

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Kirby E. Sutton (Part 9)

Few other Bucklesberrians ever achieved the level of success that Kirby Edward Sutton (1866-1930) did as a traveling salesman and plantation farmer. In addition to amassing an extraordinary 1,200-acre farm in Bucklesberry, he accumulated great wealth during his life.

Pursuing two careers, though, left little time after a busy work week for Kirby to do much of anything else. He never married and had no known descendants, so there was no immediate family that required his continual watch care. Nonetheless, Kirby found time to give back to his community and the people he loved. Local newspapers reported on some of his community service over the years:

1893, February 16: Kirby was appointed the La Grange assistant marshal for the East Carolina Fish, Game and Industrial Association. (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

1895, October 17: Kirby served as a delegate to the Disciples of Christ Convention. (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

1897, February 5: Kirby was appointed the La Grange marshal for New Bern's popular regional fair. (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1917, October 20: Kirby chaired the La Grange township committee for the Liberty Loan drive. (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

1918, September 12: Kirby chaired the Moseley Hall committee to assist farmers in completing questionnaires for the State Food Administration and State Cottonseed Crushers' Association. (*The Daily Free Press*)

1920, April 24: Kirby was elected as one of five vice presidents for the Travelers Protective Association of North Carolina. (*The Daily Free Press*)

1922, April 4: Kirby was appointed committee chair for good roads for the Travelers Protective Association of North Carolina. (*The Daily Free Press*)

Kirby's most important community service may have been his appointment to the Lenoir County Exemption Board during World War I and, in conjunction, as the County's chief registrar for the selective draft. His decision to step down from the Board in September, 1918, purportedly due to busy affairs, was initially misreported:

1918, September 4: "The *Free Press* Tuesday stated that Mr. Kirby Sutton's resignation from the local Exemption Board was caused by stress of private business. This was not the case....The Moseley Hall man feared that his selective service duties on top of multifarious other demands upon his time would prove disastrous to his health, which has been jeopardized for some time, partly as a result of running a nail into a foot recently." (*The Daily Free Press*)

Reported just a few days before his resignation from the Exemption Board, Kirby did, in fact, suffer an accident:

1918, August 24: "Mr. Kirby Sutton, member of the Lenoir County Exemption Board and prominent planter, ran a nail almost through his foot at La Grange Friday. Mr. Sutton carelessly stepped upon the nail to bend it down. Instead of bending, it passed through the sole of his shoe and almost penetrated his foot. He is reported to have spent a sleepless night." (*The Daily Free Press*)

In addition to community service, Kirby delved into politics and was involved in the corporate business world, topics of next week's Bucklesberry article.