

# Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

## Dog Days 1886 (Part 2)

The heat is usually quite uncomfortable during dog days of summer from July 3 to August 11. Just five miles south of La Grange, moisture in the bottom lands of Bucklesberry along the Neuse River can heighten humidity, making this period of the summer almost unbearable.

Journalist, Samuel Ivey (S. I.) Sutton (1834-1904), born and reared in Bucklesberry, routinely wrote about happenings there. Reprints of several of his reports from early-July, 1886 were shared in last week's Bucklesberry article. The final four columns that he published during dog days that year are reprinted here. News centered on heavy rain followed by dry conditions, and the deaths of two Bucklesberry citizens:

1886, July 21: "The rains have abated and the [Neuse] River is subsiding, or words to that effect....A fox chase last Saturday morning near town brought out a large number of those who enjoy such fun. The fox was caught....Various are the opinions in regard to the condition of crops. Some are of opinion that but little damage has been done, while others think it serious. Time will show. We are sorry to hear of the severe sickness of Mrs. B[enjamin] F[ranklin] Sutton of Bucklesberry. Dr. Hadley, the attending physician, reports her condition more favorable at this time....It was reported here last Saturday that Peter Sutton...was drowned last Friday night in attempting to cross the [Bear] Creek during the high water. Peter turned up in the afternoon without a scratch and ready to laugh at his being able to disappoint a funeral. Last Thursday was the leading heavy rain, in some places, of any day of the wet season. West and north of here the rain was exceedingly heavy. Bear Creek was higher than it has been known to be for some time—bridges upset and Joyner's [later, Sutton's] Mill dam had to be cut in several places to save the mill house." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1886, July 28: "The rains have ceased and now we are anxious about the dry weather. Man is an anxious creature, never content in any condition....Elsie [Ann Herring] Sutton, wife of B[enjamin] F[ranklin] Sutton, Jr., died at the residence of her husband in Bucklesberry, last Saturday morning. The deceased was a daughter of John I. Herring, of Wayne County, and a most excellent Christian lady. The community has lost one whose life is worthy of imitation, and the husband a devoted companion. There is no mistaking that crops have been injured by the too much and continued rains. On light lands where the soil is not deep, the cotton and corn crops are injured very badly, while on stiff land with a good soil, the cotton has been pushed too fast and is not fruiting as well as it otherwise would. The corn crop, on good land, looks to be good." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1886, Aug. 4: "A refreshing rain visited our section Monday evening....There is a hope that rain will visit this section soon. Crops are in much need just at this time....Preaching at Hickory Grove last Saturday night and Sunday by Rev. W. E. Swain, the pastor. We are glad to note that a Sunday school has been organized at this place..." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1886, Aug. 11: "No preaching in this place last Sunday....A small child of William H. Elmore died in Bucklesberry last week. We have not learned the particulars as to the nature of the disease....Mr. Noah Rouse is digging marl at his marl bed on Neuse River again this summer. We were shown a very large tooth that was taken from the pit one day last week....C[ouncil] S. Wooten, Esq., in last week's [*Goldsboro*] *Messenger*, pays Bucklesberrians a high compliment, as an industrious and hospitable people. Joe [Josiah, Sr.] Sutton thinks the picture overdrawn in some things, but we know that a good dinner, and a plenty of it, can be had in that section at any time." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)