

# Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

## Jeremiah Sutton, Sr. (Part 5)

Known as Jerry, Jeremiah Sutton, Sr. (1836-1900) married three times and fathered twenty-one children. He was a family man and widely regarded as one of Bucklesberry's most successful farmers of cotton, wheat and hogs. An industrious and enterprising individual, Jerry operated a fishery and a distillery, too.

In addition to family and work, newspapers at the time reported on personal and social aspects of Jerry's life. For example, along with other local citizens, Jerry was selected as a juror for the April, 1881 session of the Superior Court:

1881, March 17: "Jurors for April [Lenoir County] Superior Court. R. B. Gilliam, M. H. Wooten, Jesse F. Braxton, S. I. Wooten, Jno. T. Daly, D. M. Edwards, Wright Pridgen (col), John Tull, S. T. Crossland, C. S. Sumrell, H. E. Dillon, Amos W. Taylor, Joseph Lassiter, Jesse W. Holland, J. E. Rouse, Gilbert Sutton (col), W. B. Reid, J. W. C. Hill, Anthony Davis, Sr., Augustus Mosely, R. K. Noble, E. M. Hodges, Stephen Brown of Vance, J. W. Kincey, James Noble (col), W. H. Brock, Jerry Sutton, J. H. Fields, William Arthur, B. F. Davis, W. E. Hill, Benj. F. Sutton, Jr., Wm. B. Nunn and Henry F. Brooks." (*Kinston Journal*)

The birth of Jerry's sixteenth child, Charlie Andrew Sutton (1883-1945) was also a matter of public interest. Although daughters were being born to most men in the neighborhood that year, Jerry was one of a few who sired a son:

1883, April 26: "Ben F. Fields, the Falling Creek miller, is happy in the possession of a daughter, Jerry Sutton in the 'wee bit' of a son [Charlie Andrew Sutton], Ruffin Benton a gal baby and Thos. Dawson one of the same kind, all the ingathering of last week, making a total of seven within the last month, with only two boys." (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

Jerry rarely dressed up. But at one gathering, he sported a cravat (necktie) which made him uncomfortable. Apparently, it conveyed a certain impression that he didn't like:

1885, August 5: "One of Bucklesberry's substantial and successful farmers, Jerry Sutton, dressed in his first cravat last Friday. The article of dress was a present, and we suppose that Jerry thought his visit to Goldsboro required an extra touch of finery. The cravat being a white one, it troubled the wearer lest he should be taken for a preacher." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

The move to Florida of Jerry's son, Demasco (1867-1901) caught the attention of Samuel Ivey Sutton (1834-1904), then-reporter of La Grange news items. S.I.'s son, Andrew Jackson Sutton

(1859-1919) similarly sojourned to Florida the previous year with hopes of finding a better life, only to return home after four months:

1885, December 16: "Demasco Sutton, son of Jerry Sutton, left here last Tuesday for Florida, it is supposed. His parents knew nothing of his intentions until after his departure, and feel some anxiety about the matter. Too much big talk about good times in Florida, in our opinion. But few who leave here return rich, is our observation." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

Attorney and author, Council Simmons Wooten (1840-1930) visited with Jerry and wife, Sarah (Sallie) Ivey Sutton (1846-1893) on one occasion to discuss legal matters. Showing their down-home hospitality that was characteristic of Bucklesberrians, the couple served a feast of a meal. Mr. Wooten enjoyed it so much that he bartered with Jerry for legal expenses:

1886, August 2: "Soon dinner was announced and such a quantity of good things one rarely sees on one table. There was turkey, chicken pie, ham and barbecue to say nothing of the vegetables and desert, and there were no small quantities either. There were large, old fashioned dishes three feet long, and every one was brimming full. I venture the assertion that there was enough to feed 50 men on the table. After dinner was over, he [Jeremiah Sutton, Sr.] asked me what was my fee for the work I had done. I told him I was fully paid, that I had eaten dinner enough to last me a week and that I thought that was full compensation. I will put the question to my brethren of the bar, that if they could make enough in one day to support them for a week if they would not think that a good day's work." (*Goldsboro Messenger*)