

# 2021 Annual Report

## Old Town Cemetery

(George Gordon Battle Cemetery Trust)



## About the Cover

This painting is by Chris Wilson who owned Old Town Plantation from 1983 to 2015. Under sponsorship of Preservation NC, he acquired Old Town with the agreement to restore the interior and exterior to its original period. This was a ten-year project for Chris and his wife Kathy. By all accounts, they did a masterful job.

Chris and Kathy now live in Wilmington, NC; he is still an active painter. While living at Old Town, he produced paintings of the house plus of the surrounding fields. To see his work, go to <https://www.jchriswilson.com> or call him at (910) 763-4796.

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## INTRODUCTION

For your reading enjoyment, this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Report to the Battle cousins about the family cemetery and its history. The report contains four sections:

- A brief description and history of 2 homes in the area which have historical significance to the Battle family: Old Town and Cool Spring.
- Profile of George Eatman about his genealogical work on the North Carolina branch of our family.
- 2021 financials of the George Gordon Battle Cemetery Trust (GGBCT); this is the principal funding source for maintenance of Old Town Cemetery.
- Looking ahead in 2022.

As with the 2020 Annual Report, there is an Appendix A at the end of this report, listing all living descendants of Jacob Battle. Please review and report any additions/deletions as well as changes in email address or state of residence. Appendix B shows our direct descendants from Elisha Battle down to Jacob Battle. This should help keep the generations straight when reading about the cemeteries and their history.

## HOUSES

Old Town Plantation and Cool Spring Plantation are both located within one mile of Old Town Cemetery. First, about the term “plantation”; it conjures up an image of a large home with high ceilings, circular driveway and Greek columns (think Tara, in “Gone with the Wind”). Today, there is a certain pretentiousness when using this word; for southern farm houses however, the definition meant:

- House associated with a large farm;
- Commodity (such as tobacco or cotton) grown as the main crop;
- Workers provided food and housing and yes, in ante bellum south, this meant enslaved people.

## Old Town

Elisha Battle (1723-1799) moved from Nansemond County Virginia (SE corner of state, no longer an official county) to Edgecombe County in 1748 with a holding of 400 acres. Soon afterwards, a family cemetery was established, today known as Elisha Battle Cemetery (EBC). Although there is no written record of an accompanying house, there probably was a modest one nearby.

Elisha's son Jacob Battle (1754-1814) built another house, called Old Town about ½ mile east of the cemetery; there is no written record as to when but a study using dendrochronology (a fancy name for dating construction by analyzing growth rings in construction timber) shows the timbers were cut down during the 1785-1786 growing season. A larger house

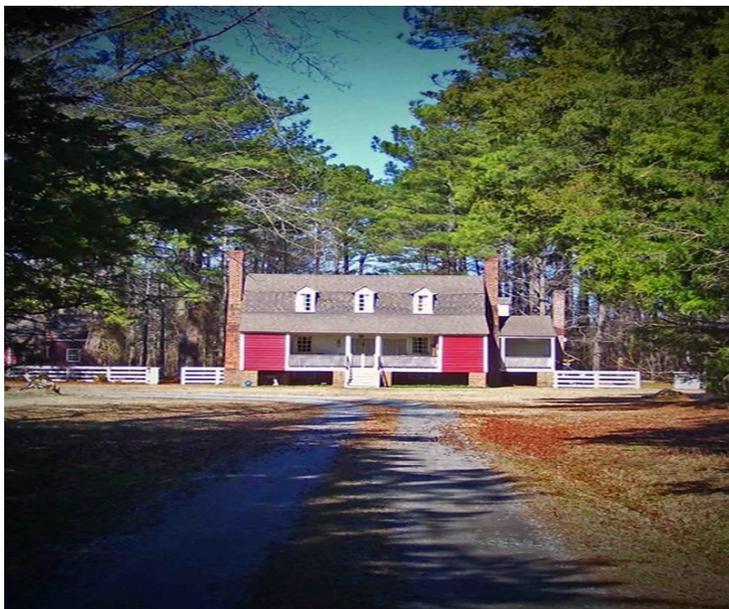
(Cool Spring) was subsequently built around 1850 as the family home. Old Town then became occupied by the land's tenant farmer; it remained in the Battle family until 1908 when most of the Battle farmland plus the Old Town house, was sold to M.C. Braswell (a prominent businessman/landowner in the area). There is a protective covenant in the sale agreement allowing access to the two cemeteries.

In 1983, Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, now known as Preservation/NC, developed a program for restoring historic NC homes. One of the first was Old Town, in which the Braswell family donated the home and Dorothy Battle Wilkinson donated land still held by her family. The new location is about a mile west of the original Old Town site.

It is on the north side of highway 97, at the end of long driveway with an allée of cedars leading to the house. The new owner, Chris Wilson, a renowned regional artist and local professor, with his wife Kathy, carefully restored the house, completing restoration in 1995 (the cover of this report is a painting of driveway up to Old Town by Chris Wilson). In 2016 Chris and Kathy sold Old Town to Susan Vick who has maintained the house's historical integrity.



