

PAST EVENTS STILL ECHO IN BRATTONVILLE

Historic Village Soon To Be Only A Memory

By LOIS SMITH
Special to The Observer

BRATTONVILLE, S. C.—At the time Oliver Goldsmith in his London garret room was writing "The Deserted Village," a community was being formed in the New World which at the turn of the 20th Century, like Goldsmith's village, started its disintegration.

Soon all that will be left of the pre-Revolutionary village of Brattonville, S. C., in York County, will be a marker erected in 1902 by the Kings Mountain Chapter, DAR, of Yorkville.

Old mansions of dignity are struggling in vain to remain a part of the present. Although a few are occupied, a haunted

atmosphere pervades. Not an ominous one, but one of past effulgence.

Tall trees standing guard as sentinels over pretentious homes of past generations, seem to beckon passers-by with the invitation, "Come, let us tell you our past." Their story is the history of Brattonville.

William Bratton — who received a land grant from King George III—and his wife, Martha Robinson Bratton (a native of Rowan County, N. C.) were the founders of Brattonville, which served as a stagecoach stop on the Yorkville-Chester road.

Prior to the Revolution, they built a commodious log home. Small openings in the attic served for gun ports to fight the Indians; and, later, the British. Within their village, both William and Martha were destined to become Revolutionary War hero and heroine.

Col. Bratton served on the staff of Col. Thomas Sumter, famous partisan leader whose guerilla groups waged successful warfare on the British during their march in 1780 from South Carolina into North Carolina.

July 12, 1780, while Col. Bratton was in the Kings Mountain area, British Capt. Christian Huck (born in Philadelphia), commanding a British cavalry and Loyal force of 500, camped in Brattonville near the Brattons' log home.

Feigning an evening social call, Capt. Huck tried in vain to obtain information from Mrs. Bratton concerning her husband's group.

Failing, he used threats and torture. He threw one of the Brattons' young sons off of his lap with such force that the child's nose was broken. Grabbing a reap hook, he placed it at Mrs. Bratton's throat.

The officer who was second in command pleaded with Capt. Huck to spare Mrs. Bratton's life, which he did.

Later that night, Col. Bratton with 75 Whigs, returned unexpectedly to Brattonville. Taking the British by surprise, the small band almost annihilated the British, killing Capt. Huck and most of his men. Through Mrs. Bratton, the life of the officer who rescued her was spared.

During the fierce battle, Mrs. Bratton placed her sons for safety from musket fire, in the home's seven foot chimney.

Mrs. Bratton tended the wounded, both loyalist and patriots.

The Battle of Kings Mountain followed Huck's defeat by three months.

In the period between the Revolution and the Civil War, the Bratton families built two palatial homes. Other antebel-

lum homes were added to the community, homes in which families enjoyed the comfortable, self-sufficient plantation way of life.

Now discontinued are the Post Office which was located in the stage stable, a community shoe making shop, a store, and a boarding school which had been founded in 1837.

All three of the Bratton homes still stand. They are owned by Bratton descendants who live throughout South Carolina. The Bratton silver and home furnishings still remain in the families.

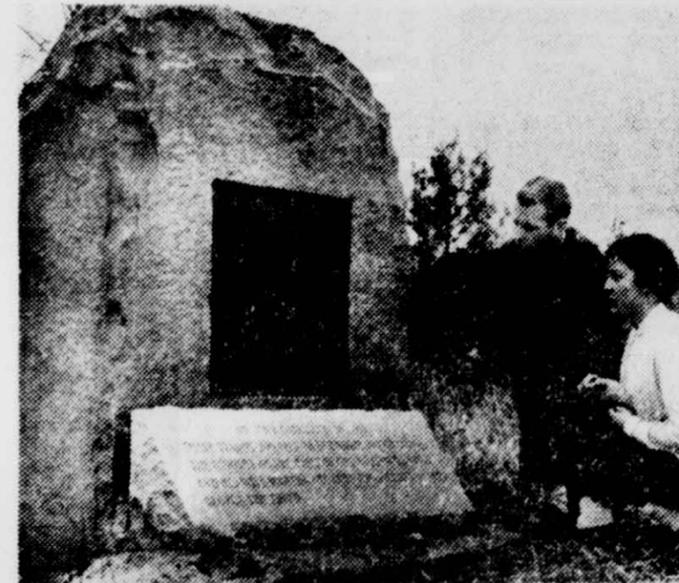
Mrs. Robert M. Bratton, 91, of York, the former Virginia Bratton, was born in the log home and has lived in all three Bratton homes in Brattonville.

The DAR tablet commemorates Col. and Mrs. Bratton for their patriotic actions.



Gene And Lucille Williamson Wander Through The Streets Of Brattonville In York County

THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER Friday, March 21, 1958



HISTORY RECALLED—A granite marker stands in Brattonville, S. C., a pre-Revolutionary village in York County, to testify to the defeat of a British force by a band of local Whigs in 1780. Gene and Lucille Williamson, 17-year-old twins who live nearby, inspect the markers. The smaller stone points out the still-standing home of Col. William Bratton, to whom the land was granted by King George III. (Photo by Joe Azer)

IN COMMEMORATION OF DEEDS OF VALOR.

