

Oct 28, 1995

Highhanded Huck reaped outrage

Anyone who is familiar with Brattonsville, an historic site between Rock Hill and McConnells, is certain to have heard of Huck's Defeat. But not many people know much about Huck himself.



Nearby history

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Revolutionary War historians spell his name variously Huck, Hook, Huyck and Hucke, but all agree that when he arrived in York County in July 1780, Christian Huck held the rank of captain under Col. George

Turnbull in Tarleton's Legion of Lord Cornwallis' British forces.

All writers — at least all writers sympathetic to the Whig cause — seem to agree that Huck was a man of evil reputation. The writers use such phrases as "a profane, unprincipled man," "impious blasphemer," and "malicious ravager."

Huck's first appearance in York County was to destroy Col. William Hill's Iron Works on Allison Creek. Billy Hill wasn't present at the time but later wrote that "Capt. Hook" had "sent to most of the houses in the settlement to notify the aged men . . . to meet him at a certain place, that he desired to make terms with them."

Further, Huck promised the citizens to "put them in the King's peace" if the men would meet with him. They met and Huck immediately offended the group by telling them they would be conquered.

While Huck was talking to the group to which he had promised the "King's peace," his men were culling out all of the good horses ridden to Huck's camp, leaving many of the "aged men" to walk home.

To add to the mistreatment, Huck, who hated Presbyterianism, burned the library and minister's home of the Fishing Creek Presbyterian Church in Chester County and made it a practice to destroy all Presbyterian Bibles he could get his hands on.

The net effect of Huck's plundering was to give courage to the Scotch-Irish community:

Word of their organization got back to Col. Turnbull at Rocky Mount. Turnbull identified "Colonels Paton, Bratten, Wynn and a number of violent people" as going among the Catawba Indians and an Irish settlement at Turkey Creek and Bullock Creek. Turnbull ordered Huck to find the rebels and bring order.

It was on this mission that Huck and about 100 mounted soldiers and 300 foot soldiers left White's Mill and headed for the log home of Col. William Bratton. They arrived at present-day Brattonsville on July 11, 1780.

Bratton was away. It was his wife, Martha Bratton, who bravely faced Captain Huck.

There are several variations told about what happened next. All agree that Mrs. Bratton refused to answer the questions put to her, and her life was threatened if she did not. A Tory militia officer, Capt. John Adamson of Camden, saved her life after one of Huck's men placed a reaping hook to her throat.

Huck moved on to an adjoining plantation and camped there that night. Word was passed to the local militia, who surprised Huck's camp.

Huck and 97 of his men were killed in the skirmish. John Carroll is credited with firing the bullet that killed Capt. Huck.

Huck's Defeat marked a major step forward toward another, larger engagement not far away: Kings Mountain on Oct. 7, 1780.

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