

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Clellan Sutton Interview (Part 14)

There was a time when Bucklesberry spanned a distance of ten miles, from Falling Creek to Seven Springs, according to noted attorney and author, Council Simmons Wooten (1840-1930).

Little wonder that Seven Springs was a topic of discussion in a videotaped interview about Bucklesberry conducted by Glenn Fields of La Grange in 1994 with Clellan Thomas Sutton (1909-1999). Clellan's recollections of Bucklesberry, where he was a lifelong resident, are important to the history of this place.

Transcribed and edited below is a segment of the interview in which Clellan and Glenn share information about the Seven Springs Hotel. A popular resort that opened soon after the Civil War, the Hotel continued operating through World War II:

Clellan: "Up on that hill [in Seven Springs]...would be the hotel."

Glenn: "And they say it's just like it was when they shut the doors. I think they gave Mount Olive College a chair, a table or something. I know they gave [something]...maybe to a museum somewhere in Wayne County."

Clellan: "You know it was right on the [Neuse] River bank from the road that comes from the springs right on down to the business part of town. All in there I noticed that people went there on buggies and wagons and tied the mules out there to the trees....They had fodder back there and hay. There'd be special times, you know, like a Fourth of July, or opening...[on] Sunday or September. or sometimes they fixed [the hotel] up. There were weekends, but there'd be special days."

Glenn: "Right. I heard Mama talk about when her Mama, and Granddaddy, I've heard him talk about it, too...how they used to go over there."

Clellan: "They boarded people in that hotel from...all over. You'd go there for a health resort [to] the springs [at] Seven Springs."

Glenn: "There is such a history there that's just gone to waste. That Hotel would be so much of a tourist draw right now if somebody had it fixed up...like a museum or a place of interest to visit. And, of course...you couldn't in this day and time. It would take so much to ever get it into an operating hotel like it was then. You'd probably be restricted. You couldn't even do it."

Clellan: "I expect the rooms and all, everything over there in that whole building, [and] I haven't been by there in four or five years, I suppose they're all right there right on.... You'd [think] they would've made it into something."

Glenn: "Something like that [hotel] will wind up in somebody's hands...and they'll just let it go...to the bad."

Clellan: "Well, all around there was in right good shape I thought....[but Morgan Maxwell, owner] was so cranky. I told myself I wasn't going to mess with him anymore. I tried to worry him all [that] I could when I went there. He acted so cranky."

Glenn: "You gave him a little taste of his own medicine, huh!...I don't know why he [Morgan Maxwell] was like that. One time, there were some folks, I don't even know who they were, some I reckon were his family, came down here to visit. They just wanted to go riding, and they went riding over around Seven Springs, and they came down Spring Road. One of the women wanted a piece of Spanish moss to take back home. And, of course, you know it all the time falls out of the tree."

Clellan: "It would hang down."

Glenn: "Well this was on the ground. So [they] stopped the car, and the woman got out, and picked it up just about the time Mr. Morgan came by. He stopped and made her put it back in the ditch, [and told them to] get back in the car and get out of there. He wouldn't even let her have that little piece of Spanish moss she picked up out of the side ditch. I tell you...I believe I would've had to argue with him if I had gotten it off of the road. That wasn't his road, but he felt like it was, I reckon. I don't know why people want to be like that..."

Clellan: "You got every kind."