

[Series, Article #5]

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# Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

## DNA Proves Bertie County Origin

The origin of John Sutton, first to arrive in Bucklesberry in the mid-1700s, has been a mystery for generations. The previous article in this series presented strong circumstantial evidence that John migrated to Bucklesberry from Bertie County. But shy of DNA evidence, we can never know for certain whether John Sutton was from Bertie County or elsewhere.

In 2015, noted genealogist and Bucklesberry Sutton descendant, Martha Mewborn Marble of New Bern, NC, in consultation with the international Sutton Project ([www.familytreedna.com](http://www.familytreedna.com)), devised a strategy to gather DNA from known Sutton descendants of Bucklesberry which could then be compared with that of Sutton descendants from Bertie County, who branched from Suttons in Perquimans County. Matching DNA would definitively prove John's origin.

A family's lineage and genetic traits are passed down to succeeding generations through male descendants. Therefore, Phase 1 of the strategy included obtaining YDNA-67 evidence from male Sutton descendants whose lineages could be traced to the three known sons of John Sutton of Bucklesberry—Benjamin, John, Jr., and William. If their 67 genetic markers matched, then Phase 2 would include obtaining YDNA-67 evidence from one or more male Sutton descendants from Bertie or Perquimans Counties. Finally, if YDNA-67 evidence of the Bucklesberry Sutton descendants from Phase 1 matched that of the Bertie or Perquimans County Sutton descendants from Phase 2, then we would have confirmation that John Sutton originated from Bertie County.

In 2016, five Sutton males, all descendants from one of John Sutton's sons of Bucklesberry, agreed to YDNA-67 testing through Family Tree YDNA. In order to preserve confidentiality of the descendants, they are identified simply as A, B, C, D, and E. Descendants A and C of La Grange, and Descendant B of Smithfield, NC are from the Benjamin Sutton line. Descendant D of Weymouth, MA is from the William Sutton line, and Descendant E of La Grange is from the John Sutton, Jr. line. Remarkably, when the DNA results were analyzed, the 67 genetic markers of all five men matched with a variance of no more than three markers, proving their relationship to each other and to John Sutton.

Phase 2 of the plan was advanced by identifying another Sutton male, Descendant F, of Chattanooga, TN, who also agreed to YDNA-67 testing. Born in Washington, DC, Descendant F was reared in Rocky Mount, NC; however, his father was a Sutton from Perquimans County. Incredibly, Descendant F's 67 markers matched that of the five Sutton descendants from Bucklesberry.

The only way that Descendant F could genetically match Descendants A, B, C, D, and E from Bucklesberry is for all to share a common Sutton ancestor. We know that Descendant F's roots can be traced to George Sutton of Perquimans County, making George the common ancestor. Through a series of patrilineal relationships, beginning with John Sutton of Bucklesberry, we can trace the lineage of Descendants A, B, C, D, and E back to George. John's father was Thomas Sutton (mother, Elizabeth Luerton Sutton) of Bertie County. Thomas' father was Joseph (mother, Parthenia Durant Sutton) of Perquimans County. Joseph's father was Nathaniel (mother, Deborah Astine Sutton) of Perquimans County. And Nathaniel's father was George (mother, Sarah Tilden Sutton) of Perquimans County. Thus, Descendant F and Descendants A, B, C, D, and E all can be traced to George Sutton.

The mystery of John Sutton and where he originated prior to his arrival in Bucklesberry has now been solved. DNA evidence allows us to conclude with certainty that John Sutton migrated from Bertie County.