

# Story Time

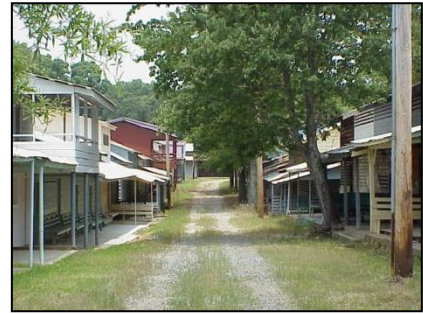
---

by *Delores Campbell*

November 2008

## Ball's Creek Camp Meeting

Come August, Grandma and Granddad Stafford gathered up quilts, an oil stove and food to last a week, straw and an ice box; then headed to Newton to a religious camp meeting that lasted for two weeks. I went with them a few times. We would stay a week down there. We lived in an unpainted plank tent. The straw was put on the big bunk that we slept on. The quilts were laid on the straw. Two curtains that looked like sheets were hung up to provide a private place for taking sponge baths and sleeping. There was a kitchen that had a table and benches, a stove, and an ice box to keep milk and perishable food. We had outdoor toilets and a pot



Balls Creek Camp Meeting Area

that we took to these toilets each morning. There were a lot of tents that other people stayed in. The arbor had a roof with tent top and thick poles to hold it up. The floor was dirt with benches for us to sit on while the preachers preached the sermons, and a piano that a woman would play while we sang hymns. They put straw down on the floor so it wouldn't be so dusty. We could go to church three times a day if we wanted to. Our tents also had tin roofs. There was a store where we could go get different food items, and a place, within walking distance, to get water for washing dishes, etc.

My Grandma and Granddad Stafford lived in Newton before they came to Dudley Shoals. They met each other while working at a cotton mill down there. Granddad said he was 21 years old when he married Grandma. She was a Sigmon before she married. Anyway our neighbors were just a walk away at the camp and the tents (all built with gray, unpainted boards) that circled about a mile around with two rows on each side. There was a wide dirt path between the two rows.



Camp "tents" in Virginia

I forgot to say that there was a wall between our bedroom and kitchen. There were no windows or door between the bedroom and kitchen. There was a plank door, front and back. The floors were dirt. We kept our clothes in a trunk. Some of Grandma's kin people would come and visit for a day. It was one big Christian get together. The last year we were there, some of the people were beginning to put in bathrooms with doors in their tents and building new tents. August was also the month that they had the Stafford reunion at Newton. I never went to it. I have often wondered how many Staffords did go to the reunion.

## **But For the Grace of God**

One day, some of the women where I worked, were making fun of a guy that was retarded. One of the men listened to them and, when they had finished talking, he said, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." I had always liked the man, but when he said that I thought even more of him. If your family is normal, do you thank God for them?