

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Hardy Sutton (Part 3)

The son of Revolutionary War Patriot Benjamin Sutton, Sr. (ca. 1752-1837) and Sarah Hardy Sutton (1759-1846), Hardy Sutton (1803-1861) was a third generation Bucklesberrian. Like others of that time period, he was a farmer by trade.

Hardy lived a relatively short life and died just a few months after the start of the Civil War. Cause of death is unknown. He married Annie Hill Sutton (1807-1881) who outlived him by almost two decades.

They were parents of fourteen surviving children: Nancy Sutton Wooten (1825-1896); Thomas Sutton (1826-1894); Elizabeth Sutton Wood (1827-1894); Martha (Patsy) Sutton Parks Elmore (1829-1922); William Harmon Sutton (1832-1926); Richard Sutton (1833-1856); Lemuel Hardy Sutton (1835-1923); Benjamin Franklin Sutton (1838-1897); John A[ldridge] Sutton (1840-1915); Sally Hardy Sutton Fields (1841-1922); Louisa Sutton (1845-1961); twins, Julius Eri Sutton (1846-1925) and Junius Eli Sutton (1846-1931); and Christiana (Sutton) Sutton (1850-1939).

There is no known photograph of Hardy and no obituary. A few records in the Clellan Thomas Sutton Collection of Bucklesberry documents give a glimpse of his character and what he valued. For example, two receipts indicate he paid tuition for some of his children at a time when formal education in rural America was largely non-existent.

Hardy honorably paid his debts and avoided default on credit extended to him. Four receipts in the Collection show that he paid the balance on accounts he held with local merchants. Moreover, he was concerned about the reputation of his parents who may have been ill or unable to pay their bills. In an 1838 itemized receipt, Hardy settled in-full the outstanding balance on his mother's account:

1838: "Mrs Sally Sutton To J[ohn] & J[ohn Cobb] Washington & Co Dr, 1834 August 22nd, 1 lb Epsom Salts...\$0.25, Octo[ber] 4, 1 lb Salt...\$0.10 [October] 23...2 large blankets...\$12.35, Nov 24 69 ? ? – \$4.14, [November] 25, 3 pr Brogans...knife...\$4.65, 1834 Aug[ust] 12, 1 Brace & Bitts...\$3.00, [August] 29, 1...Brush...\$2.56 [Total=] Cr 26.99, 1834 Nov 25 By Cotton \$19.11 ½ [Balance=] \$7.87 ½ Acct...pd in full...Hardy Sutton, Jny [January] 31, 1838 J[ohn] & Jno [John] C[obb] Washington & Co."

There is evidence that Hardy was a godly man who sought to provide for the spiritual needs of his family. Born about a half-century from the time that early settlers arrived in Bucklesberry, there was no local church in the community when Hardy and Annie married and started growing their family.

The nearest church was Bear Creek Primitive Baptist Church, founded in 1756. Original papers housed at Duke University dated 1858 to 1916 provide a listing of church members and contributors (called subscribers). Among those named was Hardy Sutton.

The church meeting house was located north of La Grange in the current Ed Herring Road vicinity behind the old Joshua Herring homeplace and south of Meeting House Branch (aptly named) that runs eastward from Bear Creek. The ten-mile distance from Bucklesberry to the church on horse-drawn wagon would have been time-consuming.

Hardy and his family may have made the arduous round-trip to Bear Creek Church countless times. The year before he died, Hardy and five other charter members organized and built Hickory Grove Church in 1860. Located on its original Kennedy Home Road site, Bucklesberry's first local church still ministers today. Many of the congregants are descendants of Hardy and Annie Hill Sutton.