

[Series, Article #3]

Published 11.30.16, *The Weekly Gazette*, La Grange, NC

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Bucklesberry Name Not So Unique

An unusual name for certain, you would think that Bucklesberry of La Grange is the only place in the world that bears this name. Not so. Taking into account other spellings, like Buckleberry, Bucklebury, Bucklersbury, Bucklesbury, and even Bucklesberie, there are a number of places across the pond (England) and in North Carolina by the same name.

The earliest mention of the name dates back to 12th century England. The Bucklebury Estate of Berkshire County was granted to the Benedictine Monks in 1121 by King Henry I. Once the Monasteries were dissolved in 1538, King Henry VIII granted the Estate to John Winchcombe in 1540. It descended through the female line, and has remained in the Hartley family to the present day.

One of the oldest estates in England, the Bucklebury Estate comprises the parish of Bucklebury and about 1,600 acres of land, including woodland and farms, as well as commercial and private-residential property. More than half of the acreage is allocated for Bucklebury Common, from which commoners had particular grazing and wooding rights through the centuries until the early 1900s. Today, only a select group of households living in the Common are allowed to collect fallen dead wood for fireplace use. Also included in the Estate is the Bucklebury House, built by John Winchcombe in the mid-1500s.

In 1305, Willielmus Servat was issued a license to construct a tower to fortify his palace in the city of London. Situated on the north side of Bucklesbury and Walbrook Streets, Servat's Tower of Bucklesbury, also referred to as the Sernes Tower in Bucklesberie, was demolished in the 16th century. Interestingly, Bucklesbury Street at the time was narrow and flanked with grocery and apothecary stores. Still recognized today in the city of London is a suburb known as Bucklersbury.

Presently, there is a village and civil parish located in West Berkshire, England, named Bucklebury. The parish has a population of a little more than 2,000, although the village is considerably smaller. Not without fame, Bucklebury is where Prince William's wife, Kate Middleton, Duchess of Cambridge, was reared. Kate's parents, Carole and Mike Middleton currently own the 18-acre, seven bedroom Bucklebury Manor there. In addition, the animal amusement Bucklebury Farm Park is situated on the edge of Bucklebury village.

In North Carolina today, Bucklebury Court is a residential subdivision in Dominion Trace, a neighborhood located in Highland Creek on the outskirts of Charlotte. Most notable and historical, however, is the rural, mostly wooded area currently located in Bertie County called Bucklesberry. Its earliest mention is in a 1723 lease to Hugh Hyman for a plantation called

Bucklesbury in the former Bertie Precinct. The 1862 tax listing for Bertie County listed eleven residents holding properties with land acreage in Bucklesbury.

An 1863 map by Gilmer identifies a geographic area in Bertie County called Bucklesbury Capeheart. Similarly, Bell's map of Bertie County dated 1964 names a Bucklesberry Pocosin. In 2009, Crilley marked the approximate location of Bucklesbury in Bertie County as "SW Merry Hill E of Windsor, on the south side of Highway 17 just N of intersection Hwy 45 toward Edenton."

Although Bucklesberry of Bertie County was apparently a thriving farming and residential community in the 18th and 19th centuries, sadly it has been reduced today to a mere hunting club. Researchers recently traveled to the Bucklesberry area located between Windsor and Merry Hill, as outlined by Crilley, which they identified through an Internet Google Maps search. Typing-in "Bucklesberry" yielded only one option, which was Bucklesberry Road, Windsor, NC. Indeed, when the researchers arrived on-site, they found a long, isolated gravel road leading into acres of woodland. About a half-mile down the path, they came to an abrupt stop at the sight of a yellow-painted iron gate with a posted sign.

The first mention of Bucklesberry of La Grange is in a 1748 document found in the Clellan Sutton Collection, which we will discuss more fully in a future article. May God preserve our Bucklesberry community for many more years to come.

Caption for photograph:

Bucklesberry Hunting Club, located on Bucklesberry Road, Windsor, NC