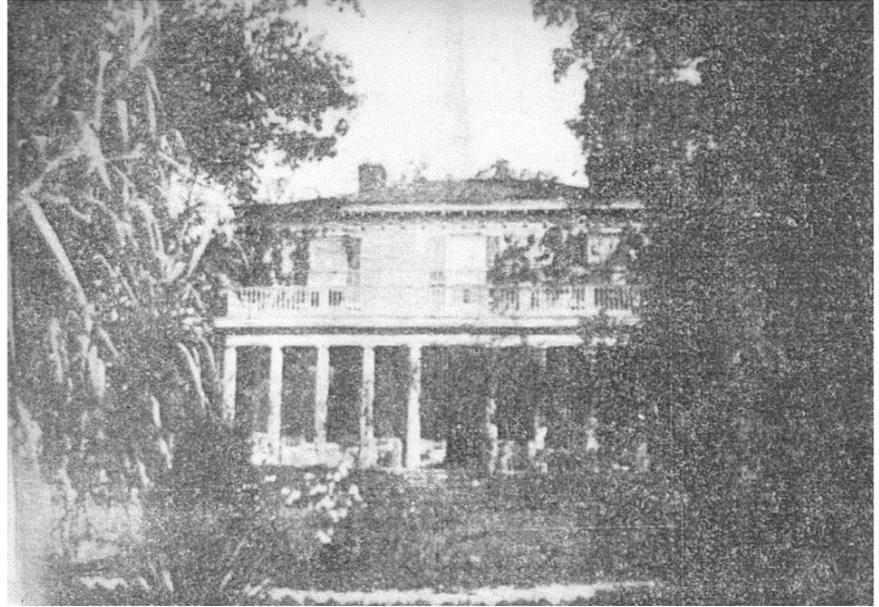
Old Town: Pre-Restoration



Old Town: Post-Restoration

## Cool Spring

Under Jacob's son, James Smith Battle (1786-1854), the plantation prospered and acreage increased to 20,000. He built a Greek revival house in front (south) of the existing one and it became the family's primary residence. It is unclear whether this existing house was Elisha's first or a later one (probably the latter). Upon James Smith Battle's death in 1854, his property was divided among his 5 surviving children, among them being our direct descendant, Turner Westray Battle (1827-1895) who was given the Cool Spring house plus 3,000 acres.



Cool Spring: Original House

In 1896 there was a fire that damaged Cool Spring followed by another fire in 1898 that completely destroyed the house. Joseph Daniel Bunn, a cousin, who was staying there at the time, tragically lost his life saving his aunt by throwing her out of a second story window.

Cool Spring was rebuilt but to avoid a repeat of this tragedy, it was one story high and all rooms in the house had windows that opened to the ground floor. In a later renovation, 2 dormers and a stairwell were added to open up the attic area.



Cool Spring; Current House



Old Town Cemetery: after Hurricane Irene

Cool Spring and the surrounding farmland were acquired in 1999 by Joel and Jean Boseman. They own Boseman Farms which is a large and successful agribusiness firm. In December 2005, there was yet another house fire but it was contained and Cool Spring was rebuilt. The Boseman's have been good neighbors to the cemeteries.

In 2011, OTC experienced two natural events: a straight-line windstorm in April and Hurricane Irene in August. The Boesmans aided with the cleanup of both occurrences. The Boesmans still live at Cool Spring and remain active with their farm business.

## PROFILE OF GEORGE EATMAN

Last year's Annual Report profiled three Battle descendants, all deceased. This year we are profiling George Eatman who is very much with us and has been critical in organizing and sharing Battle history with the family. George is a grandson of Jacob Battle and son of Mary Long Battle Eatman. Born in 1946, he grew up in Rocky Mount and was educated at Sewanee and UNC-CH. He has practiced law, been a trade association executive and lobbyist. He is author of numerous articles on genealogy plus co-authored the book, "A Treasury of Anglican Art", published in 2001 by Rizzoli.

George's life-long interest in family history and genealogy was nurtured by his friend and aunt, Dorothy Battle Wilkinson (daughter of Jacob and Nell Battle) who encouraged him to update the original 1930 Battle Book regarding the descendants of James Smith Battle (including our branch of the family). In 2001 George published "The Battle Book updated". He and Bill Battle Mebane established the family website ([thebattlebook.com](http://thebattlebook.com)), which provides current updates. George continues to be actively involved in genealogical associations as well as updating our website. He happily answers family related questions on genealogy.



George and Irene

## FINANCIALS

This section provides financial statements of the cemetery trust for 2020 and 2021.