The Unveiling of a Revolutionary Monument.

GREAT DAY AT BRATTONVILLE

Bit of History Recalled by Notable Event at Old Homestead of Brattons, in York.

Special to The State.

Rock Hill, Oct. 2.—As a historical event and a day of rare pleasure Thursday, Oct. 1, will long be remembered by every one who was so fortunate as to be at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Moultrie Bratton on that day—the day of the unveiling of the monument erected by the Kings Mountain chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, in commemoration of Huck's defeat, July 12, 1780, on the old battle ground.

Not since 1839, when Dr. John Bratton lived at this old homestead, has there been any attempt at such a celebration; at that time there was something like 1,500 people present, and now only the oldest residents have a faint recollection of it, and so this event of Thursday will be handed down to posterity.

Mrs. Bratton is a lineal descendant—

being a great great granddaughter—of the famous Col. William Bratton who led to victory the brave little band of 75 men against Huck with his overpowering force of 500 Tories.

When Huck first arrived at Brattonville Col. William Bratton had gone in search of the Tories, but hearing that they had gone to Brattonville, he immediately retraced his steps, arriving there about 4 o'clock in the morning.

During his absence his wife, Martha Bratton, was subjected to insult and ill treatment by the Tories. They demanded her to tell where her husband was; to this she promptly replied: "In Sumter's army." Huck tried in every way to win her to the royal cause or force her by menaces to disclose the place of her husband's retreat, though she firmly refused, even when a sharp reaping hook was at her throat in the hands of a brutal soldier. This courageous act of Martha Bratton is still lovingly remembered by all Whigs.

This house is a true type of the antebellum homes, and the Brattons have a clear understanding of the word hospitality.

Even nature gave her consent and smiled on the efforts of this worthy descendant of a worthy sire, and the day was an ideal one.

On coming to this home you pass the old Revolutionary home of William and Martha Bratton, about 200 yards to the left of the present home, and from this the American flag was appropriately aloft. Over the broad gateway of Mrs. Bratton's home was the word "Welcome," while the house was literally covered with American flags and colors and colors of the D. A. R., presenting a most inspiring and beautiful picture.

The broad varanda was converted into a platform for the speakers and on this were seated Mr. Wm. McCaw, master of ceremonies; Hon. D. E. Finley, the orator of the day, and on either side the members of the Kings

Mountain chapter, D. A. R., while the guests were seated on benches under the great trees in the front.

The ceremonies were opened with prayer by the Rev. J. K. Hall. Mr. Wm. McCaw then in a few happy remarks introduced the orator of the day, who, in a well prepared address, rehearsed the stirring scenes and events leading up to this remarkable defeat of the Tories. This was followed by a most appropriate and beautiful ode written and read by Mrs. Robt. Stephenson of Yorkville. It reads:

When urgent grew our nation's need
Ere yet it knew a nation's name,
Or much of victory—ought of fame!
And liberty alone seemed sweet,
There rose brave men to fight and bleed.

'T' avenge this section of our State
To show men how they might be great,
Upon this field of Huck's defeat.

The hour was dark, the end seemed near;
E'en hope was gone from many a breast.

Instead was left a vague unrest,
A dread of failure, dire, complete;
For British troops were everywhere;
The valiant few from home had fled,
"The State was fallen!" Sir Henry said—
No further need to risk defeat!

Thank God that York's brave sons and true
Were never known to quail or quake!
No prisoners they! nor deigned to take
Protection offered by the foe!
Preferring exile with the few
To tame submission with disgrace,
And loss of freedom to their race,
And bonds for those who loved them so.

Upon this field of Huck's defeat,
Anew was lit the flaming torch
That blazed with fiery breath to scorch
The foe that fled, the foe that bled,
And, bleeding, gave us victory sweet.

All honor to the man who led,
Brave William Bratton, it is said—
Let thy descendants honor thee!
Remember, too, with hearts brim full,
Thy wife, so brave and merciful!
Oh, never gems in any crown,
More nobly worthy to be worn,
Than loyalty and mercy free!

The others, too, who fought beside,
We give them meed with grateful pride;
For never shall this State forget
"How gushed the life blood of her brave—
Gashed, warm with hope and valor yet
Upon the soil they fought to save."

So, meet it is we here today
Erect a monument of stone,
To show to all through coming years
Our loving pride in deeds well done.

Theirs the conflict, ours the peace;
Theirs the battles' storming showers—
Ours the chance "to pay the debt
Of love and reverence and regret,"
To those who made this country ours,
Then let our tributes never cease!
Let loving hearts be taught to bring
The fairest flowers of the spring,
To crown this monument of stone,

In gratitude for deeds well done,
Both daughters leal and scions all,
Hear, and heed this signal call!

And ye whom we commemorate—
Rest ye in the bosom of your God,
Until, the sleep of death all o'er,
Ye rise from underneath the sod—
Be it soon, or be it late!
Children of light, forever more!

