

GENERAL JOHN BRATTON

ONE OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMEN OF SOUTH CAROLINA IS THE HONORABLE OR GENERAL JOHN BRATTON, THE DESCENDANT OF A FAMILY THAT HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF S. C. SINCE ITS RECEPTION INTO THE UNION OF STATES. FROM TIME TO TIME ITS MEMBERS HAVE BEEN HONORED BY THE PEOPLE WITH IMPORTANT TRUSTS, AND DURING THE REVOLUTION NONE FOUGHT MORE VALIANTLY FOR INDEPENDENCE OF GOVERNMENT THAN THEY. COLONEL WILLIAM BRATTON ESPECIALLY DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF DURING THE COLONIES' STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY. HIS CAREER IS SO CONSPICUOUS IN THE REVOLUTION, THAT IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO GIVE IT IN DETAIL HERE. SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT COLONEL WILLIAM BRATTON WAS A VIRGINIAN OF THE NOBLEST DESCENT. PRIOR TO THE REVOLUTION, HE CAME WITH SEVERAL KINSMEN TO YORK COUNTY, S. C., AND ROSE TO GREAT PROMINENCE IN HIS NEW HOME; FIRST, AS A PLANTER, AND THEN AS A LEADER OF THE YORK COUNTY FORCES, WHO FOUGHT IN THE WAR FOR AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE UNDER SUMTER. HIS SON, WILLIAM, WAS AMONG THE FIRST PUPILS AND GRADUATES IN MT. ZION COLLEGE OF WINNSBORO, S. C. AND AFTER SEVERING HIS

IN 1859 HE MARRIED ELIZABETH DUBOSE, DAUGHTER
OF THEODORE/DUBOSE^{S.}. THEY HAD THREE CHILDREN,
WILLIAM BRATTON, THEODORE DUBOSE BRATTON, EPISCOPAL
BISHOP OF MISSISSIPPI, AND ISABELLA MEANS BRATTON,
GENERAL BRATTON DIED AT WINNSBORO, S. C. ON JANU-
ARY 12, 1898.

UNTIL THE OUTBREAK OF THE CIVIL WAR JOHN
BRATTON CONTINUED IN HIS MEDICAL PROFESSION WITH
MODERATE SUCCESS, AND AT THAT TIME ANSWERED THE
FIRST CALL FOR TROOPS UNDER THE "TEN REGIMENT"
ACT, AND WAS ENLISTED AS A PRIVATE. HE WAS SOON
MADE CAPTAIN, SERVED IN THAT CAPACITY DURING THE
BOMBARDMENT OF FORT SUMTER, AND UNTIL THE STATE
TROOPS WERE CALLED ON TO ENLIST IN THE CONFEDERATE
SERVICE. HIS COMPANY DECLINED TO RESPOND, AND HE
AGAIN ENLISTED AS A PRIVATE, AND WITH TWENTY-THREE
MEN OF HIS OLD COMPANY, HELPED TO FILL UP ANOTHER
COMPANY OF THE SIXTH REGIMENT THAT DID ENLIST. THE
REGIMENT WAS SOON ORDERED TO VIRGINIA, AND, ON THE
EVE OF ITS DEPARTURE, A VACANCY OCCURING, HE WAS
SELECTED TO FILL IT, AND BECAME JUNIOR SECOND-
LIEUTENANT OF COMPANY C, SIXTH S. C. REGIMENT, C.S.C.

HE SERVED AS SUCH UNTIL THE TERM OF SERVICE (ONE YEAR) FOR WHICH THEY ENLISTED EXPIRED. WHILE IN WINTER QUARTERS, AT CENTERVILLE, HE URGED RE-ENLISTMENT, FOR THE WAR, OF THE REGIMENT IN ITS ENTIRETY WITHOUT DISTURBING ITS ORGANIZATION. THIS PROPOSITION FAILED, BUT HE AND EIGHTEEN MEN OF HIS OLD COMPANY (ALL THAT REMAINED) RE-ENLISTED.

GENERAL JOHNSTON, HEARING OF THE LITTLE MOVEMENT, WAS PLEASED TO ENCOURAGE IT, AND THEY SUCCEEDED IN RE-ENLISTING THE FIRST COMPANY OF ONE-YEAR MEN IN JOHNSTON'S ARMY. THIS RESULTED IN THE RE-ENLISTMENT OF ABOUT ALL THE ABLE-BODIED MEN OF THE SIXTH, THAT SURVIVED THAT YEAR OF CAMP LIFE AND SICKNESS; FOR THEY HAD, DURING THAT YEAR, BUT ONE FIGHT, AND THAT WAS IN THE LAST MONTH OF THE YEAR - THE BATTLE OF DRANESVILLE. IN THIS BATTLE WAS NOT ONLY WHAT WAS A SURPRISE, BUT A VERITABLE TRAP, INTO WHICH THE USUALLY ALERT AND SKILLFUL JEB STUART INNOCENTLY AND UNSUSPECTINGLY MARCHED.

