

[Series Article #257]
Published 12.22.21, *The Weekly Gazette*, La Grange, NC

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Christmas 1883

A man of many talents, Samuel Ivey (S. I.) Sutton (1834-1904) was the local newspaper reporter for Bucklesberry and La Grange in the 1880s. He wrote about festivities during Christmas week 1883 that included a personal note of thanks for gifts he had received:

1883, December 28: "Miss Maggie Kirkpatrick is visiting the families of Drs. Hadley and Kirkpatrick. Junius Smith, a colored man living in the western portion of the town, died one day last week."

"Jefferson Davis, son of our townsman Dr. A. C. Davis, is holidaying at home. He is a student at Trinity College. Christmas festivals, Christmas trees, eggnog and other engagements silenced La Grange [news] items for a week."

"Miss Charity Dawson and Miss Fannie Gardner, of Pitt county, are visiting the family of J. W. Sutton, Esq., and other relatives and friends in the place. Miss Effie Rouse, from Peace Institute, Mr. Thomas Rouse, from Chapel Hill, and N[oah] J. Rouse, Esq., of Kinston, spent Christmas with Mr. Noah Rouse, their father."

"My beaver [hat] I tip to Dr. Hodges for a beautiful cigar-holder, to McTaylor for an invitation to an eggnog early Christmas morning, (of course I accepted) and to a friend for a box of cigars at the Christmas tree. These kindnesses are highly appreciated, and the more so, when they come from pure friendship as in these cases. Thanks, kind friends."

"Several cases of beastly drunkenness, with the usual proportionate number of 'tipsy' cases during Christmas. Some seem to think it a privilege to get drunk at any time, and a duty to get drunk at Christmas time, but—*Of all the fools by heaven cursed, the impious drunkard is surely the worst; In vain we seek for fools more void of sense, or deeper sunk in stupid ignorance.*"

"Christmas passed off in our place without serious injury to life or limb, but the way the spirits flowed, the horn blowed and the popers [sic.] cracked, would have astonished even Bro. Coleman. Our people are a windy people. We have two cornet bands, Christmas horns, liquid horns, and individual blowers without number. Yes, we blow high and blow low, we blow fast and blow slow, we blow weak and blow strong, we blow short and blow long, and if our Kinston friends will come up [we] will blow them, now we've got a bridge [Hardy Bridge, Neuse River, Bucklesberry]."

"The entertainment at the Collegiate Institute Friday afternoon and evening was just splendid. The exercises in the afternoon consisted of a debate between Messrs. Murphy and King, and [Kirby E.] Sutton and Tingle, students of the school. Subject: Was the banishment of Napoleon just? I learn that the speeches were entirely prepared by the debaters, and delivered in a manner highly creditable to the young gentlemen and pleasing to the principals, patrons and friends of the school. The programme at night consisted in three characters gotten up by the young people of the place, for the benefit of the school library, and was entertaining. The handsome sum of seventy-five dollars was realized, which will add considerably to the already large library..."

"After the fun below, came the feast above. The festival, contributed by the friends and patrons of the school, consisted of good things of all kinds. The young folks ate and courted and courted and ate; the older ones ate, mostly, and chatted some. Taken all in all, the entertainment was a success, and again shows the esteem placed upon this Institution by our people." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)