The master of ceremonies then requested the company to form in twos and march to the monument, about 100 yards distant. Inside the enclosed space the members of the Kings Mountain chapter, D. A. R., Mr. McCaw and little Miss Margaret Mason Bratton and Master Robert Brevard Bratton, great, great, great grandchildren of William and Martha Bratton, who, as the band struck the strains of "America," drew the ribbon which held the veil, thus unveiling this handsome memorial of love

and respect for the valiant deed of their noble ancestors.

The monument is a huge granite boulder with elegant bronze plates, a most appropriate and fitting token of the regard in which this noble band is held by the present members of this chapter of D. A. R.

On the plate on the front is this inscription:

Field of Huck's Defeat
When 75 Whigs led by
Col. William Bratton
Defeated a British and Tory
Force of 500 men
July 12, 1780.
Erected by the
Kings Mountain Chapter
Daughters of
The American Revolution
Yorkville, S. C.
1902.

On the opposite side another bronze plate presented by the Brattons is this inscription:

To the memory
of
Mrs. Martha Bratton
wife of
Col. William Bratton
Loyal in the face of death
Brave in the hour of danger
Merciful in the hour of victory.

When the company came back to the house they were requested to proceed to the home of Mrs. Bratton's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Napoleon B. Bratton, just next door, and arriving at this elegant home, a sight met their eye which will never be forgotten. The flower garden to the side of the house had been converted into an al fresco dining hall where a most sumptuous repast was served; the whole place was resplendent with American flags and other appropriate decorations.

After every one had partaken to their heart's content of the delicious viands set before them the toast master, Dr. Andral Bratton, announced the following toasts:

"The Day We Celebrate—the 12th of July, 1780"—Responded to by Mr. G. W. S. Hart.

"To the memory of Col. William Bratton, a patriot and soldier of the American Revolution, without fear and without reproach; and of Mrs. Martha Bratton, his devoted wife, the heroine of the battle we commemorate"—Mr. Thomas F. McDow.

"The soldiers of the American Revolution, to them under the blessing of God, we owe the liberty we enjoy; to them belong a nation's gratitude, a world's applause."—Rev. J. K. Hall.

"The Kings Mountain chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, through whose patriotism and zeal the deeds of heroism and valor displayed on this field on the 12th of July, 1780, have this day been commemorated in granite and bronze"—Rev. W. G. Neville.

"Carolina, Carolina, while we live we will protect thee, cherish and defend thee"—Hon. Arthur Gaston.

After this toast Mr. G. W. S. Hart advanced and speaking to Mrs. R. M. Bratton, thanked her in the name of the Kings Mountain chapter, D. A. R., and for every one present for her unbounded hospitality.

The guests returned to the old homestead where the last course, consisting of coffee, crackers and salted almonds, was served and dainty souvenirs which were cards with a picture of the old Revolutionary home with the following couplet:

May every Whig of freedom still enjoy
its fruit,
And may the Tories never recruit.
July 12, 1780. October 1, 1903.
Brattonville, South Carolina.

Among those present were: Judge and Mrs. Geo. Gage, Mrs. J. J. Stringfellow and Mr. Arthur Gaston of Chester. Mr. and Mrs. L. C. Harrison, Mrs.

Poag and Misses Beckam of Rock Hill, Mr. and Mrs. W. B. McCaw, Miss Agallice McGaw, Mrs. J. K. Alston, Mr. and Mrs. G. H. O'Leary, Miss Anise O'Leary, Mr. and Mrs. D. E. Friley, Miss Margaret and Edward Finley, Miss Daisy Gist, Mr. and Mrs. G. W. S. Hart, Miss Jennie Hart, Master Joe Hart, Miss Alice Hart, Maj. and Mrs. Jas. F. Hart, Miss Daisy Hart, Mrs. B. Neely Moore, Mr. and Mrs. S. M. McNeel, Mr. Paul T. McNeel, Miss Hulda McNeel, Mrs. W. Brown Wylie, Miss Dollie Miller, Miss Bessie Barron, Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Neville, Mrs. Withers Adickes, Mrs. R. T. Stephenson, Mr. T. F. McDow, Mr. and Mrs. Robt. J. Herndon, Master Robt. Herndon, Mrs. C. G. Parrish, Mr. and Mrs. G. S. Lowry, Miss Louise Lowry, Mrs. J. Rufus Bratton, Mr. Wm. L. Bratton and Dr. R. A. Bratton of Yorkville, Mrs. Jane Love, Miss Ella Love, Mr. and Mrs. Jno. B. Bratton, Master Robt. Bratton, Dr. W. M. Love, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Williams, Mrs. C. L. Moore, and Misses Mary Moore and Clarabel Williams and Master Glen Love of McConnellsville, Mr. and Mrs. Mason Bratton, Misses Margaret and George Bratton, Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Hall and Mrs. C. J. Kuykendal of Guthriesville and Mrs. Harriet Bratton, Mr. and Mrs. Robt. Witherspoon, Misses Rita, Julia, Helen and Nancy Witherspoon, Mrs. Scott Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. N. B. Bratton and Mr. and Mrs. R. Moultrie Bratton.

The State. n.d.

Kindness of:
Florence E. Roach
Rock Hill, S.C.