

CITY/STATE

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Revolutionary War veteran remembered with marker

By **MATT BUEDEL**
STAFF WRITER

Betsy Heimke's voice quivered as she explained why her freedom is important to her.

On the verge of tears as she spoke to people gathered to dedicate the gravesite of Revolutionary War veteran George Bryan, Heimke talked about her imprisonment in the Philippines in December of 1941, when she was 12 years old.

During the three years her freedom was lost, Heimke said, she developed an appreciation for the rights most Americans take for granted and for her ancestors, one of whom was Bryan.

"Having lost my own freedom, I think I know why our ancestors fought for their own freedoms that they established for their infant country," