

BATTLE OF HUCK'S DEFEAT

At Brantonsville on yesterday, the King's Mountain Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, unveiled a monument to the American patriots, who 123 years ago, there defeated the bloody monster Huck and his horde of British and Tory marauders. The occasion was one of deep patriotic interest, not only to those who had the pleasure of participating in the exercises and the delightful hospitalities that were so graciously and beautifully extended; but to all the people of the country and state who feel pride in the heroic valor of the sturdy old apostles of liberty, who laid the foundations of American liberty.

While the glorious event which this monument is intended to commemorate is the common heritage of all the people of this section, for reasons that seemed fully justifiable to the King's Mountain Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the general public was not invited to the unveiling exercises. Participation was confined to the members of the chapter, descendants of Col. Wm Bratton, and other heroes of the battle, and a few outsiders. They came by special invitation from the country immediately surrounding. from Yorkville, Rock Hill and Chester, numbered about two hundred in all, and all were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Bratton.

The guests began to arrive at about 11 o'clock, and were not a little surprised to note the extensive preparations that had been made to ensure their pleasant reception. Over the entrance to the spacious lawn and elm shaded lawn, was strewn a long lan-

tern, bounded with the colors of the D. A. R. and bearing the legend "Welcome," American flags floated from fence posts, and the fine old country home of Mr. and Mrs. Bratton was tastefully decorated both inside and out. Seats were arranged in all the shadiest places about the lawn, and as the arriving guests were received by the host and hostess, assisted by members of the D. A. R., they were not only bidden, but made to feel at home. The Springstein brass band from Chester, which had been especially engaged for the occasion, furnished music throughout the day.

The exercises of the day were commenced at 12 o'clock, and were opened with prayer by Rev. J. K. Hall, pastor of Bethesda, after which the orator of the day was introduced by W. B. McCaw, Esq., as follows:

The descendants of seventy-five patriots of the American Revolution, whose names shall be published at the close of these exercises, have assembled here today under the auspices of the King's Mountain Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution to commemorate in granite and bronze their appreciation of the deeds of heroism, valor and self-sacrifice of their sires that for more than one hundred and twenty-three years found its only monument in the hearts of a grateful people.

Leonidas and his Spartans at Thermopylae had registered no more solemn vow to repel the invader or to die than did this devoted band—the first and only organized resistance to British power and invasion in South Car-

olina, since the fall of Charleston in May, A. D. 1780.

That these patriots had resolved to conquer or to die, is fully evidenced by the fact that setting out from their place of refuge in South Carolina with one hundred and thirty-three men—there were only seventy-five actual participants in the battle—we now commemorate, on the American side. No one who did not prefer death to surrender to Britain or Tory was wanted in that band.

Opposed to these seventy-five heroes, whose names constitute a heritage without price to their descendants was a detachment of British horse, numbering 400 and a large body of Tories. How complete was the success of the patriots and how heroically they defeated themselves in battle will convince the story of their glory which will be told to you by the orator of the day, whom I now have the pleasure of presenting—the Hon. David Edward Finley—our congressman.

As Mr. Finley arose, on the conclusion of Mr. McCaw's remarks, there was applause. Mr. Finley delivered a carefully prepared historical address as follows:

The Story of the Battle

Madam Regent, Members of King's Mountain Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution, Ladies and Gentlemen:

As a general proposition, all great wars are fought to settle some great question. The American Revolution was fought to secure to the American people liberty and independence. Historians generally state that the great question, the settlement of which eventuated in the war, was "Taxation without Representation." Technically speaking, this is not true; and as a

matter of fact, the taxation of the American colonies by Great Britain without their consent was only one of the incidents to the exercise of sovereignty by the Mother Country and was simply an object lesson, and in the matter of the tax on tea, was so intended by the British parliament.

What the great mass of the American people objected to, was British sovereignty, and themselves being held as colonists of the British crown. Many of them to escape persecution and oppression, civil and religious, had emigrated to America, and here for generations they had enjoyed this liberty, and at the time of the Revolution the thirteen colonies in point of population, wealth and progress, had reached the point where they could not brook the insistent exercise of authority by the British government, for the reason that they wished political freedom and felt strong enough to set up for themselves in the family of nations and maintain their position.

The sentiment for independence and entire separation from the mother country was particularly strong in South Carolina—more so than in any other of the colonies. In the early progress of the war, March 24th, 1776, South Carolina, acting through her representatives, dissolved all relations with England, established a constitution and became a free and independent state. Under this constitution it was treason and rebellion to aid or abet the British government. From 1719, when the colonists overthrew the Proprietary government and became a royal province, down to the Revolution, South Carolina had been favored in every way by the British crown, and now that it was the first to throw off the British yoke, she became particularly obnoxious to Great

Britain, and great efforts were made throughout the war to conquer the state. During the years 1775, '76, '77, '78 and '79, the Whig forces were uniformly successful. Early in 1780 all this was changed. On the 12th of May, Charleston surrendered to the British.

