

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

This Week in 1882

The sharp rise in social and digital media over recent years has delivered a near-death blow to the newspaper industry. Subscriptions are substantially down. Prior to the television and high technology era, though, newspapers were the primary channel through which people got their news.

Nineteenth century rural America was generally tuned-in to local news. Reporters typically wrote about agriculture, births and deaths, business, crime, education, events, marriages and politics relevant to their communities.

When compared to sensational and 'gotcha' news coming out of some media outlets today, however, local news from the 1800s comes across as drab and uninteresting. Yet it provided a glimpse of authentic life back then, untainted by present-day societal and cultural ills.

Born in Bucklesberry and a farmer there for many years, Samuel Ivey (S. I.) Sutton (1834-1904) eventually moved to La Grange where he became a well-regarded townsman. In his spare time, he was a newspaper journalist known for his straight-forward, 'just the facts, ma'am' writing style that included occasional commentary. One hundred forty years ago this week, S. I. reported the following local news for greater La Grange:

1882, June 9: "D. C. Murchison has returned from his Florida trip. Mr. Edwards is still absent."

"Mr. W[illiam] H. Elmore and Mrs. Nancy Barwick were married at Hickory Grove Church [Bucklesberry] on Sunday, 4th instant. S. I. Sutton, Esq., made the two 'one flesh.'"

"Hughie, youngest son of B[en] H[ardy] and Christiana Sutton, died on Monday, 5th instant. The little one suffered for weeks, but has gone where the weary are at rest."

"C[ouncil] S. Wooten left for Wake Forest on Monday last. He will deliver an address at the [Wake Forest] College on Thursday."

"Joseph Kinsey is on a visit to Raleigh. He will visit Peace Institute, and may extend his trip to other important schools of the State."

"The first ripe peach of the season in this section was gathered from the orchard of your correspondent [i.e., S. I.'s farm, Bucklesberry] on the 4th instant."

"Crops have improved some. Rain last week, and a few warm days, brought them out, but the present cold snap is throwing them back again."

"Davis' School [La Grange] closed last Friday. The speaking of the boys came off Thursday night. Friday. Mr. Murray, of Wilson, delivered the address, and the members of the Washington Society spoke. Friday night the concert was given. Business prevented me from being present, so can't give particulars."

"Miss Belle Paris, of La Grange, and Mr. – Braswell, of Halifax, were married on the 31st of last month. The marriage ceremonies took place at the Methodist Church in this place [La Grange], Rev. John Paris, D.D., father of the bride, officiating. The church was beautifully decorated, and many friends witnessed the imposing ceremony." (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern)