

# *Rich In History And Charm, York Remains Example of Southern Life*

York, South Carolina, is often called the "White Rose City" and the "Charleston Of The Up-country." It is a city filled with history, charm and southern mystique. First occupied by Catawba Indians, white settlers began arriving to the York area in the 1750's from Pennsylvania via the Blue Ridge Mountains. They brought with them the customs of their mother countries and also the Pennsylvania county names of York, Lancaster and Chester from where they had most recently come.

While most people typically remember southern towns such as York for their civil war involvement, York's history began much sooner with the arrival of these first settlers and the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

When the first stirrings of the revolutionary war began, most settlers of the region wished to remain outside the struggle of the Revolutionary War. But

their very location as part of the area lying between the Broad and Catawba Rivers made it impossible for them to remain outside the war. Yet for all their initial reluctance, the area now known as York County was the only part of South Carolina that refused to surrender to the British, and two Revolutionary battles were fought and won in York County.

At Williamson's Plantation, near Brattonsville, in 1780, the infamous Huck's Tories were defeated by the settlers, and a few weeks later the Battle of King's Mountain was won. The later battle is considered by many to have been a turning point in the war. Located in Northwestern York, the battlefield is now the National Military Park.

The time between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars was an era marked by controversy between the upcountry of York and the low country aristocratic

rice planters of Charleston. The Charleston planters were staunchly entrenched in control of government and no courts existed outside the tidal basin. Finally, due to the wanton destruction and rampant crime that developed York into what the residents of that time came to describe as a "lawless frontier" relief was granted through an act setting up counties with local courts.

Following this act, the town of Yorkville (now York) was established as a county seat in 1785. It was the beginning in York and throughout the south of the "courthouse towns," today remembered for their many fine courthouses, jails and other fine public buildings, most designed by Robert Mills.

The first American-born, professional architect, Charleston native Robert Mills was considered the "court architect" of the time. He designed the Washing-

ton Monument, the National Treasury Building and other public building throughout the country — and in York.

The budding of York into a courthouse town, started by the construction of the courthouse and other buildings, started an architectural renaissance in York. Today, almost every post civil war and antebellum architectural style can be found along the tree-lined streets, from Colonial, to Greek Revival to Victorian.

As part of the Bicentennial celebration in 1976, York was nominated and later granted historic designation on the National Register as one of the largest historic districts in the United States, and York's living history continues to thrive.

Take a walking tour along the beautiful streets and view the historic architecture of York, South Carolina.