	For year ending	
	12/31/2020	12/31/2021
Cash	5,018	3,604
Mutual Funds	100,721	114,661
	<u>105,738</u>	<u>118,266</u>
	2020	2021
Beginning Account Value	100,947	105,738
Deposits (+)	350	400
Withdrawals (-)	-1,955	-4,630
Dividends & Interest (+)	2,712	4,778
Net Change in Portfolio	3,685	11,979
Ending Account Value	105,738	118,266

## FINANCIAL NOTES:

- These financials are on a cash basis, not reflecting any known expenses for the following year. In 2020, decision was made for the monuments to be power washed and professionally cleaned; this was done in September 2021 at an expense of \$2,000 and is reflected in the 2021 withdrawals. The remaining 2021 withdrawals were for regular maintenance (e.g., grass cutting and yardwork).
- As for extraordinary expenses, 2021 was a quiet year. In the past, these expenses have been mostly weather related and inevitably will happen in the future.
- As for 2022 extraordinary expenses, none are expected unless the special project described in **LOOKING AHEAD** below is begun. If so, additional funding commitments will be required before proceeding,
- In 2021, there were gifts from family members of \$400.
- Thanks to strong stewardship by the trustees and a bull market, the trust enjoyed a healthy increase in 2021 (year end balance increased from \$105,738 to \$118,256).
- Should you have any questions about the financials or (more importantly!) wish to make a gift to the trust, please contact Richard Battle (RBATTLE@CAPITAL-INVEST.COM).



Old Town Cemetery: after power wash

## LOOKING AHEAD

The trust provides funding for the 2 Battle cemeteries: Old Town Cemetery (OTC) and the Elisha Battle Cemetery (EBC). Many of you are familiar with Old Town, where most of our ancestors are either buried or honored. Elisha Battle Cemetery (the older cemetery) is less well known. EBC was established shortly after Elisha moved in 1747 to Edgecombe County. It is located around ½ mile west of OTC in Taylor's Field between Cool Spring and Treatment Plant roads just north of Highway 97. In 1995, NC's chief archaeologist, John Clauser, documented 14 plots in EBC by analyzing the ground depressions within the cemetery; this is in contrast to 42 plots or markers within OTC.

More attention has been paid to OTC; EBC has therefore become an orphan. The wooden crosses are long gone; there are no tombstone markers and the protective fence has been damaged by farm equipment. Since Elisha was the first Battle to live in NC, the family has long explored the possibility of disinterring (moving the remains) from EBC to an area adjacent to OTC. It is a complicated process with many steps and no guarantee of success. In addition, we are filing for a private letter from the IRS to obtain tax exempt status regarding future gifts to the cemetery. The trustees are currently doing an analysis of all this and, in all likelihood, will provide an interim 2022 report to the cousins on the status.

Stay tuned!



Elisha Battle Cemetery: fence around cemetery

**APPENDIX A****2021 Annual Report****All Living Descendants of Jacob Battle II**

	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Full Name</b>	<b>State</b>
1	SN	Stacy Nicholas	OR
2	TWB	Turner Westry Battle VI	FL
3	TWB	Turner Westry Battle III (VII)	DC
4	TWB	Turner Westry Battle IV (VIII)	DC
5	TWB	Madison Elizabeth Battle	DC
6	TWB	Isla Latham Battle	DC
7	TWB	Sloan Barksdale Battle	FL
8	SSB	Stephen Shackelford Battle	NC
9	SSB	Kristen Elizabeth Sebastian	NC
10	RSB	William Richardson Staats Battle	NC
11	RSB	Cameron Shackelford Battle Leonard	NC
12	RSB	Sterling Barksdale Battle Stilley	NC
13	RSB	William Richardson Staats Battle Jr	NC
14	ELE	Edward Laughtin Eatman Jr.	SC
15	ELE	Edward Laughtin Eatman III	FL
16	ELE	Shannon Gay Eatman	SC
17	ELE	Amanda Nicole Long	NC
18	ELE	Jonathan Tyler Long	NC
19	GHE	George Hackney Eatman	VA
20	GBE	Gordon Battle Eatman	NM
21	GBE	Sara Rose Eatman	TX
22	GBE	Theodore Carson Toohey	TX
23	GBE	Maxwell Sawyer Toohey	TX
24	NBE	Nell Battle Eatman	VA
25	NBE	Andrew Christian Edwards	VA
26	NBE	Richard George Battle Edwards	MD
27	NBE	Mary Elizabeth Edwards	MD
28	NBE	Joshua Zachary Edwards	MD
29	GWF	Gordon Wilkinson Folger	NC
30	GWF	Lee Alphonso Folger IV	NC
31	GWF	Lee Alphonso Folger V	NC
32	GWF	Alison Wilkinson Newbold Folger	NC
33	GWF	Francis Wilkinson Folger	NC
34	GWF	David Alexander Folger	NC
35	GWF	Caroline Jourdan Folger	NC
36	GWF	Kathryn Carlyle Battle Folger	NC
37	FSW	Frank Smith Wilkinson Jr	MN
38	FSW	Smith Kemp Wilkinson	MN
39	FSW	Westray Battle Wilkinson	MN
40	FSW	Eloise Battle Ratan	MN
41	FSW	Scarlett Battle Ratan	MN
42	FSW	Josephine Kemp Ratan	MN
43	FSW	Charlotte Scannell Heins	MN
44	FSW	Benjamin Carter Wilkinson	ME

Descendants of Jacob Battle plus step &amp; adopted children

**APPENDIX B**  
**2021 Annual Report**  
**Direct Descendants**  
**Elisha Battle to Jacob Battle II**

