

[Series Article #221]
Published 4.7.21, *The Weekly Gazette*, La Grange, NC

Bucklesberry, Back in

Lillian Sutton Perry (Part 12)

Daniel Elijah Perry (1857-1897) and Lillian Sutton Perry (1864-1946) married in 1885. Information about their courtship and engagement remains a mystery as references in social news columns and other public records are unavailable.

Their journey toward marriage, however, may have been brief, given Dan's busy work schedule. In addition to his law practice, he was also a U.S. Commissioner. Just a few months before they wed, Dan was ruling from the bench:

1885, July 28: "Nathan Stanley was tried before U.S. Commissioner [Daniel E.] Perry here [New Bern] on Friday, for illicit distillery. On default of bail, he was sent to jail." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

Although their engagement was not reported publicly, their marriage on December 2, 1885 was widely celebrated by several newspapers, including the State's leading news outlet:

1885, December 3: "Perry-Sutton...at the bride's uncle's, in Lenoir County, N.C., Dr. H. D. Harper officiating, D[aniel] 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)

Indeed, God's rich hand of blessing was on their marriage. Over the next eleven years, five children were born to Lillian and Dan: Daniel Elijah Perry, Jr. (1887-1913); Byna Bliss Perry Carey (1888-1973); Susan L. Perry West (1891-1974); Noah Strong Perry (1893-1918); and Ely Jackson Perry, Sr. (1896-1968).

As a graduate of Salem Female Academy, Lillian could have pursued a career of her own. But she laid aside professional aspirations and chose instead to be a faithful helpmeet to Dan and a loving mother and homemaker to their children.

As provider for the home, Dan continued his work as an attorney and U.S. Commissioner. Politically, however, he had a change of heart. Possibly influenced by Lillian and her

conservative roots, Dan's previous association with the forward-thinking Republican Party took an about-face within the first year of their marriage:

1886, August 19: "Daniel E. Perry, Esq., a young Kinston lawyer, who was the Republican candidate for the [N.C.] House in 1882, has returned to his first love and is now a dyed in the wool Democrat." (*Weekly State Chronicle*, Raleigh)

For the next several years, Dan dabbled in the purchase and sale of property. Perhaps he had an interest in real estate law, or he may have realized that land was a wise investment of his earnings:

1886, November 25: "For Sale, A good Tract of Land of about 400 Acres in Contentnea Neck Township, Lenoir County. About one-third cleared. For cash or on favorable yearly installments. For particulars inquire of D[aniel] E. Perry, Kinston, N.C." (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

1887, April 30: "Mr. T. L. Hartsfield sold his farm containing about ninety acres to D[aniel] E. Perry, for \$3,500. It is about one mile from town [Kinston]." (*The Weekly Journal*, New Bern)