

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

New Year's 1882

Fireworks have been a New Year's tradition for many years. Although available to the American public by 1783, there were no reports of fireworks displays in La Grange or Bucklesberry a century later.

Local news published during New Year's week 1882 in the *Kinston Journal* mentioned two celebrations in the La Grange area—a parade and a social hop. The big news that rang in the New Year, however, was a life-threatening kerfuffle between two men, one a regarded attorney. Excerpts from the January 5, 1882 report follow:

"On...[December 27] the Good Samaritans had [a] public parade or display. Their maneuvers and singing attracted attention to say the least of it."

"Wednesday [December] 28th was a day of business of many kinds. Some law business was disposed of in the fore noon, a Rail Road meeting, in which citizens from Clinton, Faison, White Hall [Seven Springs] and La Grange participated, was held in the afternoon, and later an affray, and later still arrests by policeman, trial etc."

"The trials were civil and would not interest the public....The affray was between [James] Lovit Hines and F[rederick] B[ecton] Loftin, Esq. of your town [Kinston]. I will give the circumstances as I learned them as nearly as I can. Mr. Hines and Mr. Loftin were engaged in a private conversation, and Loftin becoming offended at some remark made by Hines, struck him. They clinched, but were soon separated by friends who used every effort to restore peace but Hines refusing to listen, drew his knife and threatened to cut if not let alone. He was let alone, when he drew a pistol, and fired twice, without doing any damage. The policeman after a long time came upon the scene, and about the close, took the parties under arrest. The matter was heard before Mr. Moore who bound the parties to court. Mr. Hines was also put under a five hundred dollar peace bond. It can truthfully be said of this town government, that there is a great deficiency some where, or that it is an entire failure. Affrays spring up and are over, many times, without the knowledge of the police. A better police regulation would make a better appearance, to say the least of it."

"An amusing story is told at the expense of the Chief of Police. When hearing of the affray and that his services were needed, he at once told his assistant to go for a certain notorious street drunkard and lock him up. But it seems that the drunken man had learned a thing or two and

could not be found. Reports say that when an affray starts, the policeman makes for Rouse, and Rouse makes for home. I do not say that the above is true."

"A social hop was given at the [La Grange] Academy [Noah J. Rouse and J. Y Joyner, administrators] on Thursday [December 29] night."

"Several business changes in town. Barrow & Pully have sold out to John D. Walters, who is to occupy the store moved by Bob Harper. (It didn't take Bob only 4 or 5 days to move it.) I understand that W. M. Nettles, C. W. Joyner and J. P. Joyner will sell goods at Barrow & Pully's old stand."

"Tub Warters and William Ward will do work on buggies, carts, wagons etc. at Albertson's & Taylor's former place of business."