

# Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

## This Week in 1887

A farmer in the Frog Point part of Bucklesberry for many years, Samuel Ivey (S.I.) Sutton (1834-1904) eventually moved to the town of La Grange. He was a talented man who held the offices of magistrate, Justice of the Peace, postmaster and railroad agent during his later life.

In his spare time, he was also a columnist for several news outlets during the 1880s. Blessed with a keen wit, S.I. was a gifted writer. He wrote extensively about his kinsmen and friends in the local community on a host of topics. All were newsworthy at a time when societal culture was tight (i.e., strong norms; low tolerance for deviant behavior) and newspapers were a primary means of communication.

One hundred thirty-five years ago this week, S.I. reported on people of interest, gardening, farming, weather, and a theft. In this report, he exercised the 'bully pulpit' of a journalist and wisely admonished people who were hypercritical of others. Reprinted here is S.I.'s *La Grange News* column published March 30, 1887:

"The fishing business up here is very poor this season. Rev. Mr. Hires [sic., Hiers] preached here last Sunday, his regular appointment. It is now said that a fair crop of peaches will be raised if no disaster from this. W. A. Hadley, who has been confined to his bed for two or three weeks, was able to be on the streets Monday. We hope his improvement will continue and be permanent."

"A few days of moderately warm weather has given gardens and other truck [crops] a more healthy appearance. Trees do not look as much like spring now as they did three weeks ago. Surely we have had a long cold spell for March."

"The article on farming in Saturday's JOURNAL [i.e., *The Daily Journal*, New Bern] is good reading. The trouble will be to get farmers to see and practice it. The people up here, where Mr. Sanderlin is well known, would be delighted to see him at the head of the Agricultural Department of the State. The JOURNAL is not alone in this."

"Constant fault-finding is very disagreeable. There are few persons clear from faults, and fewer still clear from mistakes, and it is no evidence of smartness to be constantly alluding to faults or pointing out mistakes. One's smartness will be judged by what he does and not by what he sees in other."

"We learn that the store house of B. F. Fields [sic., F. B. Fields], at Falling Creek, this county, was broken open last Sunday, and the iron safe (left unlocked), robbed of two hundred and fifty dollars. This is a severe loss to Mr. Fields, who is one of our most industrious citizens. The particulars of the robbery we have not learned." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

S.I.'s reference to Rev. A. J. Hiers is especially relevant to Bucklesberry's Hickory Grove Church. Rev. Hiers was the pastor of the Missionary Baptist Church in La Grange, but he also preached intermittently at Hickory Grove in 1884 and 1885 when they were without a pastor.

Although affiliated with the United Methodist Church today, Hickory Grove was a Baptist church for the first quarter century after its founding in 1860. On April 8, 1885, S.I. reported that the congregation of Hickory Grove introduced and passed a resolution, "Without a dissenting voice, that the Church adopt the discipline and form of church government of the Methodist Protestant Church..." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)