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S.C. - Homes, Historic - York County

Pre-Revolutionary House Is Still Standing

Many Timbers In McElwee House In Good Condition

By ELIZABETH REED

William McElwee, Sr., came to York County about 1765 from York County, Pennsylvania.

Frank McElwee of York, a direct descendant of William, owns a copy of the original deed dated "Octbr. 30, 1765 and granted to "William McElwee of Mecklenburg county, lands on both sides of Clark's Fork in Bullocks Creek and bounded as follows . . ." The deed was signed by William Tryon.

At that time the present western part of York county was a part of North Carolina and the line ran about three miles from the town of Yorkville. It was not until about 1815 that the boundary line for the "New Acquisition" was finally settled.

No wonder then, that there has long been a dispute about the state in which Andrew Jackson was born. The earliest deeds to much of the land in the Clover area repose in vaults in North Carolina and not in York.

What is left of the McElwee house which was built by William McElwee stands across a small stream from the cabins and dining room of the King's Mountain park.

When built in the years before the Revolution the house was a one story structure. Later the second story was added and still later the chimneys were built.

The main body of the house is of sturdy logs and not too much money would be required to restore it so that further decay would not occur.

Inside are two main rooms with a fireplace in each. From one of the downstairs rooms, a stairway leads to the two upstairs rooms.

In spite of the years of neglect the old house has many a board and log that are in sound condition, it has many a wide pine board that would grace a 1949 home and win praise from the visitor.

But a few more years will tell the tale and the McElwee house will be no more. Even now the heavy undergrowth is closing around the historic old structure that probably housed the wounded from King's Mountain battlefield.

Family

The first William McElwee was the great grandfather of Frank McElwee of College street, York, a retired school master and farmer. William had a son who bore his father's name. This son served under Francis Marion during the Revolution. He happened to be visiting his home at the time of the Battle of Kings Mountain and thus took part in that conflict.

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Evening Herald The McElwee House May 26-1949



Sound timbers are still left in this old house in the King's Mountain State Park area, although no one has lived in it for years. The chimney seen in the foreground is strong and usable but the one opposite has crumbled and lies partly within the rooms of the home. (Herald Staff Photo).

Included among the descendants of William McElwee was James McElwee, known as Big Jim. Mr. Frank McElwee remembers him as an interesting character whose unique will designated certain parts of his property to pay certain debts. His wife was Col. Wright's daughter.

The last McElwee to live in the old house of today's story was Mrs. Jane McElwee Oates, whose father was John McElwee. Jane was born August 23, 1811 and died December 8, 1895 at the ripe old age of 84.

On April 1, 1841 Jane was married to William Oates, who was born March 28, 1812, and died June 16, 1888. He possessed a plantation adjoining the McElwee tract and when he married he moved into the old home of today's story. Both died in the old home.

William and Jane McElwee Oates had five children: John Franklin Oates, father of Miss Jennie Oates of Chester who has furnished much

of the information for this story; Monroe Oates who never married and who was killed in the first Battle of Manassas; William Oates, Jr., who never married; Elizabeth M. Oates who married W. B. Stroup of Clover and is now dead; Mary Margaret Oates who never married and died in November of 1924.

John Franklin Oates married Jessie L. Hardin of Chester. Their children were John Franklin Oates, Jr., who died unmarried in 1907; William Hardin Oates who died in infancy; Joanna Smith Oates who married Auburn Woods in 1908 and who died in 1923 leaving a number of children: one of whom is John Oates Woods, Rock Hill attorney; Jesse Havries Oates, Sr., of Chester; Miss Jennie Oates of Chester; Dorothy Oates who married Dan Herlong of Johnston, a nephew of Dr. E. E. Herlong, and Margaret Witherspoon Oates who married J. Henry West of Louisville, Ky.

Elizabeth M. Oates married W. B. Stroup and they have four sons, William Oates Stroup of Clover; Dr. Paul A. Stroup, Clarence Crawford Stroup, both of Charlotte; and McElwee Monroe Stroup of Clover.

After the War Between The States most of the McElwee family with the exception of William Oates and Mrs. Jane McElwee Oates moved to Arkansas. There the Rev. Monroe Oates founded an A.R.P. church at Pottsville, Ark. and one at Russellville, Ark.

William Oates was a ruling elder in the Bethany ARP church and the Oates home was the home of all ARP ministers who happened to be in the community.

Following the death of Mr. and Mrs. William Oates the property passed to their daughter and son Mary Margaret Oates and William Oates, Jr. In 1924 Miss Margaret Oates sold the property to Oscar Cabniss who in turn sold it to the Federal Government in 1935.

The old house is the only house still standing on the King's Mountain State Park area with the exception of the ruins of the Wells house.

(This is one of a series of stories on old homes and families in York County.)