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In York County

Oldest Home Set For Restoration

By ELLEN JOHNSEY
A Special Correspondent

YORK—The oldest known home in this area will be restored according to officials of the York County Historical Commission.

Col. William Bratton and his young wife, Martha, were the founders of Brattonsville and built the house in 1776. The property was a land grant from King George III. The house stands near an unused lane which at one time

was the stage coach route from Yorkville to Chester.

The exterior of the log house was weather-boarded years ago for protection against decay. Inside, most of the original plaster is still in existence, but through spots, one may see the hand-hewn laths.

There are three fireplaces in the house and a winding staircase leads to the room above. Small openings in the attic served as gun ports to fight the Indians and later the British.

Built onto the end of the house is a huge bedroom and a small kitchen is in the back, but is a part of the house. Near the back door, a brick walk leads to a spring which was the source of water for the Brattons.

Col. Bratton served on the staff of Col. Thomas Sumter, whose group waged successful warfare upon the British during 1780. The battle of Williamson's Plantation in which British Capt. Christian Huck was slain was fought half a mile from the Bratton home.

During the period between the Revolutionary War and the War Between the States, the Bratton families built two other homes. All three still stand. They vacated the old log house in 1880. Other people resided there until 1947.

Now repairs will be made to put the home in a condition similar to the time when William Bratton resided there. The house is being rented on an extended release to the Historical Commission.

Work is scheduled to begin Saturday and there are hopes that the house can someday be equipped with furniture from the colonial period.

Many tourists have come to see the famous old home and to make it a show place in the state is the desire of the commission.

August 20, 1963

The State

Historical Monument Is In Decay

By PAT ROBERTSON
and ELLEN JOHNSEY

Brattonsville—The tall, stately oaks are now crowded with vines and thick brush.

Houses — once regal and friendly — crumble in ruin, their shame of neglect mercifully hidden by the high weeds and brush.

Here children played; here history was made.

Here was once a town. Small, to be sure, but friendly with people.

Now the laughter is but an echo carried by the winds' whisper.

Now all is quiet except for the sounds of nature and the occasional visitor.

Brattonsville: 189 years old. Site of a patriot victory during the evolution. Scene of courage and life and death, and happiness and sorrow. Home of the Brattons. A landmark in history.

Now it is a monument to decay, fostered by the insen-

sitivity of the 20th Century. Teen-agers' scribblings mar the once-beautiful walls of the old homes.

The story of Brattonsville began in the same year the Colonies declared their independence.

William Bratton received a land grant from King George III. He and his wife, Martha Robinson Bratton, founded the little community and moved into the original log house erected by Bratton in 1776.

Soon Brattonsville became a stopping place for stage coaches traveling from Yorkville (now York) to Chester.

Though built of logs the house was sturdy and much more than just a cabin. The second story room was lighted by four small windows, used first as gunports in battles with the Indians and later by snipers against the British.

On a hot, July night in 1780 Martha Bratton was alone in this house with her two small

sons. William, now a colonel on Thomas Sumter's staff, was in the King's Mountain area with a force of 75 men.

On that day British Captain Christian Huck, commanding 500 Regulars and Tories, marched into Brattonsville and camped at Williamson's Farm a quarter of a mile from the log house.

Huck came to Martha Bratton that night in hopes of learning the whereabouts of her husband and his men. He plied her with the offer of a commission for Bratton in the British Army. She refused to talk.

Huck, infuriated, threw one of her sons to the floor and broke the child's nose. One of his men grabbed Martha Bratton and would have beheaded her with a reaping hook had not another officer intervened.

Mrs. Bratton was ordered to prepare supper for the British. She entertained a thought of putting poison in the food but decided against it, fearing her husband and his men might return and eat some of it.

While the British ate she and her sons were locked in the upstairs room. After eating, Huck and his men returned to their camp.

Later that night Bratton returned to his home at the head of more than 200 soldiers (some historical reports say he had only his original company of 75).

Hearing of his wife's terror and finding the British asleep, he decided to attack. For an hour the Battle of Williamson's Plantation waxed hot.

Astride his horse, Captain Huck rode up and down his lines rallying his troops. He fell, mortally wounded by a Whig bullet.

All the British soldiers were wounded, killed or captured.

Among the captured was the officer who had intervened to save Mrs. Bratton's life.

Marked for execution, his life was spared at the request of Mrs. Bratton. She also attended the British wounded.

Only one patriot died in the battle.

By 1825 the young sons of William Bratton had grown to man hood and one of them, Dr. John Bratton, erected a stately mansion across the road from the log house.

The house was two stories

CHESTER NEWS

September 29, 1965

high, with a columned front porch. To its side was built a smaller brick house which served as office and apothecary for the doctor.

At the rear of the stately manse, called "The Homestead," was a breezeway leading to a spacious dining room. Hand-carved banisters lead the way up the stairs to the upper floors.

The "Brick House" facing the road, was the third house built at Brattonsville. It was erected during the Civil War and was imposing with white-plastered brick columns and flat stone porch.

The brick house had two front doors, one a family entrance and the other opening into a store. Younger Brattons disliked the idea of having a store in the home and a long wooden store building was built beside the house.

The store carried necessities, as well as luxuries. When new supplies arrived a slave was sent out with sample of fine calico and other materials and such luxury items as coffee. A few days later residents of the area would come in and purchase supplies.

Carpenters on the Bratton Plantation made caskets of hardwood timber and always had casket parts on hand in case of the death of a member of the family.

The "Brick-House" has had no members of the Bratton family as residents since 1914. Later generations rented the old home to tenants.

As late as the 1940s the old log house was still occupied. It has been leased by the York County Historical Association whose members hope to restore it.

York County Rep. Samuel Mendenhall has bought the "Brick House" and currently is restoring it.

But, "The Homestead," the most regal of the three, is falling into ruin, apparently beyond repair. Its walls bear the chalked-on names of modern-day teen-agers. Its doors are open to the wind and rain. History is written on this wind.



ONLY THING MODERN IS SIGN

cont.



Chester News
Sept. 29, 1965 ONLY THING MODERN IS SIGN