

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Dempsey E. Wood (Part 6)

An avid sportsman, Dempsey Eugene Wood (1847-1921) of Bucklesberry was passionate about fishing. Recognized as a champion angler, he set fishing records that were reported by newspapers across the State:

1913, October 21: "A record has been made, so far as Raleigh is concerned, by Mr. Ashby L. Baker, who returned today from a fishing trip to the mouth of Neuse River, on which he was accompanied by another well known fisherman, Mr. Dempsey Wood, of Falling Creek. Tuesday fifty-six black bass were taken with the rod, the largest weighing eight pounds. On other days the sport was almost as good. Mr. Baker brought with him to Raleigh 141 bass, which weigh over 400 pounds. In a few days he will return to that paradise of fishermen. He says he has never had such sport before in his life." (*The Charlotte News*)

1917, May 5: "Mr. Dempsey Wood is back from Onslow Lodge, on New River, below Jacksonville, where with Messrs. Alex. Webb and A[shby] L. Baker of Raleigh he caught 115 fish of several kinds in a day and a half. This set a record for the lodge. For ten years, more or less New England and North Carolina sportsmen have recorded their catches in a book kept at the lodge for the purpose. 'Don't weigh your fish by the scales on their backs,' says a legend in the book. Messrs. Baker, Webb, and Wood set down their record and had the lodge-keeper add an affidavit. The veteran Kinston fisherman was given credit for locating the place where the fancy haul was made. Long experience has made fish-finding a kind of an extra sense with him." (*The Kinston Free Press*)

During the latter years of his life, Dempsey took extended fishing trips and cruises on yachts with friends:

1918, April 22: "Mr. Dempsey Wood planned to go to New Bern Monday to join his long-time fishing partner, Mr. [Ashby L.] Baker of Raleigh, for a two-weeks cruise through East Carolina waters." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

1919, November 4: "Mr. Dempsey Wood and Mr. A[shby] L. Baker of Raleigh have returned from their monthly cruise in the sounds. They caught more than 275 black bass in Pamlico and Pungo Rivers...." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

1920, March 16: "Messrs. Dempsey Wood and E. T. Moseley will spend the next few days fishing along the coast. They left Tuesday afternoon to board the yacht *Reliance* at Oriental." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

Dempsey ended his life much as he lived it, enjoying the sport of fishing. On the day he passed away, he was among friends on the way to New Bern for a summer fishing trip:

1921, June 8: "Kinston was shocked yesterday morning to learn that Dempsey Wood, prominent and respected townsman, had died suddenly on the Norfolk Southern train between the city and Caswell, while en route to new Bern with friends on a fishing trip. The end was totally unexpected, Mr. Wood having appeared to be in the health and in good spirits when he boarded the train..." (*Greenville News*)