

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Settler John Sutton (Part 2)

Records from the Clellan Sutton Collection name John Sutton (ca. 1730-bef. 1773) as one of the first settlers of Bucklesberry Pocosin in old Dobbs County, from which Lenoir County was later formed. John's origins prior to his arrival in Bucklesberry around 1750 have been a mystery for generations. Circumstantial evidence, including a will, a deed, and a bride, strongly suggests that he migrated from Bertie County, NC.

The will of Thomas Sutton, Sr. (1699-1750) of Bertie County, then a province of Great Britain, points to John's probable origins. Believed to be one of Thomas, Sr.'s six sons, John was the only one who was not bequeathed a share of land from his father's plantation.

Genealogist and Bucklesberry Sutton descendant Martha Mewborn Marble (1944-2019) suggested a likely theory why John was excluded. Perhaps during the time period when Thomas, Sr. was preparing his will, John had already announced his intention to move away, or he may have already left Bertie County altogether and had relocated to Bucklesberry in old Dobbs County. Thus, John's father would not have felt obligated to give him a share of family land.

Another possible explanation is that there may have been pre-existing, irreconcilable differences between John and his father that resulted in lingering ill feelings. Upon learning that he had been singularly excluded from a share of the homeland, John may have determined that he needed to separate geographically from his brothers, all of whom inherited sizeable tracts of land in Bertie County.

A young man, then in his early twenties, with prospects of building a family of his own, John may have concluded that he needed a fresh start elsewhere. This could have prompted his departure from Bertie County with an eye toward old Dobbs County some one hundred miles away.

Additional circumstantial evidence that could explain John's probable relocation to Bucklesberry is a land sale deed. A mere ten weeks after his father Thomas, Sr.'s will was proven, John sold the 100 acre parcel of land in Bertie County that he had inherited from his Aunt Mary Jones, sister of his mother Elizabeth Luerton Sutton (1705-1730).

Other research by Mrs. Marble confirmed John Sutton is not named in any other Bertie County public or court records after 1750. This suggested he no longer lived there after that year. Around

this same time period, John Sutton emerged in largely unsettled Bucklesberry Pocosin in old Dobbs County.

The earliest Bucklesberry record in the Clellan Sutton Collection that explicitly names John Sutton is a survey of a 275 acre plantation for him in Bucklesberry. Probably not a coincidence, this circa 1757 document coincides with the same time period that John could have exited his homeland of Bertie County.

John continued to enlarge his land holdings after settling in Bucklesberry. An April 9, 1763 receipt in the Collection indicates John paid a deposit of two pounds, equivalent to about \$462.00 in today's economy, for "part of pay [to] secure and get him a patent for 100 acres of Land in Dobbs County North Side of Neuse River joyning [i.e., joining] John Giles and Thos [Thomas] Burnet's lines..." Owned by a Bucklesberry descendent who resides in Virginia, a December 22, 1763 *Land Grant No. 68* from King George III awarded John 75 acres which also adjoined the land of John Giles on the north side of the Neuse in Bucklesberry.

One final piece of circumstantial evidence that supports the belief that John Sutton migrated from Bertie County will be shared in the next Bucklesberry article.