

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Jeremiah Sutton, Sr. (Part 2)

Jeremiah Sutton, Sr. (1836-1900), known as Jerry, was a family man. His first two wives, Tabitha Hayes (1831-1868) and Sarah (Sallie) Ivey (1846-1893), died prematurely, leaving him twice a widower. They nonetheless enriched his life with 21 children. Although Jerry and third wife, Sarah Allen Croom (1854-1937) had no children together, she was a faithful helpmeet to him and step-mother to his six youngest children.

In addition to his devotion to family, Jerry was widely regarded as a successful farmer. During the seven-year period from 1878 to 1884, local newspapers reported on his farming ability, from growing crops to raising hogs. A master at wheat farming, he was recognized in and out of Bucklesberry as one of the best:

1878, December 20: "We made a trip last week on Lousin Swamp-by Sheriff Fields and Joe Taylor-saw but little preparation for wheat for another year, only three or four small patches in a twelve mile ride. In Bucklesberry there is a large quantity sown, and it is coming up finely, so says our old neighbor, Jerry Sutton, than whom there is no better wheat farmer in the county." (*Kinston Journal*)

Wheat production in Bucklesberry was almost twice that of other farm communities in the county, due to skilled farmers like Jerry and nutrient rich soil:

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 2,000 bushels." (*Kinston Journal*)

Jerry showed expertise in growing cotton, too. One report about a stalk of cotton that Jerry grew with an incredible number of bolls, first published in the *Kinston Journal*, was picked up by news outlets in the Piedmont region of the State:

1880, October 14: "Mr. Jerry Sutton a farmer of this county, has a stalk of cotton which is the result of a sprout of a stalk of last year's crop, from which he has picked out 80 bolls, and there are a great many bolls on the stalk which have not matured. Mr. S. says they are the largest cotton bolls that have ever grown on his farm. Who can beat it?" (*The Chatham Record*, Pittsboro)

Jerry also excelled at raising hogs. He produced so many in 1880 that he considered donating hogs to folks in the community:

1880, February 5: "One of Jerry Sutton's neighbors says that he...has more hogs than he knows what to do with... and that his sows are so fruitful that his plantation is becoming horribly overstocked, and he has a good mind to give a lot away to his neighbors." (*Kinston Journal*)

Hog production to Jerry was a matter of quantity and quality. He was known for growing big ones:

1883, October 25: "Jere[miah, Sr.] Sutton has a fine porker. Plenty of corn makes fat hogs." (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

1884, February 21: "'Uncle Jerry Sutton' killed his two year old pig last Friday. It weighed 670 pounds, and several thought if it had been properly weighed it would have been at least 700. We think he sold about 140 pounds of sausage from it at 18 cents per pound." (*Goldsboro Messenger*)

A Part 3 article to follow will discuss other aspects of the life of Jeremiah Sutton, Sr., including business, personal and social events.