

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Lillian Sutton Perry (Part 21)

Blessed to have been a stay-at-home mother, Lillian Sutton Perry (1864-1946) reared five children on her own after the death of her husband, Daniel Elijah Perry (1857-1897). Financially secure from Dan's estate as well as that of his mother, Susan Rhem Perry (1834-1897), and stepfather, Eli Hamilton Elsworth Franklin (E. H. E. F.) Perry (1831-1912), Lillian and her children lived comfortable lives.

Nonetheless, as do all, Lillian experienced a number of heartaches and tragedies. Reported as news items, the public record of some of these unfortunate events reflected interest among locals who were aware that she was a widow. Other reports were an indication of Lillian's prominence in a community that respected her strength of character.

Within seven years of her husband's early passing, death knocked on Lillian's door again, as it were. In the fall of 1904, her mother, Elizabeth (Bettie) Gray Sutton (1842-1904), died:

1904, October 4: "Mrs. Bettie Gray Sutton, wife of Mr. Edward Sutton, died at her home in Falling Creek township Monday morning after an illness of five months, and the remains were interred at the family burying ground near the home today at one o'clock. Mrs. Sutton was the mother of Mrs. Lillian N. Perry, of this city [Kinston] and seven [sic., six] other children who are living. They are: Messrs. W. F. and Edward L. Sutton, Mrs. Minnie A. Brlitt, Mrs. Clyde R. Sugg, Mrs. Bruce R. Dixon and Miss Ora Lee Sutton." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

Some of the difficult times that Lillian endured had to do with property. Owner of multiple farms in Lenoir County and rental houses in the Kinston area, a series of fires occurred on several of her properties in the early 1900s:

1901, June 15: "A tenant house about a mile northeast of Kinston, belonging to Mrs. Lillian Perry, was burned Wednesday night. Mr. Timothy Spence and family, who lived in the house, had a narrow escape from being burned. They had to get out of the house without saving any furniture or even putting on any clothes. The blaze of the fire could easily be seen from Kinston." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)

1904, June 13: "A fire at the residence occupied by Mr. E. L. Brooks on East Street, at 12 o'clock today, did about \$75 damage to the roof and the inside of the house. The fire caught from a spark from the kitchen chimney falling on the roof and setting fire to the rotten shingles. A large crowd quickly collected at the scene of the fire and the fire engine was quickly to the well, but the fire

was put out with buckets of water. The building is the property of Ms. Lillian Perry." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

1914, November 10: "An alarm at 11:45 a.m. today called the fire department to southeast Railroad Street, where an outhouse, presumably fired by children, was blazing. The damage was trifling. The building was on property owned by Mrs. Lillian Perry." (*The Daily Free Press*, Kinston)

Property damage paled next to the illness and death that visited Lillian's immediate family again before the 1920s. More in the next Bucklesberry article.