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# Poetic About Odgen

The York Obs Sunday, November 12, 1989

## Early Resident's Writing Describes People, Life In Community

Ogden, a rural community south of Rock Hill, was the home of A.L. Neely in the early part of this century.

Neely wrote folksy poetry about his home, school, church, family and, more than anything, about farm life. In 1925, the State Publishing Co. published Neely's writings in a slim book title, "Ogden Jingles."

Neely made no attempt to disguise Ogden or its people. One of his poems was called, "Ogden Crop News." It was written one especially wet spring when it rained so much the farmers' fields were soggy and grassy. Part of the poem went this way:

*"Pearson's grass grows long and green  
Betchler's grows cockleburs,  
Garrison, and Sims grass have met  
And crawled across the rows.  
Strait and Nuson, Smith, and Kidd,  
Are soldiers brave and true.  
They face grass with dauntless grit,  
Like heroes always do."*

Neely recalled Ogden's first school, called Mineral Spring School, a one-room log affair that had vanished by 1925 but was remembered as sitting in a field covered with cowslips and daisies. The children of Mineral Spring School delighted in playing Goosy Goosy Gander, Ring Around the Rosy and other such group play. He recounted their names as McFadden, Kidd, Byres, Dunlap, Isom, McKants, Bookout, Percival, Parish, Evans, Moore, Strait, Duncan, Bates and Neely.

*"Our teachers teach, our preachers preach  
Where once the savage stood  
Through thick and thin they're fighting sin  
And they are doing good."*

A rare bit of history was recorded by Neely in a short essay in which he gives the history of Antioch Methodist Church. The account was pieced together from "scraps of pages from the original church register over forty years ago. These records fell into the hands of the writer about 1910. . . ."

Antioch Methodist Church was founded by the Rev. J. Marion Boyd, who served the Rock Hill circuit. In 1878 he set up the church because there was no Methodist church near.

"He saw in this Black Jack Valley what appeared to be almost a wilderness with a family living here and there in log dwellings, and it was in these log houses that Rev. Boyd started a work that resulted in building Antioch."

The private homes used for the first services were those of Thaddeus K. Bates and James H. Kidd during the months of March, April and May 1878. In June the Methodists built a brush arbor. In August, 18 men brought their axes and began chopping down trees for the first church building.

Not much had to be bought. Even the roof covering was oak split on the grounds. The total cash expense of building the church was \$255.10. Records showed that 51 people contributed money, but that three men contributed most of it: Ferguson H. Barber, Arnold Friedheim of Rock Hill, and W.B. Byres.

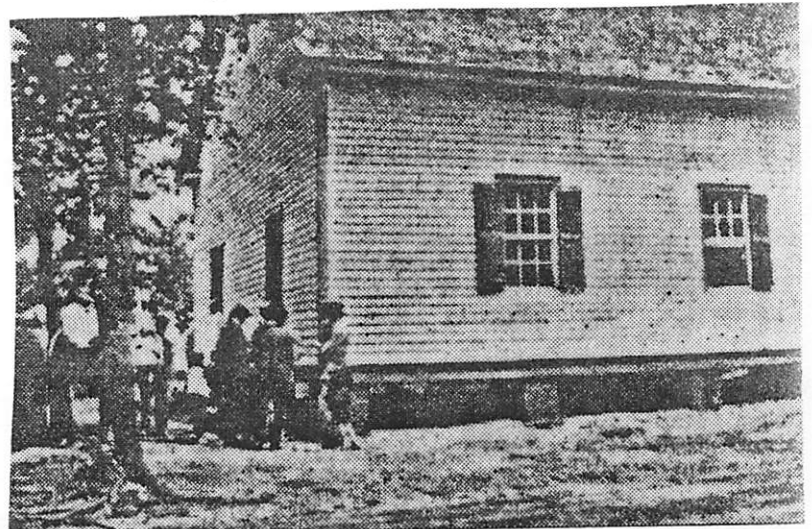
The church was completed and dedicated by Boyd Sept. 29, 1878. Neely said it would be "hard indeed to estimate the good socially and morally that has resulted from the building of Antioch."

Neely's poems were printed in the Weekly Newsletter of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in the Woodman's magazine, "Sovereign Visitor," and in the Weekly Fairfax Enterprise.

One of the most amusing poems was titled "Tax Returning Time" which ends this way:

*"His fertile soil is very deep  
Many feet to the clay  
He never said his land was cheap  
until returning day."*

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