

Bucklesberry, Back in

Lillian Sutton Perry (Part 11)

After attending Kinston Collegiate Institute, Lillian Sutton Perry (1864-1946) furthered her education at Salem Female Academy in Forsyth County, NC where she graduated in 1883. At a time in history when few students in the rural South, let alone, women, had access to higher education, Lillian's academic success was truly extraordinary.

Accomplished in her own right, Lillian married Daniel Elijah Perry (1857-1897) in 1885, two years after her graduation. Licensed to practice law in 1881, Dan had amassed an impressive resume by the time they married.

He established a law office in Kinston with attorney Andrew J. Loftin by 1882. An electoral loss for a seat in the N.C. House of Representatives that year prompted a return to private practice in early-1883. Yet he was not completely divorced from politics. In the summer of 1883, Dan was appointed U.S. Commissioner for the Eastern District of North Carolina by the U.S. Circuit Court at Raleigh, a politically initiated position that included judicial responsibilities.

With a business eye toward investing, Dan purchased the Levi Mewborn Sutton (1845-1891) plantation in the fall of 1883 that included a homeplace and 227 acres of land. A few weeks later, Dan's mother, Susan Rhem Perry (1834-1897) and stepfather, Eli Hamilton Elsworth Franklin (E. H. E. F.) Perry (1831-1912) relocated to Kinston and established residence at Dan's plantation. E. H. E. F. assumed management of the farm:

1883, December 28: "E. H. E. F. Perry, Esq., formerly of Jones County, has, with his family moved up to the plantation of D[aniel] E. Perry, near Kinston recently sold by L[evi] M. Sutton, Esq. It is a valuable and very productive tract of land and this Jones County farmer will make it blossom like a rose." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

With his mother and stepfather safely transitioned, Dan was able to give full attention to his legal practice and his work as U.S. Commissioner:

1884, January 4: "L. A. Roberson and N. P. Roberson were brought here last Wednesday by United States warrants issued by D[aniel] E. Perry, U. S. Commissioner, charged with running an illicit whisky distillery in Lenoir County. They were bound over for further appearance on the 9th instant, at Kinston, before the Commissioner." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1884, March 27: "J. Q. Jackson and D[aniel] E. Perry have joined hands and will now practice law together. These gentleman, with Uzzell and Rouse, and A[ndrew] J. Loftin, are among the hardest students and best workers we know..." (*Goldsboro Messenger*)

Less than a year into his appointment as U.S. Commissioner, Dan was given another opportunity to run for electoral office. Rather than a second attempt to gain a seat in the N.C. House, the local Republicans were interested in nominating him for the State Senate race:

1884, April 10: "The Republicans of Greene County say our U.S. Commissioner, D[aniel] E. Perry, must put on the [N.C.] Senatorial robes which F[red] B. Loftin, Esq., has laid aside by his removal from the 11th District. He will wear such honors worthily and becomingly." (*New Berne Weekly Journal*)

Dan turned down a second bite at the electoral apple and opted instead to serve as a delegate to the Republican State Convention. He continued his important judicial work into late-spring, 1885, at which time he formed a law partnership with attorney George V. Strong to serve Jones County clients.