitation, perchance in the bustling city, and dwell in sweet retrospective musings and long to live the quiet hours over again."

"So much has already been written of these wonderful Springs that 'tis not the purpose of this writer to dwell further at description; indeed, 'tis not given man to tell of these hills and valleys and sparkling Springs. The attempt only finds one lost in the awful sublimity of God's presence, and the soul can only look upon His handiwork and exclaim, Wonderful!"

"Hear no more; but come ye halt and lame, ye who are burdened with the weary cares of a life of hurry and worry amidst the clamor of the city; yes, even you who have spent the hours at the gay

ocean resorts, and hide awhile away from the 'maddening crowd' and learn for yourself of the golden hours that pass by only too swiftly..."

"This has been a pleasant week at the [Ninth] Springs, indeed. Among other guests we have the inimitable, irrepressible jolly soul of good cheer and witicism Mr. W. M. Russ, Clerk of Wake Superior Court, a resident of Raleigh; also Mr. T. B. Moseley, a genial gentleman of the same city; Mr. J. C. Hines, of Faison a courtly gentleman of the 'old school' type, and Rev. F. W. Farries, the beloved pastor of the Presbyterian church of your city [Goldsboro]; and then there is the matchless soul of sympathy and good cheer, whose chief delight seems always to be found in making others happy, Col. H. W. Smith, president of Wayne Agricultural Works..."

"All the above named gentlemen, Messrs. Smith, Russ, Hines, Moseley, and Rev. Farries accepted an invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Geo. W. Wynn, of the Bucklesberry section, near La Grange, and spent Wednesday at their elegant country home, and came back full of good cheer and shining faces, and highly elated over the reception tendered them by these good people. Today, their former host and hostess returned the visit, accompanied by Miss Fannie [Henrietta Francis] Sutton, and being handsomely regaled at Rural Retreat Hotel, as guests of the above named gentlemen." (*Goldsboro Weekly Argus*)

The last owner of Ninth Spring Farm, Virginia Reneau Price, donated most of the land to the State. Adjacent to Cliffs of the Neuse State Park, the property is now part of the Park's master plan.