

# Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

## Clellan Sutton Interview (Part 5)

The 1994 interview of Clellan Thomas Sutton (1909–1999), conducted and videotaped by local genealogist and historian, Glenn Fields, provides a treasure trove of information about twentieth century Bucklesberry.

Parts 1–4 of the interview, published in previous issues of the *Gazette*, focused on Clellan's recollections of how Bucklesberry got its name, where the Sutton family originated, how the various Sutton lines were related, geographic landmarks, and country stores that operated in Bucklesberry in the early- to mid-1900s.

Part 5 of the interview, transcribed below, centers on Clellan's remembrances of local corn and grist mills in the greater Bucklesberry community:

Glenn: "Were there anymore mills? I know this one over here [the Dawson & Eubanks, or D&E Mill, still standing in 1994]. It started out...[and] it's always been electric power because there was nothing else to run it by, I don't reckon."

Clellan: "They bought corn and shelled corn."

Glenn: "Where were the...water powered mills, like the [Davis Mill in Strabane]? Was that the only one around?"

Clellan: "Oh, there used to be Parrott's Mill at Falling Creek."

Glenn: "Falling Creek had one?"

Clellan: "Parrott's."

Glenn: "Was it right on Falling Creek? There is no tributary down there. It's all just Falling Creek."

Clellan: "There used to be Farm Valley School [over] there. That mill had been there for ages, Parrott's Mill."

Glenn: "Reckon there are any remnants of it there now?"

Clellan: "Yeah."

Glenn: "Where was it in relationship to the highway?"

Clellan: "Well, you turn up there at the [Falling Creek] store and go up towards the railroad, just right in that little corner. Been there many a time. It lasted until about 1937 or 1938."

Owned and operated by Fred H. Dawson and E. Earl Eubanks for many years, the D&E Mill was within shouting distance of Clellan's home in Bucklesberry. The mill, now demolished, was situated on the southeast corner of Frank Barwick and Dawson Mill Roads where the home of Gene and April Parrish sits today. Exactly when the mill opened is uncertain, but Fred's son, Nelson Dawson of Kinston, born in the mid-1950s, recalls the mill operating from his earliest childhood days.

The late Sherwood Sutton, and son, Stanley Sutton, ran D&E Mill for several years until it closed permanently in the early 1980s. Grandson and son, Freddie Sutton of Bucklesberry, said D&E milled corn into feed, then sold and delivered it in burlap sacks to local farmers and residents for their chickens and pigs.

John Washington, in his historic 1810 account of Lenoir County, identified "16 or 17 gristmills, most of which have saws attached to them." By 1884, *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory* listed 20 mills for Lenoir County, 16 of which milled corn, flour and/or rice at the time.

Clellan's recollection of the Parrott Mill at Falling Creek was spot on. Edward Leroy West (1932–2011) grew up and worked on the Parrott Farm off of US Hwy 70. In a 2009 interview with Joseph Mosnier of the Southern Oral History Program at UNC-Chapel Hill, Mr. West discussed the Parrott Mill referenced by Clellan:

"They had a mill pond...Falling Creek mill...they grind meal in there. And the dam busted [about 1944, when James M. Parrott III was away fighting in WWII]—this was water-grind, they called it—and the dam busted. When the dam busted and everything, they couldn't grind or couldn't water-grind meal no more. And so they'd take that old F[armall]-20 tractor and take it down to the mill and grind meal all night with it."