After the fall of Charleston, all open opposition to the British in South Carolina ceased for a few weeks. The British, in order to make secure their conquest, stationed bodies of troops in different sections of the state; and while the patriots could no longer reasonably hope for success, the spirit of liberty burned with quenchless flame in the breast of the Whigs in this section of South Carolina. This flame was fanned by the wanton cruelty of the British, and particularly by the acts of the bloody Tarleton at Waxhaw (Buford's massacre,) in Lancaster county, where, on May 29th, he had put to the sword several hundred Virginians after resistance had ceased and quarter was asked. After this last act of murder and slaughter by Tarleton, the Whigs found a new rallying cry, "Remember Tarleton."

I recollect very well some years ago when I was travelling in the upper section of Lancaster county, I came to an humble monument enclosed by a rude stone fence, and out of curiosity, I stopped and examined the monument. It was dedicated to the memory of Colonel Buford and his four hundred Virginians, the majority of whom were slaughtered at that place by Tarleton in cold blood and after resistance had ceased. On the monument are inscribed the words quoted.

The counties, (districts then), of Fairfield, Chester, Lancaster and York, were largely populated by Whigs, and

to their imperishable honor, history truthfully records that during all the dark days of the Revolution they never took the oath of allegiance to the British, or were paroled prisoners. While opposition in other parts of the state had ceased, this could not be the case in this section. After the surrender of Charleston, the British boasted that the conquest of South Carolina was complete. But they did not know the spirit which actuated and the love of liberty that controlled the Whigs in the counties of Fairfield, Chester, Lancaster and York.

On the 24th of May, 1780, Captain John McClure with a party of Whigs attacked and defeated a band of Tories under Captain Houseman at Beckhamville in Chester county. On the 26th of May, two days afterwards, Colonel William Bratton and Captain John McClure, with a small body of their Whigs neighbors, attacked and routed a band of Tories at Mobley's meeting house on Little river in Fairfield county. On the 20th of June, 1780, at Ramsour's Mill, on the South Fork of the Catawba, the Tories, under Moore and Welsh, were defeated by the Whigs under Colonel Locke.

These attacks, at a time when the British were boasting of their conquest of the state, showed to them that in this section of South Carolina at least the spirit of liberty still lived, and aroused them to greater efforts in order to punish the patriots who dared resist England's rule.

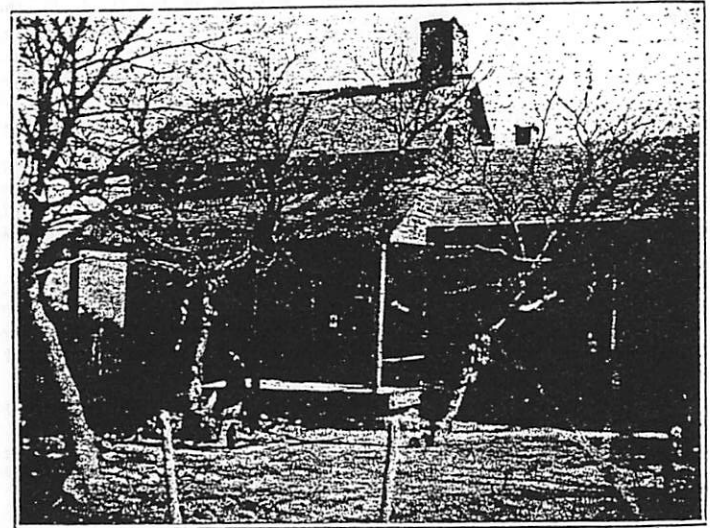
At this time a British post was established at Rocky Mount, in Chester county, under the command of Colonel Turnbull. To conquer the Whigs in this section, as well as to avenge the defeat of the Tories at Beckhamville, Mobley's meeting house and Ramsour's

Mill, Colonel Turnbull sent out Captain Christian Huck, with four hundred British troops and about five hundred Tories, to accomplish the work. Huck made his headquarters for sometime in the neighborhood of White's Mill, now Lando, in Chester county. From this point he sent out expeditions into the surrounding country, whose business it was to encourage the Tories and to subdue the Whigs. Tory bands robbed the Whigs of their property, burned their houses and even committed murder in cold blood. During this time the house of the Reverend John Simpson, pastor of

ty and devilry were perpetrated by Tory bands.

General Sumter's headquarters at this time were at Clem's Branch in Lancaster county.

In York and Chester counties, the Whigs were active, and Colonel William Bratton, Colonel Edward Lacey, Captain John McClure and John Mills were engaged in arousing the Whigs to resistance. Success crowned their efforts and in a short time 400 men, mounted and armed, were gathered in these two counties. History states that in this number were included all the able bodied men fit for service. The



Col. William Bratton's Revolutionary Home

Fishing Creek church, was burned; purpose of the Whig leaders was to drive the Tories from this section of the state. William Strong while engaged in reading his Bible, was cruelly shot; and many other acts of wanton cruelty. When the Americans gathered, it

was at first intended to attack the British and Tories at White's Mill (now Lando), in Chester county; but on arriving there about sundown on the 11th of July, it was found that Huck had moved his camp to Brattonville, in York county, a distance of about fifteen miles. It was determined to follow and attack him that night. Owing to an order's being misunderstood, some one hundred and fifty or more of the Whigs returned to the east bank of Catawba river, and Colonels Bratton and Lacey, Capt. McClure and other leaders proceeded with less than 350 men. Huck was found encamped in the neighborhood of Brattonville, near the house of Colonel William Bratton. From Reuben Lacey, a Tory, and brother of Colonel Edward Lacey, it was learned that the British were encamped at James Williamson's house; also the location of the sentinels was ascertained. On reaching this point, the Tories proceeded to surround the country and plunder the Whigs.

