

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

The Sick and the Dead

Nineteenth century health care was rudimentary at best. It remained substandard well into the mid-1900s. Formal education for physicians and licensure requirements were in fledgling stages of development in North Carolina during this time.

Not until 1930 did the State see its first four-year medical school established at Duke University. Licensure of medical doctors began in the mid-1800s. Back then, the only requirements to sit for the NC Medical Board exam was proof of age (at least 21 years) and demonstration of good moral character.

Interestingly, Brandon's 1884 *North Carolina Business Directory* identified three practicing physicians who served the small town of La Grange and surrounding areas: A. C. Davis; J. M. Hadley; and J. M. Kirkpatrick. Despite having more than one doctor, scientifically-based health care was still decades away.

Folks in Bucklesberry, as in other rural communities, suffered from the adverse effects of quackery, undiagnosed illnesses, poor prenatal-infant care, and lack of proper medical treatment for known diseases, including vaccines yet to be discovered. This week's article is devoted to reprints of news items published between 1880 and 1921 that reported on the sick and the dead among Bucklesberry kin:

1880–March 25: “On Monday last Dr. S. Van Meter, from Charleston Ill, held court in West's hotel. His coming had been advertised extensively, and as his consultations were free, the streets of Kinston were thronged....all flocked to drink words of wisdom from this Western sage. Dock Wallace found out that he had three diseases he had never thought of before; a Woodington voter was told to put his house in order for a new departure; a Contentnea Necker was told to let whiskey alone for his stomach's sake; a member of the Lousin Swamp Agricultural Club was recommended to be treated for a very virulent disease–LAZINESS; a Bucklesberry gentleman had the alternative offered of quitting chicken pie and apple-jacks at the same meal, or suffer the usual dyspepsia...” (*Kinston Journal*)

1880–April 26: “Our friend, S. I. [Samuel Ivey] Sutton, Esq., has so far recovered from recent illness as to be able to come to town. We hope he will soon be able to attend to business.” (*Goldsboro Messenger*)

1881–March 10: “Mrs. Anna Sutton, an aged lady, has been suffering for months from a disease the character of which is unknown....She refuses to receive medical attention or take physic,

believing her disease to be incurable! She submits to her afflictions, with fortitude and resignation..." (*Kinston Journal*)

1881–September 15: "Harvey H., son of B. F. [Benjamin Franklin] Sutton, died at Mr. Thos. Sutton's on yesterday (Sunday) evening. Aged about [6] months." (*Kinston Journal*)

1882–October 25: "Glen, daughter of Julius E. and Nan Sutton, died this (Monday) morning of that much to be dreaded and fatal disease diphtheria." (*The Daily Journal, New Bern*)

1883–November 1: "Bad colds (they are always called this) infest our community. In Bucklesberry, a troublesome cough accompanies each cold, which makes it more annoying." (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

1884–June 18: "Several of Jerry [Jeremiah, Sr.] Sutton's family have been confined with measles. The disease has been very severe in many cases." (*The Daily Journal, New Bern*)

1884–September 16: "The condition of Mrs. Nancy Sutton in Bucklesberry, for some time sick and under the treatment of Dr. Hodges, is said to be but little if any better." (*The Daily Journal, New Bern*)

1899–May 19: "Mr. Jerry [Jeremiah, Sr.] Sutton, of Bucklesberry, who has been in poor health for sometime, is not expected to stand the strain on his system long." (*The Daily Free Press, Kinston*)

1903–March 31: "Mr. Noah Sutton, of Bucklesberry, died Saturday night, the result of a stroke of paralysis which came on him some weeks ago..." (*The Daily Free Press, Kinston*)

1921–February 18: "Mrs. Alice Quinn died at her home in the Bucklesberry section recently, succumbing to pneumonia. She was the widow of David Quinn, of Duplin County. A former husband was Noah Sutton, who died some years ago...." (*The Daily Free Press, Kinston*)