

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Settler John Sutton (Part 13)

One of Bucklesberry's first families was headed by settler John Sutton (ca. 1730-bef. 1773) who migrated from Bertie County, NC by 1750. Believed to have fathered seven sons, John probably had daughters as well, although they are unnamed in existing records. Whether his assumed wife Ann Turner Sutton was the mother of his children is unknown.

The Suttons have proven to be a procreant family since John's arrival in Bucklesberry more than two and half centuries ago. One genealogical database has conservatively documented more than 2,500 of John's descendants representing at least ten generations. Interestingly, Sutton was the most prevalent surname in Lenoir County by 1880, followed by Davis, Jones, Williams and Taylor in rank order.

John's four purported sons—James, Richard, Simon and Thomas—had few known early descendants. Traces of them disappear in Census records after 1880. Virtually all of John's known progeny to date have descended from his three proven sons—Benjamin, John Jr. and William. They and their immediate offspring intermarried locally. All three sons remained in Lenoir County where they grew their families.

Benjamin Sutton Sr. settled in the heart of Bucklesberry north of the Neuse River along the Kennedy Home Road between Bear Creek and the Pot Neck area. The Benjamin Sr. line arguably has been the most procreative. Two early descendants, his son Benjamin Sutton Jr. (1795-1864) and his grandson Jeremiah Sutton (1836-1900), both married three times and sired 21 children each, which included a set of twins each. Three historically significant descendants in Benjamin Sr.'s line were Samuel Ivey Sutton (1834-1904)—La Grange Justice of the Peace and railroad agent; Andrew Jackson Sutton (1859-1919)—Kinston department store owner; and Noah Norwood Sutton (1921-1991)—La Grange shoe store proprietor.

Recent late descendants of Benjamin Sr. include Estelle Sutton Creech (1922-2017), Glenwood Allen Fields (1943-2021), Julian Thomas Sutton (1945-2019), Kendrick Darrell Sutton Sr. (1941-2009) and Myra Sutton Herring (1948-2015).

John Sutton Jr. also settled on the north side of the Neuse River on the ridge area of Bucklesberry near Mays Store and Jim Sutton Roads. Three historically significant descendants in John Jr.'s line were Alexander Richard Sutton (1860-1928)—La Grange Mayor and gin-mill operator; Dr. Carl Whitt Sutton, MD (1882-1943)—Richlands physician, banker and businessman; and Nathan George Sutton (1847-1919)—La Grange steam mill operator.

Recent late descendants of John Jr. include Marcellus Lanier Sutton (1923-2017), Marjorie Sutton Oliver (1933-2019), Mary Rose Sutton Stocks (1931-2015), Matthew Lee Carr Sutton Sr. (1930-2016) and Richard Elliott Sutton (1931-2021).

William Sutton Sr. settled just outside Bucklesberry in the northwest area of Kinston along U.S. Highway 258 between Pauls Path and Fred Everett Roads. Three historically significant descendants in William Sr.'s line were Fred Isler Sutton Sr., JD (1886-1971)—Harvard graduate, Kinston Mayor and attorney; Fred Isler Sutton Jr. (1896-1995)—Kinston real estate developer; and Lillian Sutton Perry (1864-1946)—Salem College graduate, Kinston business woman and philanthropist.

Recent late descendants of William Sr. include Dr. Warren Seipp Perry Sr., DDS (1924-2003), Eli Jackson Perry Jr., MD (1926-2004), Bernard Spillman Sutton (1927-2005), Franklin Hoggard Sutton (1926-2021) and Fred Isler (Ricky) Sutton III (1943-2018).