The Whigs, under the command of Colonels Bratton and Lacey, Captain John McClure and others, reached Brattonville after midnight on the morning of July 12th, 1780. The forces under them are variously estimated by historians. The lowest estimate places the number at 75, another at 133, and another at 350. Certainly the number of the patriots engaged was small as compared to that of the British and Tories, who numbered 900, Ramsey, Sims and Chapman, in their histories of South Carolina, state that the American forces at the battle of Williamson's plantation, or Huck's defeat were under the command of General Sumter. This is not true, as General

Sumter was not present and took no part whatever in the battle, and as a matter of fact knew nothing whatever of the occurrence until afterwards. I presume that the error was occasioned by the fact that Colonel William Bratton and other leaders with him in the battle all recognized Colonel Sumter's authority, he being a brigadier general and the highest in command in this section of the state. The Whigs carefully laid their plans and about 4 o'clock on the morning of July 12th, the attack on the British and Tories was made. The British were enclosed in a lot or field around James Williamson's house, entered on each side by a lane. The attack was made on both sides of the enclosure. The British were at a disadvantage on this account, and being asleep until the Americans approached within seventy-five yards of their encampment were taken by surprise. Huck, aroused from his slumber by the roar of the American muskets and rifles, mounted his horse, rode back and forth along his lines and did all that he could to rally his men, but all to no purpose. The Whigs, many of whom resided in the immediate neighborhood, particularly was this true of Colonel William Bratton and the Williamsons, fighting for home, family and country, attacked the enemy, and like heroes did they sustain themselves. The battle lasted one hour, and the victory was complete. Forty of the enemy were dead; more than fifty wounded; the remainder, with the exception of a small number, who escaped, were made prisoners. Among the slain was the monster Huck, and the cruel Ferguson. The patriot loss was one killed, a man named Campbell.

The victory was most important in that it was the first time since the surrender of Charleston by General Lincoln that any considerable body of British troops had met with defeat. One immediate result of the battle was the increase of the forces under General Sumter. The Whigs throughout the state became active, and notwithstanding the fact that the incapable Gates was defeated on the 15th of August at Camden by Lord Cornwallis, the battle of Musgrove's Mill was fought on August 18th, resulting in a victory for the Americans under General Williams.

Huck's defeat followed by the victory at Musgrove's Mill led up to the battle of King's Mountain on October 7th, 1780. Without Huck's defeat the battle of Musgrove's Mill would hardly have been fought, and without those victories, there is little likelihood that the battles of King's Mountain and Cowpens would have taken place, and without these battles, it is improbable that the war of the Revolution would have been successful.

The women of the Revolution played their part in the great struggle for independence. Particularly was this true in this section of the state. History states of Mrs. Martha Bratton, the wife of Colonel William Bratton, that on the evening of the day preceding the battle a squad of Tories came to her husband's house and informed her that they wished to see her husband. When she told them that he was not at home, and she didn't know where he was, a Tory ruffian swore that he would make her know. And seizing a grain sickle he placed it in position around her neck, and drawing his sword, with an oath told her that if

she did not tell her husband's whereabouts, he would cut off her head. In this position, with her little son John Bratton, then about six years of age, clinging to her dress, with death staring her in the face, she exhibited a courage sublime, and without excitement answered the threat to take her life by stating that she had told the simple truth and could not tell if she would, and added that she would, not if she could. She was rescued by a Tory, Captain Adamson, who cast the villainous Tory with the flat of his sword and kicked him out of the house. Captain Adamson then addressed Mrs. Bratton, expressing regret at the occurrence, and gave her assurances of protection.

Shortly after this, Colonel Huck came to the house, and in an interview with Mrs. Bratton ably and politely endeavored to persuade her to use her influence with her husband to give up the Whig cause, and accept a commission in the British service. She answered him that Colonel Bratton was in Sumter's army, and that she would rather see him die there, true to the cause of liberty, than to have him a traitor in the British service. As I have already stated, the bloody Huck and the cruel Ferguson were slain in battle—the former by Thomas Carroll. After the battle was over, an incident occurred which was a sequel to the attack made on Mrs. Bratton the day before. Colonel Bratton, being informed of the attack on his wife, was erroneously told that Captain Adamson was the man guilty of the outrage. He and Captain Chambers were about to put Captain Adamson, who had been captured, to death. Captain Adamson protested that he