THE CONDUCT OF BRATTON, KNOWN IN CAMP AS THE "STRICT LIEUTENANT", AND THE IMPRINT OF THAT DISFAVOR WHICH IS THE LOT OF THE SUBALTERN WHO ADHERES

TO DISCIPLINE, ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION AND COM-
MANDED THE CONFIDENCE OF THE ENTIRE REGIMENT. AT
THE RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE RE-ENLISTED BATTALION
(THERE WERE ONLY MEN ENOUGH FOR SIX FULL COMPANIES)
HE DECLINED TO OPPOSE HIS CAPTAIN AND FIRST-LIEU-
TENANT, BOTH OF WHOM ASPIRED TO THE COMMAND OF THE
RE-ENLISTED COMPANY, AND REFUSED TO ENTER INTO ANY
CONTENTION FOR OFFICE.

HE WAS AGAIN A PRIVATE WHEN THE UTTERLY "UN-
SUSPECTED" OCCURRED. HE WAS ELECTED TO THE COMMAND
OF THE RE-ENLISTED BATTALION, WHICH IN A SHORT
TIME FILLED UP TO A REGIMENT, OF WHICH HE AFTER-
WARDS BECAME COLONEL.

ON THE BATTLEFIELD OF THE WILDERNESS, WHERE
HE CONDUCTED HIMSELF WITH THE GREATEST VALOR AND
BRILLANCE, HE WAS MADE BRIGADIER-GENERAL. GENERAL
LEE SENT A TELEGRAM TO THE WAR DEPARTMENT AT RICH-
MOND, ON THE NIGHT OF THE SECOND DAY'S FIGHT, RE-
QUESTING THE IMMEDIATE PROMOTION AND CONFIRMATION
OF COLONEL BRATTON. HIS REQUEST WAS FULLY COMPLIED
WITH ON THE NEXT DAY. WHEN THE GREAT LEE SUR-
RENDERED AT APPOMATTOX, GENERAL BRATTON COMMANDED

THE LARGEST BRIGADE OF THE SURRENDERED ARMY. THOUGH FIGHTING AND HOLDING THE ENEMY IN CHECK BY DAY AND MARCHING BY NIGHT (CONTINUOUSLY FROM AMELIA C. H.) THAT GLORIOUS OLD BRIGADE WAS SO WELL HELD TOGETHER THAT IT REACHED APPOMATTOX STRONGER THAN ANY DIVISION, AND THAN ANY CORPS, EXCEPT THAT TO WHICH IT BELONGED (LONGSTREET'S) IN THE SURRENDERED ARMY. IT IS TRUE THAT GENERAL LEE HAD ONLY 8000 MEN UNDER ARMS, BRATTON'S BRIGADE CONSTITUTED NEARLY ONE-FIFTH OF THE SURRENDERED ARMY. OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE BRIGADE PAROLED, AGGREGATED ABOUT 1,500. HIS BRIGADE MAINTAINED ITS ORGANIZATION AFTER THE SURRENDER, AND VOLUNTEERED THE SAME RESPECT FOR HIS AUTHORITY IT HAD UNDER MILITARY LAW, AND THUS ENABLED HIM TO CONDUCT THEM IN ORDERLY MARCH TO DANVILLE, WHERE RAILROAD TRANSPORTATION WAS SECURED FOR A PART OF THE WEARY WAY HOME.

ALL OTHER COMMANDS DISBANDED AND SCATTERED FROM APPOMATTOX. THIS ACTION OF HIS MEN SHOWED IN WHAT HIGH REGARD HE WAS HELD BY THEM.

DURING THE WAR GENERAL BRATTON WAS KNOWN AS "OLD RELIABLE".

