

# Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

## Settler John Sutton (Part 11)

Little is known about eighteenth century early settlers of the Bucklesberry Pocosin of old Dobbs County, from which Lenoir County was later formed. Historical records are scarce. The few available documents are lean on details about family members.

One universally recognized genealogical resource is the U.S. Census. First conducted in 1790, it only named heads of household. Wives and children were not listed in Censuses until 1850. Verifying the families of early Colonial American settlers, then, is virtually impossible, shy of other ancestral records such as deeds, Bibles, etc. preserved within family lines.

The Bucklesberry community is fortunate to have the Clellan Thomas Sutton (1908-1999) Collection of more than 300 documents. This mammoth album dates from 1748 to the early 1900s. It chronicles several generations of one of Bucklesberry's first families headed by patriarch John Sutton (ca. 1730-bef. 1773). Although he is identified in several of the oldest records, the first about 1757, his wife and helpmate is not named and remains uncertain.

Some historians believe John's wife was the former Ann Turner, daughter of John Turner, thought to have originated from Southampton County, VA. But there is no definitive evidence or proof she was his wife or the mother of his children. Ann is at best his assumed wife, based on records that indicate her father gifted or sold three properties in old Dobbs County to John. The prior association of the Turner and Sutton families in John's birthplace of Bertie County also lends support that she was his assumed wife.

John's children, however, are known and documented. According to the late historian and Bucklesberry Sutton descendant Martha Mewborn Marble (1944-2019), John had three proven sons: Benjamin (ca. 1752-1837); John, Jr. (ca. 1758-1820/30); and William (ca. 1760-1813/20). Four other purported sons have also been ascribed to John: James (1755/67-unknown); Richard (1755/73-1800/10); Simon (1765/67-bef. 1813); and Thomas (bef. 1758-1783/1800).

All of John's proven sons and three of his purported sons are listed as heads of household in one or more of the first three Censuses (1790, 1800, 1810). Only Thomas is omitted. Believed to have deceased by 1800, he may never have married or possibly had health issues, either of which could have placed him in the household and care of one of his brothers when the 1790 Census was taken.

In addition, numerous records in the Clellan Sutton Collection account for all three of John's proven sons. Various receipts, inventories and tax records dated 1786 to 1800 are also attributed to three of John's purported sons. Once more, only Thomas is not mentioned in the Collection.

Finally, children's names can be an indicator of lineage. Three of John's purported sons—James, Richard and Simon—have names found in the family line of John's assumed wife Ann Turner but not in John's line. This suggests Ann Turner was not only John's assumed wife but could have been the mother of his children, although neither is proven. Thomas, the only purported son's name not found in the Turner line, is found in John's paternal line. His father from Bertie County was Thomas Sutton, Sr. (1699-1750).

Available evidence points to the likelihood that John fathered seven sons altogether. "No doubt John had daughters," wrote Ms. Marble, "but there is no evidence as to [who] they might have been." ([www.olddobbers.net](http://www.olddobbers.net))