

Each generation of McLeans left a mark

The battle of Kings Mountain, often called the Turning Point of the American Revolution, was fought Oct. 7, 1780. In spite of the importance of the battle, the battlefield was neglected for 35 years.

In 1815, following the victory of Andrew Jackson over British troops in the battle of New Orleans, there was a great wave of patriotism. Veterans of the first war against the British were reminded that they had not put up markers at the sites of their victories.

Dr. William McLean, a Kings Mountain veteran then living in Lincoln County, N.C., was determined that a marker be placed on the site. At his own expense, he hired a stone cutter to inscribe on a sandstone found on the grounds: "Major Ferguson, belonging to his British Majesty, was here totally defeated and killed Oct. 7, 1780."

On the other side of the stone: "Sacred to the memory of Major Chronicle, Captain Mattox, Lieutenant Boyd and Rabb, who were killed fighting in defense of American liberty Oct. 7, 1780."

When McLean and other veterans went to the mountain to clear a spot for the monument they found numerous human bones above ground indicating that animals had been able to tear up the original shallow graves. There was no planned celebration; no invitations were issued except to veterans who understood that there would be much hard work involved. Still, the bringing together of old comrades was never forgotten by the veterans.

Over the years the monument was chipped on by so many people seeking souvenirs that it was badly mutilated.

The first celebration of the battle occurred on its 75th anniversary. Invitations to the "jubilee" were sent to everyone from the president of the United States (Franklin Pierce) and his Cabinet to all descendants of the Revolutionary combatants.

John S. Moore was chairman of the Committee on Arrangements. He had 60 members on his committee. The two main speakers were: S.C. Sen. John S. Preston, a grandson of Col. William Campbell of Kings Mountain fame and George Bancroft, famed statesman and historian.

Fifteen thousand people came to the battlefield on Oct. 7. Yorkville, the nearest S.C. town, had a population of only 1,200 and found it difficult to handle the demand

Louise Pettus



NEARBY HISTORY

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for housing.

One of McLean's sons, Col. Joseph A. McLean, was a highly respected probate judge of York County. The colonel had a son also named Joseph. The younger Joseph McLean (1861-1924) grew up in Yorkville and graduated from Davidson College.

Following Davidson, Joseph McLean studied music in New York and Cincinnati. He then taught music for 40 years in Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee and Charlotte. He was longest at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Ga., where he was director of music for about 25 years.

One of his achievements was writing the music for nine songs in the Presbyterian church hymnal which was used worldwide from 1901 to 1927.

When World War I broke out in Europe, McLean tried to volunteer but was turned down as not physically fit. He then worked at the YMCA operations at Camp Gordon near Augusta, Ga. He was soon put in charge of the "Y" building at the Atlanta General Hospital. Before the war was over McLean was chosen to direct the Red Cross in Atlanta and in Charleston.

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He returned to York. In spite of his weakness he took in music students. He also served as organist at York's First Presbyterian Church.

McLean loved flowers and had a beautiful garden. He also loved people. Everywhere he went he made friends.

He had married in 1893. His wife, Elizabeth Graham of Charlotte, died 11 months later in September 1894. She and her infant were buried in Elmwood Cemetery in Charlotte. Following his death on Dec. 29, 1924, Joseph McLean was buried beside Elizabeth and their infant.

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