

# Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

## Match Made in Heaven (Part 6)

On December 23, 1890, Laura Wood (1856-1934) of Bucklesberry married Rev. William Ellis Swain (1856-1923), former pastor of Hickory Grove Church in Bucklesberry. Evidence suggests their wedding was held in La Grange at the newly constructed Grace Methodist Protestant (M. P.) Church, then located on the corner of North Caswell and East James Streets in La Grange. William was instrumental in establishing that church several years earlier.

Laura was a well-regarded educator in the community. William was an up-and-coming preacher in the M. P. Church Conference. As prominent people, their wedding was reported by multiple news outlets. Two weeks after their wedding, they made a brief stop in the Capitol City:

1891, January 8: "Rev. W. E. Swain, and bride, of the North Granville Circuit, M. P. Conference, spent a portion of yesterday in the city [Raleigh]." (*The State Chronicle*, Raleigh)

Prior to their wedding, William completed his three-year term as pastor of the Winston M. P. Church in December 1890. His next appointment was in Granville County, where he and Laura began their lives as a couple. Their first residence was a newly constructed and furnished parsonage in Oxford:

1891, January 9: "The Rev. W. E. Swain, of the M. P. church, who was appointed to the North Granville Circuit, will occupy the parsonage at this place [Oxford] and will preach here next Sunday." (*Oxford Public Ledger*, Oxford)

Several M. P. Churches in this circuit were under William's charge. Mount Olivet M. P. Church in Oxford was the home church where he was stationed from 1891 to 1893:

1892, September 2: "Rev. W. E. Swain, the beloved pastor of Mt. Olivet [M. P.] Church, treated his congregation to a most powerful sermon on the text 'Ye are the Salt of the Earth' on Sunday." (*Oxford Public Ledger*, Oxford)

Growing a family became an immediate priority for Laura and William, both of whom were in their mid-thirties. Their first child Lynette Grimsley Swain Moss (1892-1957) was born during William's second year of service in Granville County:

1892, July 15: "Mrs. W. E. Swain returned Monday from a three months visit to friends at La Grange. She was accompanied by baby Lanette [sic.], six weeks old." (*Oxford Public Ledger*, Oxford)

In November, 1893, the State M. P. Conference held its annual meeting in La Grange. There William received his next three-year pastoral appointment at the Grace M. P. Church in Laurah's hometown of La Grange.

He concluded his three-year ministry in the North Granville M. P. Circuit in December, 1893. That same month, Laurah was nearing the end of her pregnancy with their second child. Soon after transitioning to La Grange in early 1894, James Wood Swain (1894-1956) was born on January 8.

More about the lives of Laura Wood Swain and Rev. William Ellis Swain will be shared in an upcoming Bucklesberry article.