

## More History of a Family, a House and a Town

By Linda Anders

About 1900, Thomas “De” England built what is now the home of the Transylvania Heritage Museum, 189 West Main Street, Brevard. This article continues the story of the house with a history of its namesake, Harry Patton.

Thomas Taylor Patton was listed with his parents in the 1860 Buncombe County, NC census as the 12-year-old son of James E. and Eliza Davidson Patton. Thomas served in the Jeter Artillery of the Confederate States of America. On 3 December 1878, he married Emma Ella Weaver in Polk County, NC. By 1900, Thomas and Emma were living in Transylvania County in North Brevard.

Their son, Harry Heiss Patton, was born 24 May 1887 in Buncombe County. Harry attended the old Davidson River School and also the Asheville Farm School, which later became Warren Wilson College. On 8 January 1912, Harry was married to Edith Louella England, the daughter of Thomas D. and Mary Ann Charlotte King England. Harry and Edith lived in the England house which became known as the Harry Patton house.

Edith was a member of the first graduating class of Brevard Epworth School; it later became Brevard College. This school for women was established in 1895 in the Red House on Probart Street in Brevard by Reverend and Mrs. Fitch Taylor. Girls were taught basic reading, writing and domestic skills. The “Minutes of the Annual Conferences of Methodist Episcopal Church, South” for the year 1899 lists the Brevard Epworth School as having four officers and teachers with 70 students. The Red House still stands today and is a charming bed & breakfast. (See page 64, Images of America – Brevard by Susan M. Lefler, for sale in the Museum’s shop, Heritage Gifts.)



*One of the stores owned and operated by Harry H. Patton, also containing the Pisgah Forest Post Office, from a time when Pisgah Forest was almost as large as Brevard. As Brevard's Town Clerk in the 1930's, Harry Patton was instrumental in bringing the Ecusta paper plant to Transylvania County.*

Harry was a merchant and owner of Patton's General Store and later the Village Store in Pisgah Forest. He was Clerk as well as Treasurer for the Town of Brevard from 1924 to 1936. According to Cal Carpenter's article in the *Transylvania Times*, Brevard's population was "around 1900 then, the budget was about \$10,000 annually; the Police Force consisted of two men with one standby in case either of the two regulars got sick." Harry also spearheaded the movement to bring big industry to Transylvania County, resulting in the Ecusta paper plant.

Harry and Edith had two children. Their daughter, Charlotte, was a member of the Transylvania Volunteer chapter of the Children of the Confederacy based on her Grandfather Patton's record. Charlotte's certificate of membership, dated the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of November 1925, is currently at the Transylvania Heritage Museum.

Charlotte, herself a graduate of Brevard College and University of Georgia, Athens, married George Wrigley, Jr., a graduate of Furman University and M.I.T., and the resident engineer of J.E. Sirrene Construction Company when they built Ecusta. Clippings from the *Transylvania Times* in October 1924 tell of the numerous social events leading up to their wedding and mention names of many Brevard residents of that time.

Thomas Taylor “Tom” Patton, b. 17 Feb 1913, d. 25 May 1972, Brevard, was the son of Harry and Edith. Tom’s daughter, Sharon Patton Smathers, says her father was born in the house, and that she and her two brothers grew up in it.

Smathers said there was also an older building on the property, made with wooden shingles. It was, at various times, an old schoolhouse, a stable, a tea room, and Tom used it as a sign shop. According to Anne Wrigley Benner, Charlotte’s daughter, her mother made and sold homemade taffy and ran the tea room in that building during the Depression.

After the Patton house was sold by the family, it was moved to the back of the property and a brick structure was built near the street; however, the house can still be seen behind the large chestnut tree, a reminder of the families who originated our beloved Town of Brevard.

The Transylvania Heritage Museum will host a special “homecoming” for friends and family this Saturday, June 5, from 2-4 pm. The Museum is now open Wednesday-Saturday, 11 am – 6 pm and invites visitors to come step back in time and enjoy the ambience of this old house. Donations for admission are suggested and appreciated but not required.

**Heritage Gifts** offers an opportunity to purchase handcrafted items along with books and CDs of local interest. For membership information, upcoming events or to become a sponsor, please call 884-2347, visit the web site at [www.transylvaniaheritage.org](http://www.transylvaniaheritage.org), or email [heritage@citcom.net](mailto:heritage@citcom.net).