

OGDEN JINGLES
by Louise Pettus

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 Company published Neely's writings in a slim book titled, "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 that 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 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 Thadeus 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. The records showed that 51 people contributed money but that 3 men contributed most of the money: Ferguson H. Barber, Arnold Friedheim of Rock Hill, and W. B. Byers. The church was completed and

dedicated by Reverend Boyd September 29, 1878. Neely said it would be "hard indeed to estimate the good socially and morally that has resulting 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 maagazine, "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."