

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Early Beginnings

In 1924, a November 6 news story announced Bucklesberry's one hundred year centennial anniversary. Reprinted here, the article appeared in *The News and Observer* of Raleigh:

"Bucklesberry Will Celebrate—Famous Section of Lenoir County Approaching Its 100th Birthday—Kinston, Nov. 5—The Bucklesberry section near here will celebrate the centenary of its 'creation' next year. The district one of the richest in a farming way in Lenoir county is all but 100 years younger than the most of the universe. Much of the land was 'made' in the first reclamation project ever launched in this part of the country. As late as 1905 land in the neighborhood sold for as little as \$12 to \$20 an acre. The average farmer there would not part with his holdings for ten times \$12 an acre now."

"Moseley Hall historians say John and Hardy Sutton of good old English stock opened Bucklesberry to colonization in 1820. Most of the land is still in the possession of the Suttons' descendants, however. Hundreds of Suttons are located in Moseley Hall Township. Bucklesberry is near La Grange, originally named Moseley Hall. The colonial hall from which the name was taken was the birthplace of William Moseley, first American governor of Florida, who moved to the peninsula in 1819 and became the State Executive when Florida was admitted to the union in the forties."

"Bucklesberry planters will celebrate the centenary by making crops larger than John and Hardy Sutton ever dreamed would be produced there, they say. No plans have been made for formal observances. Steps may be considered shortly, however. The Bucklesberry and Moseley Hall communities lead Lenoir county in the production of cotton, tobacco, and corn. Many fine plantations have not had their boundaries changed since their establishment 75 to 100 years ago."

Although this story did not make front page headlines, its inclusion in the State's leading newspaper at the time was tacit acknowledgment of Bucklesberry's prominence as a well regarded eastern North Carolina farm community. Unfortunately, renowned historian William S. Powell (1919-2015) failed to mention Bucklesberry anywhere in his fully referenced 1963 book, *The Story of Lenoir County and Kinston, N.C.* (State Department of Archives and History). To Powell's credit, he identified "a number of communities important enough to have their own names but not large enough to be incorporated as towns," (p. 4), which included Dawson, Fountain Hill, Institute, Parrotts, Sandy Bottom, and Woodington. However, Bucklesberry was observably omitted.

Other than the inspired, inerrant Word of God, all other recorded history is subject to oversights, mistakes, and errors. Over the last half-century, previously undisclosed records and recently discovered documents pertaining to Bucklesberry have surfaced. In addition, many online primary sources have become available. Therefore, historical records about this old farm community that are determined to be in error have to be responsibly corrected.

Incontrovertible evidence now indicates the omission of Bucklesberry in Powell's book was indeed a glaring omission. The Bucklesberry article in *The News and Observer* was also mistaken on two major points. Bucklesberry was not established by brothers John Sutton (ca. 1779-1848) and Hardy Sutton (1803-1861), and the community was not settled in 1820.

Facts about Bucklesberry's early beginnings will be shared in the next article.