

2 lives, brought together by American Revolution

Woman tended to a stricken stranger, even keeping vigil by her bed

Agnes Barton and Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson, both born in Ireland, emigrated to the Waxhaws section of Lancaster County, S.C. Elizabeth Jackson, probably in her mid-20s, came in 1765 with her husband, Andrew, and two young sons, Hugh and Robert. Agnes came with her parents to the Waxhaws when she was 12 in 1769. History does not record Agnes' maiden name, only the name of the man she married, a Mr. Barton, carpenter by trade.

Since Elizabeth Jackson was some 17 years older than Agnes, they were not likely close friends. They may not have known each other. Thomas D. Faulkner, a Fort Mill undertaker in 1913, whose great-grandmother was a sister of Elizabeth Jackson, wrote that the two women were strangers to one another.

However, the American Revolution would intertwine their lives. The Bartons had moved from the Waxhaws to Charleston some time between 1776 and 1780. After the British invaded and captured Charleston in the spring of 1780, they headed for the area of greatest resistance to their rule — Camden and the Scotch-Irish settlements in Lancaster and York counties.

The Waxhaws were invaded and the population was forced to flee northward.

Elizabeth Jackson's two oldest sons had died as soldiers in the

war. She took 13-year-old Andy, a son born on the Carolina frontier, with her to Susannah Spratt Smart's home in southern Mecklenburg County, where they were taken in. Several months later, she got word that two of her Crawford nephews were sick with "ship's fever" (most likely typhus). Elizabeth left Andy with his Crawford relatives and headed for Charleston to nurse her nephews.

According to T.D. Faulkner, Elizabeth Jackson never reached

NEARBY HISTORY



Louise Pettus

the ship but was taken sick shortly after she reached the city. Agnes Barton took her in and nursed her. "Night after night did she sit by the sick bed of the stranger, ministering to her wants and soothing her sorrows with all the solicitude of an Irish heart; and when she died she closed her eyes; and although in humble circumstances in the world, yet she furnished from her wardrobe the clothes in which the mother of the immortal Jackson was committed to the dust..."

Mr. Barton, the carpenter, made the coffin for Elizabeth Jackson. When the war was over, the Bartons returned to the Waxhaws. Agnes Barton died July 30, 1846, at age 89.

On Aug. 11, 1824, Andrew Jackson replied to a letter from James H. Witherspoon of Lancaster District. Witherspoon had asked Jackson to reveal the exact spot of his birth. Jackson replied, "I was born in South Carolina, as I have been told at the plantation where-

on James Crawford lived about one mile from the Carolina road of the Waxhaw Creek, left that state in 1784, was born on the 15 March in the year 1767."

Jackson asked Witherspoon if he would help him by finding out exactly where his mother was buried. He wrote, "I knew she died near Charleston, having visited that City with several matrons to afford relief to our prisoners with the British. ... It is possible Mrs. Barton can inform me where she was buried that I can find her grave. This to me would be great satisfaction, that I might collect her bones and inter them with that of my father and brothers."

James Witherspoon wrote back that Agnes Barton lived within one mile of him and that he had interviewed her. Mrs. Barton could not tell him exactly but said it was "in the suburbs of Charleston, about 1 mile from what was then called the Governor's Gate, which is in and about the forks of the Meeting and Kingstree Roads." In recent times, according to newspaper articles, the spot where Elizabeth Jackson was buried is said to be on the old campus of the Citadel.

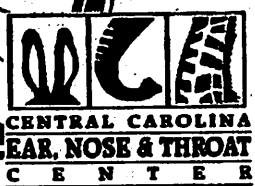
In 1949, a marker in memory of Elizabeth Jackson was erected by the Catawba Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Old Waxhaw Cemetery, Lancaster County. The pedestal was cut by John George Sassi of Rock Hill. The memorial statue of a young woman in flowing robes is believed to be an Italian import.

Louise Pettus is a retired Winthrop University history professor. Her column appears Sundays.



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