

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Jeremiah Sutton, Sr.

If there ever were a Bucklesberry hall of fame, Jeremiah Sutton, Sr. (1836-1900) would surely be among those recognized. Known as Jerry, he was a rugged, highly successful farmer who amassed considerable land during his lifetime. But his greatest achievement may have been growing a large family.

Jerry himself was the youngest of nine children born to John and Elizabeth Aldridge Sutton. So, a sizeable family was not a strange notion to him. Amazingly, he would grow up to marry three times and sire 21 children, a record not exceeded by any other known Bucklesberrian, past or present.

Jerry and first wife, Tabitha Hayes (1831-1868), had seven children born between 1852 and 1867: Alonzo Harold; Maxaline; Antoinette; Johnnie Charlute; Richard Alpheus; Fannie; and Demasco. Not all made it to adulthood, however. Maxaline died at age ten, and Fannie passed away at age six.

Jerry and second wife, Sarah (Sallie) Ivey (1846-1893), had fourteen children born between 1869 and 1893: Mary Ann; Elsie Susan; Octavia Beatrice; Ella A.; Jeremiah, Jr.; Hepsie; John Ivey; Sarah (Sadie); Charlie Andrew; Amaziah Clarence; Ava B.; Willie Robert; and Dee and L. M. (twins). Several never survived their preschool years. Mary Ann died at age three. Elsie Susan lived only ten months, and the twin boys died the day after they were born.

Third wife, Sarah Allen Croom (1854-1937), known as Sac, and Jerry married within a year after the death of his second wife. Still living in the homeplace at the time were Jerry's and Sallie's six youngest children, ranging in age from seven to seventeen. Although Jerry and Sac had no children together, forty-year old Sac immediately took on the role of step-mother upon her marriage in 1894.

Jerry died one month before the U.S. Census was taken in 1900. Representing his family in the Census record, Sac was listed as both head of household and stepmother. Also named in the household that year were five of her step-children: Hepsie, age 22; Sadie, age 19; Charlie, age 17; Clarence, age 14; and Ava, age 12.

The devotion to Sac for her faithfulness as his abiding wife, helpmeet and mother to his children was unquestionably evident in Jerry's last will and testament dated August 15, 1896. The first two provisions ensured that Sac would be comfortably taken care of the rest of her life:

"Item 1st - I give and devise to my beloved wife, Sarah Sutton that part of the tract of land on which I now reside which is situated on the North side of the Canal containing forty acres and being all the land which I own on the said North side of the Canal, together with the privilege of using fire wood and rail timber on five acres of my land on the South side of said Canal to be designated by her and my executor. To have and to hold the said land and privilege for and during her natural life...."

"Item 2nd - I give and bequeath to my said wife one horse and buggy to be selected by her and one sow and pigs to be so selected, and....I desire and direct that my said wife have the privilege and the right is hereby given her to reside at my home place in the house where we now reside as long as she shall desire."

Other interesting accounts of Jerry's life will be shared in upcoming articles, including a fishing business, a dinner shared with famed lawyer and journalist, Council S. Wooten, a scuffle involving a knife and a hoe, an apple brandy and wine enterprise, and more.

Caption to accompany photograph:

Jeremiah Sutton, Sr. and family about 1899 at the homeplace house originally situated on Kennedy Home Road, Bucklesberry. Sitting: Daughters, Hepsie (left) and Ava. Standing: Son, Charlie Andrew (left); Jeremiah, Sr.; Sarah Allen Croom Sutton; and son, Amaziah Clarence. Photograph courtesy of Bucklesberry resident, Jack Randall Sutton, grandson of Jeremiah, Sr.

