

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

August 1879

Bucklesberry was a self-contained community much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Its close proximity to the Neuse River with nutrient rich soil and abundant timber allowed residents to grow or make virtually all they needed for life and subsistence.

Not an island unto themselves, though, Bucklesberrians interfaced with family and friends in the La Grange area and shopped with town merchants as needed. Newspaper social columns back then provide a picture of their politics, religion, business, crime, health, and so on. Reprinted here are La Grange items that were reported 142 years ago during the month of August 1879:

1879, August 7: "Luther Koonce owns a tame mink, who makes a splendid rat catcher. The late rains have greatly improved the crops and started the water mills, thereby relieving D. M. Stanton's steam mill of the extra work it had to do for several weeks to furnish the surrounding country meal and flour. H. E. Dillon has improved his lot between his residence and D. M. Stanton's mill. It was a pond of water of nearly an acre a year ago. He has had it filled up, fenced and has on it a beautiful crop of rice."

"Mr. Shade Wooten of Greene [County] was in town Saturday. He brought his son William A. Wooten to Kinsey's School. In a conversation with Mr. J. W. Isler in regard to engines, he stated he first used the Book Walter, which paid for itself the first year. He has since got[ten] rid of the Book Walter on account of the sparks that passed from it and Shapley, which is so constructed that no sparks issue from it all. Mr. Isler is trying to decide whether he should buy an engine or move his gin to the water mill on Walnut Creek about a mile and a half from his house. Mr. Shade Wooten thinks he would rather buy the engine than haul the cotton the mile and a half, and, thereby save his water for grinding grain."

"Mr. J. M. Hines, Jr. reports cotton improving in the Institute neighborhood since the rain, but fears corn cannot make much. Mr. Noah Rouse is the most fortunate farmer we have, for he owns so much land that his farm extends beyond the droughty area into the section favored with rain."

"The town commissioners passed an ordinance prohibiting hogs, geese and goats from running at large in the streets to go into effect October 15th, 1879. It has particularly raised the ire of old man Freeman Smith, who declares himself a candidate for Mayor in the next May election, and says he will never vote for any man that favored the passage of such an ordinance. There were two petitions before the Board, one declaring hogs a nuisance and desiring the ordinance passed,

the other opposing the immediate passage but willing for it to be passed to go into effect in the future. Both parties got what they asked for and old man Freeman's name was on the latter petition."

"Jesse Aldridge the shoemaker died suddenly Thursday, July 31st. He had been feeble for several months, but was considered convalescent just before his death. He leaves a wife and child to mourn his loss." (*Kinston Journal*)