

Why Did They Name It That?

by Jimmie Close

OWNER
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Bucksnort was unexpected since it was not on my official Tennessee map. But the exit sign off Interstate 40 told me I had arrived at Bucksnort.

There were some traveler-oriented businesses at the exit, but there was no one on duty at the motel, and the only person on duty at the cafe said she had been commuting to work for less than three weeks and had no idea how Bucksnort had gotten its name. However, she did tell me that there were people who lived at the original site of the town a few miles away who might know something about the history of the area.

Following the directions, I found a scattering of houses and two abandoned commercial buildings. At the second house I tried, a lady offered me apple-sauce cake and iced tea. She told me that a neighbor who had passed away had spent a lot of time at the highway cafe telling travelers that there was a local moonshiner named Buck, and that people would come to Buck to get a snort.

She assured me that the story was a fabrication, and that the community had been named by her grandfather, who had built the house where we were eating cake. During mating season, the bucks would come out of the surrounding woods for an annual ritual that included a lot of head butting and snorting. When asked, her grandfather would always say that he lived where the bucks snort. She had other stories that made it a very pleasant two-hour stopover.