

# Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

## Settler John Sutton (Part 3)

A Bucklesberry resident his entire life, the late Clellan Thomas Sutton (1908-1999) was an avid historian. Highly regarded for his vast knowledge of the community, he was curator of a unique collection of more than 320 Bucklesberry documents from the mid-1700s to the early 1900s. Viewed as one of the largest family albums of its kind in the State, the *USGenWeb Project* ([www.usgenweb.org](http://www.usgenweb.org)) houses online copies of these records.

The Clellan Sutton Collection includes a number of historically significant pre-Revolutionary War records that name John Sutton (ca. 1730-bef. 1773) or can be attributed to him, the first dated circa 1757. John actually arrived in Bucklesberry as a settler in old Dobbs County, though, a few years earlier. The April 28, 1750 will of Francis Grice, also of old Dobbs County, named John as one of three witnesses, proving he was living in Bucklesberry in 1750.

Unfortunately, John's origins prior to his move to Bucklesberry are not nearly as clear. Evidence, including his purported father's will, a deed, and his son's bride, albeit circumstantial, strongly suggests that Bertie County, NC was his prior residence.

The will of Thomas Sutton, Sr. (1699-17510) of Bertie County, a province of Great Britain at the time, points to northeastern North Carolina as John's origins. Believed to be one of Thomas, Sr.'s six sons, John was named in Thomas, Sr.'s will. Although he was the only son not bequeathed a share of land from his father's plantation, John likely was reared in his father's household in Bertie County.

A land sale deed provides additional circumstantial evidence that establishes John's connection with Bertie County. About ten weeks after his father's will was proven in March 1750, John sold 100 acres of land he inherited from his Aunt Mary Jones, sister of his mother Elizabeth Luerton Sutton (1705-1750). It was located in the Cashoke Creek area of Bertie County.

Research from the late genealogist Martha Mewborn Marble (1944-2019), herself a Bucklesberry Sutton descendant, confirmed the May 1750 land sale deed was the last Bertie County public or court record in which John Sutton was named. Although the deed places him in Bertie County, it suggests he no longer lived there after 1750. The same year, John first emerged in Bucklesberry.

Finally, the bride of John's son offers circumstantial evidence that John was from Bertie County. All of his known sons—John, Jr., William, and Benjamin—were purportedly born in the Bucklesberry Pocosin of Dobbs County. The oldest of the three brothers, Benjamin (1752-1837)

married Sarah Hardy Sutton (1759-1846) from Bertie County. The couple made their home in Bucklesberry where they reared a family of ten children.

Ms. Marble posited that the union of these two, reared in geographically separate communities some 100 miles apart, was no chance occurrence. Included in the Clellan Sutton Collection is a 1780 letter addressed, "To Benj[amin and] Sarah living [in] Dobbs," and signed, "Your Loving Brother till death Wm [William] Parrot Hardy." This letter proves that Sarah was a sister of William, whose roots can be traced to Bertie County, suggesting she was also born and reared there.

It is plausible, then, that Benjamin may have accompanied his father John on trips back to the homeland of Bertie County from time to time. In addition to visiting Sutton relatives, Benjamin had ample opportunity there to meet his bride. The 1780 letter implicitly ties John once more to Bertie County.

More on settler John Sutton will be shared in an upcoming Bucklesberry article.