RETIRING TO HIS LIFE AT FARMINGTON NEAR WINNSBORO, S. C. AS A PLANTER, HE WROTE ON APRIL 20, 1868 (TURNED OVER TO S. C. HISTORIANS JUNE 1879) A RESUME, AND REPORT TO GENERAL ANDERSON OF STATESBURG, S. C., HIS FORMER COMMANDER OF THE VIRGINIA CAMPAIGN. THIS PAPER THAT LATER WAS PRESENTED TO THE SOUTH CAROLINIANA SOCIETY AT S. C. UNIVERSITY IN COLUMBIA, S. C. IS ENTITLED "FROM SOUTHERN HISTORICAL PAPERS VOL. VIII, NUMBERS 10, 11, 12 RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, MAY 7, 1862 TO JANUARY 1865. IT SAYS "REPORT OF OPERATIONS OF BRATTON'S BRIGADE FROM AUGUST 7, 1864 TO JANUARY 1, 1865." WE MOVED TO SPOTTSYLVANIA C. H. AND ARRIVED MAY 8TH. THE ENEMY RETIRED BEFORE US. WE LOST DURING THE NIGHT KILLED AND WOUNDED 70 MEN. WE DID NOT FIRE A SHOT, WE MOVED TOWARDS PETERSBURG. WE DID NOT TAKE THE FORT BUT I WOULD BE UNGRATEFUL IF I DID NOT PRAISE THE EXTREME EFFORTS OF MY MEN. OUR LOSS WAS SEVERE. THERE WERE JENKIN'S REGIMENT, GENERAL ANDERSON, THE TWENTY-FOURTH DIVISION, HOKE'S NORTH CAROLINA REGIMENT, GENERAL EARLY, GENERAL D. H. HILL. NEVER BEFORE ON ANY BATTLEFIELD DURING THE WAR WAS SEEN MORE SPLENDID GALLANTRY EXHIBITED THAN ON THAT

FIELD OF WILLIAMSBURG BUT THAT SPLENDID GALLANTRY WAS THROWN AWAY AND WASTED BY BAD MANAGEMENT, WHEN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY EFFECTIVE IF PROPERLY DIRECTED. THIS WAS, I SHALL ADD, THE FIRST AND LAST TIME I EVER ASKED FOR A PLACE IN THE CHARGE - A PARDONABLE FOLLY. I HOPE AT THAT STAGE OF THE WAR GENERAL ANDERSON AND HIS TROOPS WERE IN COMMAND WHERE I AM TOLD THAT THE SEVEREST FIGHTING WAS DONE".

IN THIS AREA IN VIRGINIA WERE BRIGADIER-GENERAL JEB STUART WITH HIS ^{CAVALRY} CALVARY; MAJOR-GENERAL A. P. HILL'S CORPS; GENERAL RICHARD H. ANDERSON'S DIVISION; MAJOR-GENERAL LAFAYETTE MCLAW'S INFANTRY; BRIGADIER-GENERAL H. A. EARLY'S DIVISION; BRIGADIER-GENERAL FITZ HUGH LEE'S CALVARY BRIGADE; LIEUTENANT-GENERAL RICHARD S. EWELL'S 2ND CORPS.

IN ABOUT A MONTH FROM MAY 5, 1864 AT THE BATTLE OF THE WILDERNESS AND TO ABOUT THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK IN JULY TO THE BATTLE OF COLD HARBOR, THE FEDERALS LOST 50,000 MEN, AND THE CONFEDERATES LOST 32,000. THIS WAS FOR THE NORTHERN ARMY 46 PERCENT OF THEIR FORCES, AND 41 PERCENT OF THE CONFEDERATE

ARMY.

THE FOLLOWING FACTS ARE GIVEN UNDER THE NAME OF GENERAL JOHN BRATTON IN THE HISTORICAL ARCHIVES IN COLUMBIA, S. C.

"JOHN BRATTON, AGE 30. PRIVATE Co. H 6TH REGIMENT S. C. INFANTRY. ENLISTED JUNE 13, 1861, CAPTAIN WOODWARDS, S. C. UNDER CAPTAIN E. J. MEANS. ON ROLL OCTOBER 31, 1861, AS 3RD LIEUTENANT. ON ROLL DECEMBER 31, 1861, AS 2ND LIEUTENANT. ON NO LATER ROLL.

"ON FIELD AND STAFF AS APPOINTED COLONEL APRIL 22, 1862. WOUNDED MAY 31, 1862 AT SEVEN PINES AND FOR SEVERAL MONTHS PRISONER OF WAR AT FORTRESS MONROE. RELEASED SEPTEMBER 1862. ON ROLL FEBRUARY 28, 1863 AS COMMANDING JENKIN'S BRIGADE. APPOINTED BRIGADIER-GENERAL MAY 6, 1864. ON STATE ROLLS AS PROMOTED SUCCESSFULLY FROM CAPTAIN TO BRIGADIER-GENERAL."

WHEN GENERAL BRATTON RETURNED TO PRIVATE LIFE IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY, S. C., HE AT ONCE SET ABOUT TO WORK FOR THE WELFARE OF HIS PEOPLE. FROM THAT TIME HIS CAREER HAS BEEN CO-EXTENSIVE WITH THE

HISTORY OF HIS STATE. HE DID NOT FULLY AGAIN RESUME HIS PROFESSION, BUT INSTEAD, TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO PLANTING, IN WHICH HE SUCCEEDED WELL. IN 1866 FAIRFIELD COUNTY ELECTED HIM TO REPRESENT HER IN THE STATE SENATE. HE WAS A DELEGATE TO ALL TAXPAYERS' UNIONS OF SOUTH CAROLINA; AND IN 1876 WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE FAIRFIELD COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE. IN 1880 HE WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE, AND IN 1881, UPON THE RESIGNATION OF THE COMPTROLLER OF THE STATE, THE LEGISLATURE CALLED HIM TO FILL THE VACANCY. IN 1884, HE WAS ELECTED TO FILL THE UNEXPIRED TERM IN CONGRESS, OF HONORABLE JOHN F. EVANS, DECEASED.

