

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Match Made in Heaven (Part 7)

After they married in 1890, Lurah Wood (1856-1934) of Bucklesberry and Rev. William Ellis Swain (1856-1923) began their lives together in Granville County, NC. From 1891 to 1893, William served as pastor of the North Granville Methodist Protestant (M. P.) Church Circuit.

His next appointment was at the La Grange M. P. Church Circuit from 1894 to 1896. Three churches were under his charge: Grace Church, Harris Chapel, and Hickory Grove Church (Bucklesberry). This was William's second term of service in La Grange. He pastored there a decade earlier from 1885 to 1887.

Whether William's second appointment at La Grange was granted by the Conference because he personally requested it or for other reasons is unknown. Regardless, the return to her hometown was probably welcomed by Lurah.

Their first child Lynette Grimsley Swain Moss (1892-1957) was two years of age at the time. A brother James Wood Swain (1894-1956) was born in La Grange soon after Lurah and William relocated there in early 1894. Her hands full with two infants, Lurah likely found needed support among her family and friends.

Lingering health issues with her mother Elizabeth Sutton Wood (1827-1894) may have influenced the Conference's decision to assign William to La Grange for a second pastoral term. Within weeks after their move to La Grange in 1894, Lurah's mother passed away:

1894, April 26: "We deeply sympathize with Mr. J[ames] M. Wood in the death of his mother, Mrs. Elizabeth [Sutton] Wood, relict of the late Dempsey Wood, who departed this life Wednesday, the 18th inst., at the home of her daughter, Mrs. R. E. [Elizabeth M. Wood] Beaman, in Greene county, caused by a sudden attack of heart trouble, aged 63 years. The interment was made in the family burying ground in Lenoir county, Thursday at 4 p. m., in the presence of a large concourse of sorrowing relatives and friends." (*The Goldsboro Headlight*)

At year's end in 1896, the traditional time when annual pastoral appointments were announced by the Conference, William was battling a health issue that impacted his ability to minister. Consequently, he remained idle for 1897:

1896, December 4: "*Kinston Free Press*: Rev. W. E. Swain of the M. P. Church, has, on account of throat trouble, declined to take regular work. The annual Conference left this circuit [La Grange] 'to be supplied'." (*The Wilmington Messenger*)

By December, 1897, William's health improved to the point that he was able to resume pastoral duties. Ready to return to the pulpit, he accepted an appointment to Alamance County, where he served six years from 1898 to 1903.

More on the life journey of Laurah Wood Swain and Rev. William Ellis Swain will be shared in an upcoming Bucklesberry article.