

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Dog Days 1884

Some of the hottest days of summer typically occur between July 3 and August 11. Referred to as dog days, the extreme, relentless heat and humidity can be almost unbearable.

Dog days were especially hard on folks centuries ago. Relief from steel fans did not come about until the 1920s, but only for half of Americans with electricity at the time. Virtually all households had electricity by the 1960s when air conditioning had become available.

Bucklesberrian and La Grange townsman Samuel Ivey (S. I.) Sutton (1834-1904) was a gifted reporter for several local newspapers in the 1880s. Reprinted here, S. I.'s column during the dog days of 1884 referenced a refreshing rain that may have brought a cool reprieve from the heat:

"A good rain this Friday morning. It will be of much good."

"T. B. Hyman, of the Goldsboro rice mills was in town Thursday. We have drummers [salesmen] in abundance. Hardly a day but we have one or more."

"Some of our farmers report their crop in a grassy condition. Others might do the same and tell the truth."

"Dr. J. D. Spicer, of Goldsboro, was summoned by telegraph this Saturday morning to visit Mr. Moses Joyner, he being very sick at his home, near this place. James Britt and John Rouse 'played' a little Saturday, and for the fun, they were called on to deposit one dollar each in the town treasury and pay the costs."

"Cotton on light, or high lands, is showing red leaves at the bottom, the result of overmuch rain. Corn is looking finely on good lands and promises a good crop."

"Rev. J. N. Andrews, of the M[ethodist] E[piscopal] Church and formerly P. C. [Preacher in Charge] of this Circuit, spent a part of Thursday in our place visiting Rev. J. D. Carpenter. Mr. Andrews' health is bad, and he is at Seven Springs trying the curative properties of their waters."

"'Cleveland for President' is hoisted just in front of the 'cigar beauty' on the top of the warehouse. The Democratic candidate for President 'without record' we hope will enter the White House, and there make as honorable a record as he has as Governor of New York. Hendricks for Vice-President gives perfect satisfaction."

"A cabbage of the Jersey Wakefield variety, 30 1/2 inches in circumference, 15 1/2 inches in length, weighing 11 1/2 pounds, was shown in our town last Friday by J[oshua] N[unn] Sutton, and grown on 'Frog Point' in Bucklesberry. A beet 21 1/2 inches in circumference was shown the same day, grown in La Grange by E. W. Bizzle, Esq. Who can beat that beet, if the beet, as a beet, did beat the cabbage? Trot 'em out."

"The National Cotton Exchange closes its 'general remarks' on the condition of the cotton crop in June as follows: 'Taking the whole cotton belt together the condition may be represented as better than at the close of May and a trifle superior to last year, with prospects, however, largely dependent upon early cessation of rain in the Atlantic States...'" (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern, NC, July 15, 1884)