

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Settler John Sutton (Part 21)

Aside from the inspired, inerrant Word of God, all other recorded history is subject to oversights and errors. *The Heritage of Lenoir County*, a mammoth 564-page book published in 1981 by the Lenoir County Historical Association (LCHA), is no exception. Rightly regarded as the seminal book of its kind about the history of Lenoir County and its people, the biographical entry for John Sutton Sr. (ca. 1730-bef. 1773) of Bucklesberry contains mistakes.

Genealogical research conducted over the last four decades since this book's publication, including primary sources now available on the Internet and previously undisclosed historical documents, allow for an accurate account of John's life. This research was reported in full in earlier Bucklesberry articles (see Settler John Sutton, Parts 1-20). Some of it is provided here for purposes of correcting the historical record.

The LCHA states, "John Sutton Sr. was born June, 1718 in Piscataway County, New Jersey" (p. 391). There are no known documents that confirm the exact month and year of John's birth. Various court documents suggest he was born 1720-1730 and that his birthplace was Bertie County, NC. The LCHA further states, "He was the son of Moses and Yanick Sutton of Piscataway," (p. 391). However, John's documented parents were Thomas Sutton Sr. (1699-1750) and Elizabeth Luerton Sutton (1705-aft. 1730) of Bertie County.

The LCHA indicates, "Soon after the death of his father in 1740, John, along with others, started the southward trend, out of Virginia to the counties of eastern North Carolina," (p. 391). John never resided in Virginia, though, and his parents lived their entire adult lives in Bertie County, where all of their children were born. Further, the proven death year of John's father was 1750, not 1740. Weeks after his father's death, John moved directly from Bertie County, not Virginia, into the backcountry of North Carolina where he arrived in then-Johnston County by 1750. There is no evidence that he migrated with a group of others.

The LCHA states, "There were already kinsmen and neighbors of [John's] here from Virginia," (p. 391) when he arrived in Bucklesberry. True, others preceded John, but there is no proof they came directly from Virginia. For example, ancestors of the current Herring family of Bucklesberry were residents of Bertie County, as were John and his Sutton relatives. Thus, the Herrings and Suttons were likely associates. Capt. Simon Herring (1709-1769) moved to Bucklesberry several years before John arrived. However, none of John's kinsmen preceded him. He was the first of his Sutton line to arrive in Bucklesberry.

The LCHA indicates, "John married Ann Turner, the daughter of John Turner and Elizabeth Wiggins," (p. 391). The transfer of three Dobbs County properties from Ann's father John Turner to John Sutton, coupled with the prior Bertie County association of the Turner and Sutton families, support the belief that Ann Turner was, at best, John's assumed wife. That said, there is no concrete evidence that she was his proven wife, let alone the mother of his children.

The LCHA states, "John Sutton served with the Dobbs Militia under the command of Captain John Oxley Harrison," (p. 392). The Dobbs County Militia, however, was not established until 1775, several years after John's death, which was before 1773. John did have militia service two decades earlier. His name appears on the Johnston County Militia roster dated 1755.

Finally, the LCHA indicates one of John's sons, "William Sr. (1756) left North Carolina and settled in Georgia," (p. 392). Available records, though, indicate that William Sutton Sr. (ca. 1760-1813/20) and his immediate descendants settled just outside of Bucklesberry in the northwest area of Kinston along U.S. Highway 258 between Pauls Path and Fred Everett Roads.