DURING THE GREAT CAMPAIGN OF 1876, GENERAL BRATTON STOOD SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH GENERAL WADE HAMPTON, AND WON MANY VICTORIES FOR OFFICIAL PURITY AND WHITE SUPREMACY; AND INDEED, SO VALUED WERE HIS SERVICES AT THAT DARK HOUR, THAT HE WAS LATER URGED AS A FIT CANDIDATE FOR THE GUBERNATORIAL CHAIR. AT THE INCEPTION OF THE FARMERS' ALLIANCE MOVEMENT GENERAL BRATTON, WAS THE CANDIDATE OF HIS PARTY, FOR GOVERNOR, AGAINST BENJAMIN RYAN TILLMAN, BY WHOM HE WAS DEFEATED.

FOR MANY YEARS GENERAL BRATTON SERVED AS TRUSTEE OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY; AND EVER TOOK A DEEP INTEREST IN ALL PUBLIC MOVEMENTS PROMISING GOOD.

JOHN BRATTON AND HIS WIFE, ISABELLA DuBOSE BRATTON, BROUGHT GRACE TO THE SOCIAL LIFE OF WINNSBORO AND ADDED GREATLY TO THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES OF FAIRFIELD.

HE AND HIS WIFE'S EARTHLY REMAINS REST IN ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH CEMETERY IN WINNSBORO, SOUTH CAROLINA. THE MONUMENT MARKING THE RESTING PLACE OF JOHN BRATTON BEARS THESE WORDS:

"BENEATH THIS STONE
ERECTED 1957
BY PEOPLE WHO KNEW HIS GREATNESS
IN WAR AND PEACE
LIES ALL THAT IS MORTAL
OF
JOHN BRATTON
1831-1898
FAIRFIELD COUNTY'S FOREMOST
CONFEDERATE SOLDIER
BRIGADIER GENERAL INFANTRY
ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA
KERSHAW'S DIVISION
LONGSTREET'S CORPS"

"SEVEN PINES	SEVEN DAYS	MANASSAS
SHARPSBURG	FREDERICKSBURG	GETTYSBURG
CHICAMAUGA	WILDERNESS	SPOTTSYLVANIA
COLD HARBOR	PETERSBURG	SAYLOR'S CREEK"

WRITTEN BY ALICE A. B. WALKER, GENEALOGIST OF THE
THOMAS WOODWARD CHAPTER, NATIONAL SOCIETY DAUGHTERS
OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, WINNSBORO, S. C.
OCTOBER, 1963.

CONNECTION WITH THAT FAMOUS INSTITUTION, HE MADE WINNSBORO HIS HOME, AND PASSED THE REMAINDER OF HIS LIFE THERE. RECEIVING A THOROUGH MEDICAL TRAINING UNDER THE TUTELAGE OF DR. RUSH, A CELEBRATED PHYSICIAN, OF PHILADELPHIA, WILLIAM BRATTON DEVOTED THE GREATER PART OF HIS LIFE TO THAT NOBLE CALLING, AND ROSE TO EMINENCE AS A MOST SKILLFUL PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON. HE MARRIED A DAUGHTER OF GENERAL RICHARD WINN, AND TO THIS UNION FOUR CHILDREN WERE BORN. THE MOTHER DIED IN EARLY LIFE, AND THE FATHER THEN MARRIED MISS ISABELLA MEANS, DAUGHTER OF JOHN MEANS, OF GRANBY, S. C. TO THIS LATTER MARRIAGE FOUR CHILDREN WERE BORN OF WHICH JOHN IS THE YOUNGEST. JOHN BRATTON WAS BORN AT WINNSBORO, S. C. IN THE HOUSE BUILT ON FORMER WINN PROPERTY ON MARCH 7, 1831. HAVING BEEN GIVEN EVERY EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGE IN HIS BOYHOOD, HE WAS GRADUATED FROM MT. ZION COLLEGE, OF HIS NATIVE TOWN, AND IN 1850 WAS GRADUATED FROM THE S. C. COLLEGE, AT COLUMBIA. THREE YEARS LATER HE COMPLETED A COURSE IN THE S. C. MEDICAL COLLEGE, AT CHARLESTON, AND SOON THEREAFTER BEGAN THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE IN HIS NATIVE COUNTY.