

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Lillian Sutton Perry (Part 17)

Married to one another only twelve years, the death of Daniel Elijah Perry (1857-1897) left Lillian Sutton Perry (1864-1946) a young widow in her early thirties. She faced an almost unbearable challenge with five small children to rear on her own. Yet she never married again. A woman of tremendously strong character, she demonstrated over the years that motherhood was a top priority.

But motherhood was not her only responsibility. Dan's premature death instantly made her head of household. Attending to family business, then, became an important obligation as well. One of her primary duties was overseeing multiple farm properties. Perhaps with assistance from farm managers that she employed, Lillian's farms were productive:

1919, June 24: "The first cotton blossom of the season shown at The Free Press office was brought in Tuesday by David Craft, a farmer residing on Mrs. Lillian Perry's farm near this city." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

For many years, Lillian sold produce grown on her farms, probably to maximize profits. Farm animals and equipment were also rented and sold. By 1914, she was leasing farm land. In 1916, she sold her Bucklesberry farm:

1914, January 14: "Farms for rent. Apply to Mrs. Lillian N. Perry." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

1915, January 9: "Bucklesberry farm for rent. Apply to Mrs. Lillian N. Perry." (*The Kinston Free Press*)

1916, November 29: "For Rent—Five-horse farm in Bucklesberry. Apply [to] Mrs. Lillian Perry." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

1916, December 6: "Realty Transfers. L[illian] Perry to K[irby] E. Sutton, Bucklesberry [farm] land, \$9,000..." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

The sale of Lillian's farm was not an arbitrary transaction between two unknown parties. More than acquaintances, Lillian and Kirby Edward Sutton (1866-1930) knew each other because they were kin. Kirby's twice great-grandfather was Benjamin Sutton, Sr. (ca. 1752-1830). Lillian's great-grandfather was William Sutton, Sr. (ca. 1760-by 1820). As second generation Suttons

from Bucklesberry, Benjamin and William were brothers and proven sons of John Sutton (ca. 1730-bef.1773). Kirby and Lillian probably attended some of the same family reunions.

Lillian and Kirby were also school contemporaries. Only two years his elder, Lillian attended Kinston Collegiate Institute in the early-1880s while Kirby was a student at La Grange Academy and La Grange Collegiate Institute. The two may have competed against each other in school contests.

Both were also afforded a college education. Kirby attended the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and Eastman Business College in New York. Lillian was a graduate of Salem Female Academy in Forsyth County, NC.

By 1916, when Lillian sold her farm to Kirby, both were affluent citizens in Lenoir County and had acquired considerable land and wealth.