

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Lillian Sutton Perry (Part 8)

In his 1862 essay, 'American Civilization,' Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) wrote, "Now that is the wisdom of a man, in every instance of his labor, to hitch his wagon to a star." Lillian Sutton Perry's (1864-1946) marriage to Daniel Elijah Perry (1857-1897) in 1885 could be viewed as a case in point. Four years before they wed, there were indications that Dan was a rising star.

He was licensed to practice law in 1881, the youngest member of the bar in Lenoir County at the time. He established a law office with Andrew J. Loftin in Kinston by mid-1882. From practicing law, his professional interests soon turned to making law. Republican nominee for Greene and Lenoir Counties, Dan entered the race that year for a seat in the N.C. House of Representatives. Reported widely, his political aspirations catapulted him front and center in the public eye:

1882, June 25: "F[red] B. Loftin, attorney at law and Daniel E. Perry, a Statesman raised by the County of Jones are contesting for the Republican nomination to represent this [Lenoir] County in the House of the next [N.C.] Legislature..." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern). Note: Loftin was eventually nominated as the Republican on the N.C. Senate ticket and won.

1882, August 22: "The Republicans in Lenoir [County] held their convention....and the following nominations were made: For the Legislature [N.C. House of Representatives], Daniel E. Perry, Esq..." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1882, October 4: "The *Journal* intimates that, in Lenoir [County], Dan Perry and Fred Loftin must either give way or get married. Our Dan and Fred are not to be disqualified because they are bachelors. Both have done their best to get married and it is said their recent political step is more of a matrimonial than of a political movement." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1882, October 30: "It is reported [from *The Daily Journal*] that Dan[iel E.] Perry was a prohibitionist last year. John J. Parker, who is well learned in the dark and crooked way of politics, (John was once a Democrat) says that he informed Perry last Saturday that he must not declare in favor of prohibition. So Daniel made an anti-prohibition speech. How is that for 'high' among those of the Republican faith about here, who twelve months ago declared that no anti-prohibitionist should ever receive their votes." (*Goldsboro Messenger*)

1882, November 9: "The following [Republican] candidates are opposed to the present system of County Government and are in favor of the election of all officers, magistrates, etc., by the people; a free ballot and a fair count in all elections; the repeal of the Prohibition Act; and a

liberal system of public instruction....[N.C.] House of Representatives....Lenoir [County]–Daniel E. Perry." (*Weekly State Journal*, Raleigh)

Dan was unsuccessful in his run for the N.C. House. He lost the race to Democrat opponent and Bucklesberrian Dempsey Eugene Wood (1847-1921):

1882, November 9: "It will require the official vote to reach the true result of Tuesday's election; but the following estimate will very nearly approximate it. Dempsey Wood [1847-1921], Democrat is elected over D[aniel] E. Perry, Republican for [N.C.] House of Representatives by over 150 majority." (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

1882, November 15: "Daniel E. Perry is still alive and kicking, even if he was defeated for the Legislature last Tuesday. He attended Rose of Sharon church last Sunday, smashed up three buggies in a runaway scrape and vows Jay Hubbell did not visit Lenoir County during the canvass." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1882, November 25: "Daniel E. Perry, Esq., the late candidate for legislative honors in Lenoir [County], was in the city yesterday. He takes his defeat easy. (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)