

[Series, Article #1]

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Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Introduction to Series

With this issue, the *Weekly Gazette* is pleased to introduce a new series of articles that will focus on the history and ancestral findings of the Bucklesberry community of La Grange. Located just south of the US Highway 70 overpass, Bucklesberry is one of our town's oldest communities. Available records from the mid-1750s identified the largely unsettled area more precisely as Bucklesberry Pocosin.

In a 1995 book, Jack Temple Kirby described a pocosin as, “an Indian term meaning ‘swamp-on-a-hill’ ...located in an elevated area....covered with water at times, which gradually drained.... usually located between the higher plateau and the lowland swamp region....The farmland was very fertile and...as close to a rainforest as you'll get in the US.” The 1906 industrial issue of the *Kinston Free Press* characterized Bucklesberry as “exceedingly productive....reclaimed swamp land.” Locals familiar with Bucklesberry rightly attest to its unique topography and rich farming potential.

Initially, Bucklesberry included some 40 square miles. Its boundaries, outlined originally in an 1886 news piece by attorney, Council S. Wooten, and published in the *Goldsboro Messenger*, encompassed “a section of country on the north side of Neuse River, in Lenoir county, extending from White Hall (Seven Springs) to the west bank of Falling Creek, a distance of about ten miles...From the river to the foot of the hill where the piney woods region begins...from three to four miles wide.”

More recently, in a web piece titled, *Dobbers Neighborhoods*, former Bucklesberry mail carrier, Glenn Fields, described geographic borders for Bucklesberry that were equivalent to those by Wooten. It spanned from Falling Creek along Kennedy Home Road, on both sides of the highway, through the west side of Bear Creek to US Highway 903. A sign bearing the Bucklesberry name, and located just off the Kennedy Home Road, near the White Oak Grove Free Will Baptist Church, fairly depicts the heart of the community.

According to Wooten, the population of Bucklesberry in the early-1800s was small, with no more than a half-dozen families. Although mid- to late-1700s deeds identify early residents in and near Bucklesberry with familiar last names such as Burnett, Herring, Johnston, Jones, Rouse, and Uzzell, Mr. Wooten maintained that Bucklesberry “was first settled by a family by the name of Sutton, and it is now chiefly owned by people of that name or their kindred.” This remains the case some 140 years later. Sutton families occupy most of the land in present-day Bucklesberry.

Not surprisingly, then, future articles in the *Bucklesberry, Back in the Day* series will highlight information about the 18th and 19th century lives of the Bucklesberry Suttons, in particular,

prominent figures including John Sutton and Samuel Ivey Sutton. Other articles will discuss another, little-known Bucklesberry community near the coast of North Carolina, a Bucklesberry Suttons website, findings from DNA testing proving the Sutton family origins, an extraordinary collection of well-preserved historical Bucklesberry documents, and summaries from hundreds of old newspaper entries about Bucklesberry and the Suttons.

Stay tuned. Much more to come!