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Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Bumper Crop 1902 (Part 2)

Farmers in Bucklesberry and La Grange enjoyed a bumper crop year for corn in 1902. Just days before the onset of harvest season, a severe storm visited the community and left a path of destruction:

1902, August 6: "A very destructive hail and wind storm struck the section of Lenoir County about three miles northeast of La Grange Monday evening and completely demolished the...corn crops of some of the farmers in that section. It left trail of desolation in its path which is widespread in its influence. Among the heaviest losers reported is Mr. R. A. Hadley, who says that...his corn is damaged considerably. Mr. Shade T. Wooten[']s]...corn was also damaged to a great extent. Messrs, Richard Parks, Richard Hardy, Carson Cobb and others suffered great loss if not total destruction of their...corn crops. The wind was very high and took the tops off the tobacco barns. This section has been remarkably free from hail storms this year and the people blessed accordingly..." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

Despite the storm, evidence of an abundant crop ahead was reported from a nearby town. One local farmer presented an ear of corn that exceeded the average eight inch maximum length typical of hybrid yellow dent corn:

1902, August 13: "An ear of corn 14 inches long, of this year's growth, was brought into our office yesterday...[from] near Mt. Olive...The ear was fully developed and the grain was large. In view of the fine and large corn crop of this section this year there is every reason to expect that our farmers will next year have their corn cribs and smoke houses at home." (*Goldsboro Daily Argus*)

Projections of a bumper crop remained positive as corn picking season arrived. Journalists forecasted an all-time, historic harvest:

1902, September 4: "At this writing the corn crop is full of promise. If no biting frost occur[s] in the next fifteen days the greatest corn crop in the history of this country will be gathered. All of this magnificent crop will be beyond harm by September 15, and much of it by September 1....It will establish a new record both in the number of bushels and in the respect of value..." (*Goldsboro Weekly Argus*)

The corn crop of 1902 was extraordinary indeed. The final harvest aligned with earlier forecasts of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Climate and Crop Bulletins from the State Weather Bureau:

1902, September 22: "That the soil is yielding an abundant return to the husbandman this season is everywhere apparent....corn is the bumper crop this year. The current indications are for a crop of 2,495,061,000 bushels. Though the indications are reported to be a trifle less favorable than were shown for the August report, the prospects are that the crop will break all previous records....While the figures of the agricultural department are measurably speculative, they are nearly enough correct to show that when 'the frost is on the pumpkin and the fodder's in the shock' our granaries, corncrubs, storehouses and elevators will be bulging with a wealth of grain such as has never before been produced in a single year in this or any other country." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)