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Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

This Week in 1885

Local news in rural farm communities and small towns is typically not spectacular or sensational. One hundred thirty seven years ago this week, columnist Samuel Ivey (S. I.) Sutton (1834-1904) reported on the tedium of happenings in Bucklesberry and greater La Grange. Reprinted below is his May 6, 1885 news column published in *The Daily Journal* (New Bern, NC):

"The dull times increaseth. J[oseph] H. Kinsey, Esq. is visiting relatives in town. N[eedham] W. Herring had a runaway and a buggy smashed last Saturday. 'No body hurt'"

"An amusing letter was received by one of our businessmen, from Goldsboro a few days ago. The unmentionable contents created no little fun."

"A few cases of sickness in town. Alex., infant son of H[ugh] M. McDonald and one or two others, are reported sick though we hope not seriously so."

"The series of meetings conducted by Rev. Mr. [Simmons H.] Isler in this place, closed Sunday night. No additions to the church, but it is to be hoped that good was accomplished."

"Mr. [James B.] Pollock of Kinston, representing Peoples Mutual Assurance Fund, was here Monday, working in the interest of the Company. He speaks hopefully of success here."

"Farmers are busy in their crops. Cotton planting is over, and work in corn, rice, etc., is going on. The wheat crop is looking better, but is later than for several springs."

"A heavy storm passed this place last Friday evening. The wind was heavy, and we learn that there was considerable hail in the Bucklesberry section. No serious damage that we have heard of"

"At this writing our town election is progressing slowly. Occasionally considerable feeling is shown, and hard words are used. We expect the country to be safe. Let the election go as it may."

"Picnics are quite frequent—one to Smithfield and one at Pine Bush [Beach, Bucklesberry], May 1st. The one at Pine Bush was made lively, by 'ducking' in the [Neuse] River, of nearly all the 'boys,' and the fish cooked on the beach were flavored with 'firewater.'"

"Capt. Davis [sic., Col. A. C. Davis] will commence work on his new school building sometime next week. The house is to be 40 x 80 feet, 3 stories high. This will be quite an improvement on the building now occupied, and will give more room, the want of which has been greatly felt. We hope to see the Capt. [sic., Col.] receive the patronage he deserves. The new building will be ready for the fall session."

"A serious accident occurred in Saulston, in Wayne county, last Sunday evening. William Ham and wife had been visiting and were returning home, the cart-shaft gave way and the horse ran off breaking the left leg of Mr. Ham and the left leg of Mrs. Ham, both bones passing entirely through the flesh. Dr. [Jacob M.] Hadley of our place was called, and assisted by Dr. [James M.] Kirkpatrick, rendered the necessary professional treatment."

A Bucklesberry native and farmer for much of his life, S. I. Sutton eventually became a leading townsman in La Grange. In his spare time he was a reporter for several local newspapers during the 1880s.