

The life ~~of~~ sketch of John H. Britton

1.

John Henderson Britton, a well known colored civil war veteran was born in Nashville Tenn. August 1, 1850 and came to Washington D.C. with other soldiers after the war in 1864. John happened to be one of the many soldiers that had the pleasure of shaking hands with Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

John Britton was found by several northern soldiers in a old barn half starved. He had been placed there - with his troopers, who had already perished from - starvation. Many of the southern parents in those - days hid their children as they feared the northern - soldiers.

After nowishing food was fed the lad, he became well again and was kept by the general and Captains to polish boots, harness and etc.

It was at this time John Britton met Mr Cooke, - General John H. ^{Ketchum} Catheum and many other important men, whom he labored for without pay. When John became old enough ~~he was~~ placed in the northern

army to fight against his own flesh and blood, which he never relaised until he was freed. Many of his friends enjoyed his interesting talks concerning the marches and battles fought and won by the Rebels during the war. Such as the "Long march up the Crumbling Mountain" "Surrender of Memphis by Sherman." "The great battle between Gen. McDowell and Stonewall Jackson and other serious battles which he witness. He also loved to tell of his first entering the army, and going on the long march called "The Great Campaign"

For three long days and nights he and other soldiers marched through rain and mud, while bullets whizzed through the air like lightning. Leaves from the trees were shattered, horses snorting and prancing, soldiers were falling like mowed grass, many generals were shot off their horses, while the horses marched on in line.

The third night the rain ceased and those which were left of the Rebels army, when were sure of safety got down on their bellys and drank the water, which was caught in the cups the horse huffs

formed in the mud. On reaching the nearest village the soldiers munched Hard Luck.

Mr Britton's earlier life was not a easy or pleasant one. His boyhood days were spent in hardship, fear and that of a slave. At the age of twelve he was captured by the northern soldiers. In 1861. He entered the war. In '62 fought for his country until '64.

^{Then} At the age of 16 yrs John was ~~bought~~ to which is now Millbrook by Mr Cooke and placed with a Quaker -

X family named Pongdon. Jarriss Pongdon was the owner of the "Old Quaker Boarding" house at Mechanic which is now the home of the late Miss Laura Jay Edwards.

Mr Pongdon was also the great uncle of the late - Mr John D. Wing both of Millbrook and New York city a great, great uncle of the late L. Stuart Wing, Mr John Morgan Wing and Mrs Marion Wing Flint all of Millbrook.

Mr Britton was ^{raised} ~~brought~~ up for many years ~~in~~

Jarriss Pongdon family and was a member of the "Old Brick Meeting House" at Mechanic. It was at

Pongdon was the last superintendent of ^{the} famous Quaker Boarding School here in Mechanic

This boarding house John rode and taught Mr. J. Morgan Wing, Mr. L. Stuart Wing, the late Howard & Lath of Poughkeepsie and Mr. Edmund P. Platt of Washington D.C. To ride horse back and many other boyish tricks such as riding a small donkey through Aunt Lydia Congdon dining room and breaking colts.

For many years John was known as one of Dutchess County best vegetables growers and ^{he} won many blue ribbons at the "Dutchess County Fair." He was also a brick attendant at the civil war veterans Reunions, which were often held at the Nelson House Poughkeepsie.

At the death of Mr & Mrs Congdon John Britton was united in married to Bertha Elizabeth Duncan, daughter of the late Joseph H. and Sarah F. Duncan March 30, 1894 by the Rev. J. E. Lyall at South Millbrook. Mr Britton moved from the Congdon estate and became a gardener for General de Pister, Brother Louisy and Brother Gilbert at Prairie Farm a Episcopal home for boys, which is now known as Hope Farm.

In 1895 John Britton came back to mechanic, Millbrook with his wife and infant daughter and purchased a home, where he still was surrounded by his boyhood fancy.

The large wing estate, The Leaker Boarding House and The Old Brick meeting house. John's home was the estate of the late Samson and Janet Haff a aged colored couple which, Mr Britton purchased from the late Henry H. Swift Millbrook, March 11, 1897

In 1898 John signed up to serve in the Spanish American war as a substitute for the late L. Staurt Wing. Terms of Peace were soon surrendered which was a great disappointment to him, so he remained at home with his family.

After laboring for over 35 years in this vicinity for different members of the younger Wing generation, Mr Britton became well know and loved by many. He was one of Millbrook's oldest colored citizens a member of the Dutch Reform church, South Millbrook mission and a strict member of the Republican party.

He died at his home mechanic June 16, 1920,
after a short illness at the age of 71 years. Leaving
his wife, seven daughters and a host of friends
to mourn his departure.

written by
Elyz' Anna Britton
1929.