

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Harper's Landing (Part 2)

Among the named landmarks in Bucklesberry is Harper's Landing. In the Pot Neck area on the east side of the community, Harper's Landing is located directly south of the sharp curve on Kennedy Home Road toward Falling Creek, less than a mile to the banks of the Neuse River.

No longer operational, it was a water terminal for steamboats and other vessels that transported cargo and passengers to and from Bucklesberry through the early 1900s. From eyewitness accounts years ago, the distance from the top of the landing to the surface of the River was about twenty feet or more on a typical day.

Bucklesberry has other historically interesting landmarks including Frog Point, Ration Ditch, Slick Rock, and Aunt Ella's fishing hole (slough). Most are not formally identified in public records. But Harper's Landing is referenced in numerous documents, suggesting its significance back in the day.

Possibly the earliest formal record of Harper's Landing is an 1863 map housed at the State Archives in Raleigh. Drawn by H. J. Miller at the height of the Civil War, the map was prepared from surveys conducted at the direction of Lieutenant P. W. O. Koerner under the command of Confederate Engineer Bureau Chief General Jeremy Francis Gilmer. The map shows various topographical features and landmarks in the eastern part of the State between the Neuse and Tar Rivers. Marked clearly on the 'Buckleberry Poquosin' (Bucklesberry Pocosin) section of the map is Harper's Landing.

Another document that prominently identifies Harper's Landing is a soil map by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Dated 1900 and printed by A. Hoen and Co. Lithographers and Printers, Baltimore, MD, this map is owned by a current Bucklesberry resident. An additional unrelated, but noteworthy landmark on the map is Sutton's Grist Mill in Falling Creek, believed to have been owned and operated by Alexander Richard Sutton (1860-1928) and John Daniel Walters (1858-1933).

One other reference to Harper's Landing is found in a 1927 document titled, *Soil Survey of Lenoir County, N.C.*, also published by USDA. In describing the types and quality of soils in the County, authors R. C. Journey and W. A. Davis indicated kalmia fine sandy loam was prevalent near creeks and waterways in the Bucklesberry area, including Harper's Landing:

"The surface soil in cultivated fields is light gray or yellowish gray when dry and somewhat darker when wet. Kalmia fine sandy loam occurs...on the terraces along Neuse River, Contentnea Creek and Southwest Creek. The largest areas are north of Hardy's Bridge and Harper's Landing, near Sutton's Landing [i.e., Pine Bush Landing] and near and southeast of Fountain Hill. The land is level or slightly undulating with a gradual slope toward the stream. Drainage is fairly well established but in the flatter situations ditches are necessary to insure its adequacy..." (p. 14)

More on the history and origin of Harper's Landing, the family for whom it was named, and some events that occurred there will be shared in an upcoming Bucklesberry article.