

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Lillian Sutton Perry (Part 10)

By the spring of 1883, the marriage of Lillian Sutton Perry (1864-1946) and Daniel Elijah Perry (1857-1897) was more than a year and a half away. At the time, the two were residing several hundred miles apart on opposite sides of the State.

Lillian was in her final weeks of study, nearing graduation at Salem Female Academy in Forsyth County, N.C. Dan had resumed his law practice in Kinston, after an election loss for a seat in the N.C. House of Representatives the preceding fall.

Licking his campaign wounds for only a few months, Dan soon drank from the political trough again by the summer of 1883. But not for purposes of another electoral race. Rather, he received a high-level appointment to the judicial bench, viewed roundly as politically motivated:

1883, June 27: "D[aniel]. E. Perry, attorney at law, Kinston, N.C., has been appointed by the U.S. Circuit Court at Raleigh, United States Commissioner for the Eastern District of North Carolina." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

Without missing a step, as it were, Dan turned his attention almost immediately to what appeared to be a completely, unrelated newfound area of interest—agriculture. Telegraphing expertise on the subject, he commented publicly about crops:

1883, July 12: "Daniel E. Perry, Esq., just from Jones County, represents that the prospects for making a large crop of hay in that county are very flattering; thinks that Col. Moses and Col. E. B. Isler are contending against each other for the best yield in grass." (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

Instead of touting farming knowledge that he probably did not have, perhaps his comment had more to do with business intentions to invest in farm land. By the end of the next month, Dan purchased a plantation:

1883, August 23: "Daniel E. Perry, Esq., has bought the house [homeplace] portion—227 acres—of Levi M. Sutton's plantation about one mile from Kinston for \$5,500, being about twenty-five dollars per acre. This is a part of the Henry F. Bond tract of land, very desirable and increasing in value every day." (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

Whether Dan's association with Levi in the land sale was purely business or the result of an existing friendship is unknown. But it may have been an early indication of Dan's budding romance with Lillian. Perhaps they were introduced initially through Levi who was Lillian's half-cousin.

Levi was a grandson of William (Old Billy) Sutton (1796-1884) through his father John Frederick Isler Sutton (1822-1870). Lillian was also a grandchild of Old Billy through her father Noah Henry Sutton (1838-1865). John was a son of Old Billy's first wife Hulda Isler, and Noah was a son of Old Billy's second wife Rachel Harper (1804-1860). Levi's and Lillian's fathers were half-brothers; therefore, Levi and Lillian were half-cousins.

The familial relationship between Levi and Lillian, then, could have been an impetus that drew Dan and Lillian together. More will be shared in the next Bucklesberry article.