

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Twins Aplenty

Twins are rare, seen in only 3.3% or 33 out of every 1,000 live births in the U.S. These numbers suggest that Bucklesberry had more than its share between the mid-1800s and the early-1900s.

Twins included Louisa Rebecca Sutton (1855-1925) and Isaac Eli Sutton (1855-1926), born to Benjamin, Jr. (1795-1864) and Eliza Herring Sutton (1822-1857); brothers, Dee and L.M. Sutton (1894; lived only one day), born to Jeremiah, Sr. (1836-1900) and Sally Ivey Sutton (1846-1893); Bonnie Bell Sutton Vause (1900-1984) and Swannie Nell Sutton Barwick (1900-1987), born to John (Doc) Ivey (1879-1942) and Cora Lee Fields Sutton (1877-1947); and unnamed sisters (1914; lived only one week), born to Alex Milton (1884-1933) and Delilah Blanche Creech Sutton (1895-1988).

The earliest known Bucklesberry twins were brothers, Julius Eri Sutton (1847-1925) and Junius Eli Sutton (1847-1931), born to Hardy (1803-1861) and Annie Hill Sutton (1807-1881). Given the rarity of twins, their birth must have electrified this sleepy old community.

There are no available photographs of Julius and Junius together, and no individual photograph of Junius has emerged to date. But the Clellan Sutton Collection has an 1865 portrait of young, eighteen-year old Julius in uniform when he was stationed at Bald Head Island during the last two weeks of the Civil War.

Research indicates that twins sometimes have common personalities, mannerisms, preferences, and aspirations. Identical twins separated at birth who grow up in different homes and environments may share some of the same interests and proclivities. The theory is that identical twins have the same DNA and that genetics explains their mostly indistinguishable appearance as well as similarities in their actions and behavior.

With no available photographs of both brothers taken during the same time period to compare, and absent genetic evidence, it is impossible to know whether Julius and Junius were identical or fraternal twins.

What we do know is that Julius and Junius shared a number of common life interests and experiences. For example, both were life-long farmers, having inherited land from their father. They also had a mutual interest in business. Just a few years after the death of their mother, the brothers "opened a stock of groceries at the gin house in Bucklesberry" (*The Daily Journal*, New Bern, September 10, 1884).

In addition to sharing a business interest, Julius and Junius each married a wife who was a first cousin once removed to himself. Julius' wife was Nancetta (Nancy) Sutton (1857-1929), daughter of Josiah, Sr. (1819-1898) and Nancy Hill Sutton (1818-1905). Josiah, Sr. was the son of John (abt. 1779-abt. 1858). John and Julius' father, Hardy were brothers, and both were sons of Benjamin, Sr. (abt. 1752-1837) and Sarah Hardy Sutton (1759-1846), which made Nancetta and Julius first cousins once removed.

Junius' wife was Susan Elizabeth Daly (1859-1912), daughter of George B. (1815-1903) and Nancy Sutton Daly (1820-1889). Nancy was the daughter of Benjamin, Jr. (1795-1864) and Mary Jane Hines Sutton (unknown-by 1840). Benjamin, Jr. and Junius' father, Hardy were brothers, and both were sons of Benjamin, Sr. and Sarah Hardy Sutton, which also made Susan and Junius first cousins once removed.

Julius' and Junius' marriages to wives who shared with them the same common ancestors was likely impacted more by environment than by genetics. Living in a small rural community meant fewer fish in the pond, so to speak.

Although virtually all twins are born on the same day and the same year, research has shown they die years apart. So it was with Julius who died in 1925, and Junius who passed away six years later in 1931.

[Caption to accompany picture]

Julius Eri Sutton, age 18, in 1865 while stationed at Bald Head Island during the last two weeks of the Civil War. Photograph from the Clellan Sutton Collection.

