

1949 tourist attractions not exactly heart-stoppers

Hastings House in New York published "The American Guide - A Source Book and Complete Travel Guide for the United States" in 1949, a massive 1,270-page account in fine print. Much of the basic research had been done by the Federal Writers Project, a Works Progress Administration effort terminated in 1939.

One of the highway routes followed was U.S. 21 from Charlotte to Columbia, via Fort Mill, Rock Hill and Chester, with side trips. It is interesting to see what the guide found worthwhile for the tourist in 1949.

Fort Mill was given one line: "...a textile mill village, has Mon. to Catawba Inds. & one to faithful slaves."

We wonder why the guide ignored the two other statues in the park - one to the Confederate soldier and one to the women of the Confederacy.

Rock Hill, described as a college

and industrial town, got more attention.

Its three-line history states that Rock Hill "...was country cross-roads & RR. stop as late as 1860's. Confeds. used it in transport of troops and supplies, & 1 townsman was killed when Fed. Cavalry descended to destroy RR. (The reference is to Stoneman's Raid, which resulted in the burning of the railroad trestle at Old Nations Ford.) Later town became a center for KKK operations."

Certainly there was a great deal of KKK activity in York County in the 1870s, and Rock Hill had its proportionate share of members, but most of the violence occurred in Yorkville, Brattonsville, McConnellsville and the more rural areas of the county.

The guide continues: "Today it has a cotton-printing plant (Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Co.), said to print 1/5 of all cotton goods

manufactured in the U.S., factories that produce denim, hosiery, rugs & even coathangers, a hydro-electric power plant, & a \$40,000,000 Celanese Corp. Plant."

Following a Winthrop College history is the judgment that the redbrick buildings of the campus "show Eng. influence."

The Glencairn Azalea Gardens were open in April to the public for a fee. Confederate Park, which offered swimming, golf, tennis and picnicking, was also available to the public.

White Plantation House, built in 1838, was described as Rock Hill's oldest home. The house on White Street, once the home of George and Anne Hutchison White, has a "Prophets' Chamber," a room set aside for visiting ministers.

The side trip from Rock Hill was to the Catawba Indian Reservation, "where live S.C.'s only Indians. Most are of mixed blood & few tribal customs remain. Throughout early Amer. hist. Ca-

tawba fought on Amer. side and even supplied soldiers to Confeds."

Moving on to Chester, the guide described it as a textile mill town settled in the 1750s "that also manufactures cotton seed products & farm implements. On Cth. (1850) grounds is Mon. to Jack Simons."

According to Anne Collins' "A Goodly Heritage," 1986, the monument to Jack Simmons, a Jewish confectionery store owner, was erected by Gentile friends who appreciated Simmons' love of children.

As side trips from Chester: the Erwin house at Lowrys, Guthriesville, Brattonsville and York ("here 1st KKK in state is said to have been org.")

The statement was made that "Dr. Rufus Bratton was the model for Dr. Cameron in Thomas Dixon's 'The Clansman' from which the movie, 'The Birth of a Nation' was made."

There was no mention of York's lovely antebellum homes.

Kings Mountain State Park and Kings Mountain National Park were described, along with its monuments and museum.

Another side trip from Chester was Lancaster, "a mill-village center" with a courthouse and jail both designed by Robert Mills. Seven and a half miles north of Lancaster was the Old Waxhaw Presbyterian Church with its graves of Gen. William R. Davie and Andrew Jackson Sr. The historic marker for the birthplace of Andrew Jackson was noted. (Andrew Jackson State Park had not yet come into existence.)

Last, the tourist was directed to Chester State Park but was warned that the lake in 1949 was "unsuited for swimming but this is expected to be remedied in near future."

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