

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Lillian Sutton Perry (Part 6)

With roots to Bucklesberry through her father, Noah Henry Sutton (1838-1965), Lillian Sutton Perry (1864-1946) was reared on a farm in the Kinston Township area. She was afforded an education that few in the rural South enjoyed during that time period.

Enrolled at the acclaimed Kinston Collegiate Institute in her mid-teen years from 1879 to 1881, Lillian studied English, Latin, and music. Whether she received more schooling or attended post-secondary college is unknown.

The public record is silent on Lillian's life until her marriage to Daniel Elijah Perry (1857-1897) in 1885. Their illustrious wedding was first reported in the State's leading newspaper:

1885, December 3: "Perry-Sutton...at the bride's uncle's, in Lenoir County, N.C., Dr. H. D. Harper officiating, D. E. Perry, Esq., a popular and promising young attorney of Kinston, to the beautiful and accomplished Miss Lillian Sutton of Lenoir County. After the ceremony the bride and groom, accompanied by a few friends and relatives, left for the beautiful home of the groom near Kinston, where an elegant supper was served a la mode. Their many friends and relatives extend to them the wish that they may be spared many years of usefulness and wedded prosperity and happiness." (*News and Observer*, Raleigh)

Their marriage license identified Dan's parents as Elijah Perry, Jr. (1830-1858) and Susan Rhem Perry (1834-1897):

1885, December 1: "To any Ordained Minister of any Religious Denomination or any Justice of the Peace of said County: D. E. Perry having applied...for a LICENSE for the Marriage of D. E. Perry of Lenoir County aged 26 years,...the son of Elijah Perry and Susan Perry the father now dead, the mother living, resident of Lenoir County And Lillian Sutton of Lenoir County aged 20 years,...the daughter of Noah Sutton and Bettie Sutton the father now dead, the mother living, resident of Lenoir County..." (www.familysearch.org)

A Jones County farmer, Elijah Perry was deceased by 1860. The Census that year named his widowed wife, Susan, son, Dan, age 3 years, and daughter, Lavinia (b. 1855) as residents in Craven County. Susan was a homemaker with personal and real property valued at \$24,000, equivalent to three-quarter million dollars in today's economy.

Dan and his sister gained a stepfather in 1871 when their mother married Eli Hamilton Elsworth Franklin (E. H. E. F.) Perry (1831-1912). Also a farmer from Jones County, the 1860 Census indicated he was the only person in his household. His personal and real property was valued at \$25,000, equivalent to a little more than three-quarter million dollars today. Their combined worth of approximately \$1.5 million in current purchasing power catapulted Eli and Susan to prosperity not typical of most families in rural areas at that time.

Dan's family had the financial wherewithal to ensure that he received a quality education. At age 20, he graduated from Trinity College. Oratorically gifted, he was among a dozen other students who delivered speeches at the graduation ceremony:

1880, June 17: "'Force of Organization,' by Daniel Elijah Perry, of Kinston. Experience teaches that laws will be obeyed only as they are respected. Organization should be so as to help all and hurt none. Organization has conquered on every battle field and is the force felt in every battle. The success of Napoleon consisted in the force and power of his organization." (*Goldsboro Messenger*)

Situated in Randolph County when Dan was a student, Trinity College relocated to Durham in 1892. Professor Emeritus, Dr. Robert F. Durden noted that the College eventually became the "liberal arts 'heart' of Duke University," (www.ncpedia.org, 2006).