

# Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

## Social Frills

Life in the early years of Bucklesberry was rugged. It was mostly work, very hard work that was constant, perpetual and year-round. Making ends meet, rather than getting ahead, was the top priority for many people back then. So it was around the country in rural farm communities.

But life wasn't all work. Although there was little organized recreation as we know it today, Bucklesberry folks found time for leisure. Popular swimming and fishing spots were Charlie Sutton's pool, the mouth of Bear Creek, Slick Rock, and two local beaches, Hardy Bridge (formerly called Sutton Seine Beach) and Pine Bush, both sandbars on the Neuse River.

Other social frills included visiting with neighbors on front porches in the cool of the evening, overnight stays, and meals with friends and relatives. Larger get-togethers and family reunions were not uncommon and typically involved lots of food (more like feasts!) and sometimes entertainment. Local newspapers at the time reported these events:

1898, July 15: "There was a family reunion at Mr. Joshua Sutton's, of Frog Point [near Hardy Bridge], Wednesday, at which Mr. S[amuel] I[vey] Sutton and all his children and grandchildren were present, but two." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

1916, August 9: "Representatives of five generations were present at a reunion of the Elmore family Tuesday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Joel Elmore, a prominent Bucklesberry couple. Two hundred members of the family are said to have been present. The 50<sup>th</sup> natal anniversary of Mrs. J. I. Vause, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Elmore, was celebrated simultaneously. Mr. Elmore is 86 years of age and Mrs. Elmore, 87. Children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren of the popular old folks were present at the happy reunion. A number of photographs were taken, a fine country dinner served and musical numbers rendered by members of the party." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

1916, August 12: "Mr. Kirby E. Sutton, the well known Bucklesberry planter, Friday tendered his annual dinner to his tenants, employees and scores of friends. About 200 persons are estimated to have been present. A number of young pigs were barbecued for the feast. The culinary genius in charge of the barbecuing almost established a record. The enticing spread on the tables and the delectable odor created marvelous appetites, but still there was more than enough to feed the multitude. Practically every township in the county was represented. Present from Kinston were Messers. Thos. [Thomas] Harvey, D[empsey] Wood, A. W. Taylor, Paul Hodges, and possibly others. Friends of the clever host from other parts of the State, and other States also were his guests. Mr. Sutton's Bucklesberry plantation is nearly big enough for a principality, and certainly he is monarch of all he surveys in a sense, for there are few men

anywhere so popular with their neighbors and his pay tribute in affection. He is said to have enslaved his labor with kindness. The Sutton farm is a rather remarkable institution for size, fertility, profit and other things.” (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

1916, August 22: “A fish stew, chicken stew and barbecue were given at the home of Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Thornton in Bucklesberry Saturday night last. Quite a party were present. Mr. J. S. Waters, accomplished in vocal and instrumental music, entertained the hosts and guests with a few selections. Those present were: Mr. Walter Sutton of La Grange, Mr. Benton, Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Waters of Kinston, Mr. Nathan Lassiter, Mr. Charlie Skinner, Mr. Lewis Dawson, Mr. Robert Thornton of Kinston, Mrs. Matt. Sutton, Mr. and Mrs. William Skinner, Mr. and Mrs. Grainger Anderson, Miss Annie Benton, Miss Mabel Rouse, Miss Libbie Sutton of La Grange, Misses Pearl and Hattie Anderson and the host and hostess.” (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

1922, July 5: “A Fourth of July barbecue dinner given by Mr. Joshua N. Sutton, progressive farmer of the Bucklesberry section, was the occasion of a most enjoyable day at his country home Tuesday. The guests consisted of children, grandchildren, relatives and a few friends of Mr. and Mrs. Sutton.” (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

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[Caption for accompanying photograph]

Wesley Bryan Sutton (1897–1957) and Harry Manley Sutton (1894–1986) at a dinner on the grounds at the Wesley and Violet Ruth Sutton homeplace, Bucklesberry, about 1953.

