

[Series, Article #13]
Published, 2.14.17, *The Weekly Gazette*, La Grange, NC

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Forgotten Cemeteries

Like other farm communities in the colonial South, family cemeteries began popping-up in Bucklesberry at its founding in the mid-1700s. Eleven cemeteries have been well documented by local genealogist, Glenn Fields, in the Lost Souls Genealogy Project (see www.lenoir.lostsoulsgenealogy.com). These cemeteries either bear the Sutton name or have graves of descendants that can be traced back to the first Sutton to arrive in Bucklesberry, John Sutton, born about 1730 in Bertie County, NC and died before 1773.

East of Bear Creek, between the Jenny Lind and Hardy Bridge Roads and Pot Neck area, are nine family cemeteries located in Bucklesberry: Herring Family; Levy Hill/Richard B. Waters; Joel Elmore; Benjamin Franklin Sutton; Hardy Sutton; Jeremiah (Jerry) Sutton; John A. Sutton; Josiah Sutton; and Warters Family. In its earliest days, Bucklesberry stretched west of Bear Creek, from Seven Springs up US Highway 903, where there are presently two other cemeteries: Benjamin Sutton; and Piney Grove Church.

Of significance, four forgotten family cemeteries in greater Bucklesberry have recently been rediscovered: James Sutton; John Sutton; William I. Sutton; and Dempsey Wood. Prior to 2016, only the James Sutton and the William I. Sutton cemeteries had been referenced briefly in La Grange author, Marjorie Sutton Oliver's 1974 book, *The Suttons of England and North Carolina, USA, 1620-1974*.

About the James Sutton Cemetery, Ms. Oliver wrote, "James, better known as "Jimmie," and Susan [Walters] lived about one mile of La Grange and are buried in a hilly grove of trees nearby. There were wooden markers but they are no longer visible. There are headstones for a daughter, Betsy Casey and several children. It is located on the [Henry] T. Abbott farm. Mrs. Jean Abbott is a descendant." James was born in 1798 (death date unknown). He was a son of John Sutton, Jr., born about 1758 and died 1820-1830, and Ferebee Isler Sutton, born about 1765 (death date unknown), and grandson of the first John Sutton of Bucklesberry. Susan was born 1810 (death date unknown). The James Sutton Cemetery site, although abandoned, is clearly visible from US Highway 70 today. The headstones mentioned by Ms. Oliver are no longer there.

Ms. Oliver also referenced the William I. Sutton Cemetery, stating that it was "in the edge of the woods near the present home of Marcellus Sutton." In 2016, with the help of Marcellus who recalled the general area of the old cemetery from his early farming years in the 1950s, a genealogist located the cemetery deep in the wooded, grown-up area on a hill near a branch. The abandoned cemetery is virtually inaccessible. Three gravestones were photographed: William I. Sutton; Sr., Sally Sutton; and William I. Sutton, Jr. William I., Sr., born in 1810 and died in 1854,

was also purportedly a son of John Sutton, Jr. and Ferebee Isler Sutton, and grandson of the first John Sutton of Bucklesberry. Sally was born in 1819 and died in 1888. Son, William I., Jr. was born in 1842, and died as young man at age 33.

Although accessible, the Dempsey Wood Cemetery is also abandoned. Located off Pine Bush Road in Bucklesberry, this cemetery has three gravestones: Dempsey Wood; Elizabeth Wood; and Thomas H. Wood. Dempsey was born circa 1816 and died in 1881. Son, Thomas was born in 1847, and died as a young man at age 32. Dempsey's wife, Elizabeth, born in 1827 and died in 1894, was a daughter of Hardy and Annie Hill Sutton. Hardy was a son of Benjamin and Sarah Hardy Sutton, and grandson of the first John Sutton of Bucklesberry.

Forgotten for many years, the John Sutton cemetery is known today by few locals. Located directly off Frank Barwick Road in Bucklesberry, the cemetery nonetheless is well maintained, accessible, and includes one original gravestone for Elizabeth H. Wood who was born in 1829 and died in 1849. Elizabeth was a daughter of John Sutton, born about 1779 and died about 1858 and Elizabeth Sutton, born about 1790 and died after 1860.

In 2005, Jack Randall Sutton led a fundraising effort to erect a double gravestone for John and Elizabeth at the cemetery. This John was the son of Benjamin and Sarah Hardy Sutton, and grandson of the first John Sutton of Bucklesberry. Jack Randall Sutton, age 90, of Bucklesberry is a great-grandson of John and Elizabeth Sutton.