

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Steamer *Kinston* 1883 (Part 2)

The Neuse River of yesteryear was a lifeline for Bucklesberry and other rural neighborhoods. From its waterway, steamboats transported supplies and passengers to and from communities lining the banks of the Neuse during the 1800s and early 1900s.

Ron Vinson contends that the steamboat industry in NC was considerably larger than previously believed, with some 140 steamers built from 1861 to 1899. The railroad through La Grange was not completed until 1858, and highways would not be constructed in Bucklesberry until the 1930s. Steamboats, then, were used regularly for leisurely travel and cargo transportation.

Built in 1882, the one hundred ton, 122-foot steamer *Kinston* made routine trips on the Neuse, servicing greater Bucklesberry which, at the time, encompassed Seven Springs (White Hall). News reports in the early part of 1883 on steamer *Kinston's* activities focused on passenger excursions, while latter year reporting detailed transport of supplies and seasonal goods:

1883, April 12: "The steamer *Kinston*, of the N. R. Navigation Company in charge of Capt. T. G. Dixon and Engineer J. D. Taylor, made her trip from Newbern to the Arrington bridge [Goldsboro] in 17 1/2 hours. The *Kinston* left Newbern Saturday and arrived at the bridge Sunday at 11 1/2 o'clock, and returning to Seven Springs in the evening....There was quite a lively little crowd of the citizens of the Seven Springs section on board..." (*Goldsboro Messenger*)

1883, April 24: "The steamer *Kinston* went to the W. & W. R. R. bridge last Thursday. A number of pleasure seekers availed themselves of the occasion and took a trip on the boat. Four ladies and four gentlemen of our place [Seven Springs]...were among the number I suppose enjoyed themselves finely. Capt. Shade Fields was along and in one of his happiest moods. The Captain, however, got a little tangled about the way home when he returned to White Hall, and went about one mile up the River. Nothing wrong, only...the Captain felt funny." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1883, May 6: "The steamer *Kinston*, Capt. Dixon, left this port [Kinston] early last Friday morning with 29 brown jugs and demijohns and about three hundred excursionists, on pleasure bent, for the celebrated Seven Springs. The patronage of the steamer, like that of Noah's Ark was greater than its capacity, while the variety of the company equaled that which is reported to have shipped with the venerable patriarch. The steamer sailed under the auspices of the Temperance Society, the jugs and demijohns, it is said, were intended to bring back the healing waters of the Springs, though appearances, it is known, are very deceiving." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1883, May 8: "A gay party of excursionists from Kinston and elsewhere came up on the steamer *Kinston* yesterday, and our streets [Seven Springs] were filled with throngs of young ladies, gentlemen, children, etc." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1883, August 23a: "The steamer *Kinston* went up to White Hall Saturday night, and took some excursionists up the [Neuse] River Sunday." (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

1883, August 23b: "The steamer *Kinston* cleared for New Berne with passengers, produce and one bundle rough leather [from Seven Springs] for Baltimore, Md., etc." (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

1883, August 23c: "The steamer *Kinston*, Capt. Dixon, arrived from New Berne on the 18th with groceries for W. H. Andrews, dry goods and crockery ware for W. R. Simmons, [and] 200 watermelons consigned to V. N. Seawell." (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

1883, August 19: "The steamer *Kinston* left yesterday on a trip for White Hall, taking a cargo of brick and watermelons at Kinston." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1883, November 1: "The steamer *Kinston*, Capt. Dixon, arrived at our wharf [Seven Springs] on Sunday morning with goods for our merchants and bushels of oysters for our lovers of the bivalves. Lay over until Monday, carrying a load of cotton for the New Berne market." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1883, December 30: "The steamer *Kinston* arrived yesterday evening from White Hall and Kinston with 34 bales cotton, 168 barrels rosin, 26 barrels spirits of turpentine, cotton seed, rice, corn, furniture and several passengers." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)