

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Lillian Sutton Perry (Part 9)

Public records reveal little about Lillian Sutton Perry's (1864-1946) life during the years immediately prior to her marriage in 1885 to Daniel Elijah Perry (1857-1897). Apparently not yet in Dan's sight, Lillian was not living in Lenoir County in 1881-1882. Rather, she was residing across the State in Forsyth County, N.C. The school catalog that year for Salem Female Academy verified she was a student.

By the 1860s, the Academy offered a rigorous program of study that included college-level courses, although the school did not begin conferring college degrees until 1890. In addition to liberal arts classes, the school catalog indicated Lillian received instruction in advanced piano playing, a subject she first studied at Kinston Collegiate Institute.

In 1907, Salem Academy and Salem College became distinct institutions operating in tandem on a forty-seven-acre campus in Winston-Salem. The two schools continue to share the same physical address today. The Academy now provides high school students with a traditional college preparatory curriculum, and the College offers bachelor's and master's degree programs.

Lillian continued her study at Salem Academy the next year, 1882-1883. The alumni publication for 1933 announced the fifty-year, golden jubilee class reunion and identified Lillian as an 1883 graduate:

1933, May: "A Salem [Academy and College] Alumnae Branch was organized at Kinston, N.C., this spring, about twelve alumnae meeting....Mrs. Lillian Perry (Lillian Sutton) had the distinction of being the oldest 'Salem daughter,' having graduated in 1883." (*The Alumnae Record*, Winston-Salem, p. 3178)

In the spring of 1883, Lillian and Dan lived on opposite sides of the State, several hundred miles apart. Lillian was still a student at Salem Academy and nearing graduation. Dan resided in Kinston and was recovering from his 1882 election loss in the N.C. House of Representatives race. Having laid politics aside momentarily, he resumed his life and work as an attorney:

1883, January 18: "The sale of books at the Hubbard auction Tuesday was a very fine one. *The North Carolina Reports*—full set—brought \$430, bought by D[aniel] E. Perry, Esq. of Kinston..." (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

1883, January 31: "One of the old landmarks of Kinston—Justice Coleman's office—is taking on a new covering of shingles and Daniel E. Perry, attorney and counselor at law, who has taken an office there, is very carefully folding and laying away the long, green moss which covered the office, intending it for *bangs* for his lady friends." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

A year and half away from his marriage to Lillian, Dan continued to be publicly needled about his ongoing bachelor status:

1883, May 18: "[J. F. Parrott, Esq.] is...the happy and fortunate recipient from 'fair ladies' of an elegant invitation to attend the Greensboro Female College commencement exercises....Our young attorneys, D[aniel] E. Perry and Senator [Fred B.] Loftin...have, from fair hands and loving hearts, invitations to the same literary entertainment; but *ex-judge* J. Q. Jackson thinks the weighty professional labors of his young friends will prevent their attendance—he calculates not, however, of Cupid's influence over these young men..." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

With his failed campaign in the rearview mirror, Dan was only weeks away from drinking from the political trough again in late-spring, 1883. More will be shared in the next Bucklesberry article.