

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Expert Farmers

Cotton was the indisputable cash crop in the South for decades. As farming progressed through the late-1800s and into the twentieth century, cotton would eventually be displaced by tobacco as the top crop.

Bucklesberry farmers were not limited to growing only major crops, however. Expert at their craft, they also grew fruits and vegetables for their own dinner tables. Further, they were versatile and skilled in producing other crops that were marketed for income, including corn, fodder, holly trees, potatoes, rice, watermelons, and wheat. Local newspapers at the time reported widely on these crops:

1879, June 26: “McF. Cameron says he threshed out about 1,200 bushels of wheat last week. That it turned out very well except at one place which fell behind last years’ yield. He is in Bucklesberry this week, where they have wheat fields and not patches, and expects to get out over 2000 bushels.” (*Kinston Journal*)

1879, July 31: “This summer’s drought will teach farmers a lesson about the preparation of land before planting. Where the land was thoroughly prepared and the seed properly planted, the crop has been much better able to stand the dry weather. B. F. Scarboro, of Bucklesberry, tells us of a field of corn planted by him, which he planted deep, and adjoining him a tenant planted his corn very shallow. The deep planted corn is green and flourishing while the other piece is almost entirely burned up for want of rain.” (*Kinston Journal*)

1879, Aug 11: “S. I. Sutton and Emmanuel Jarman from the Bucklesberry section say the corn crops are better than they were last year.” (*Goldsboro Messenger*)

1881, June 16: “The Bucklesberry Sportsman, that was reported in last week’s JOURNAL as buying Northern hay, has been found to be Mr. D[Dempsey]. Wood, Jr., one of the best farmers in that section. We learn from some of his neighbors that he has over 20 stacks of fodder on hand, and had been swapping of fodder for hay to feed one of his drive horses. Bucklesberry is now in the ‘no fence’ country and the inhabitants thereof consider it an imputation on their farming to charge them with not raising all necessary home supplies.” (*Kinston Journal*)

1882, July 23: “Thomas Sutton of Bucklesberry housed the residue of his potato crop this week. He weighed 12 that weighed 12 pounds good weight. There was a number of others in the lot fully as large as those weighed.” (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1883, July 12: “Your itemizer [ate] the first ripe watermelon of the season eaten in this place, on the 6th inst. The melon was raised on Frog Point by Noah and Joshua Sutton.” (*New Berne Weekly Journal*) Note: The itemizer, or reporter, referenced here was Samuel Ivey Sutton.

1886, Aug 16: “We hear several of our farmers speaking complimentary of Dr. Hadley’s fine rice crop in the Bucklesberry section. Of course it’s nice if across the border [from Wayne County].” (*Goldsboro Messenger*)

1916, Nov 18: “Forests of red and green holly in four or five counties in this part of North Carolina are to be stripped during the coming 30 days to supply an abnormal demand for Christmas trees in the north. . . . The production this year is said to be superior in Lenoir County; about 500 trees in Bucklesberry section are said to be the finest in the region.” (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)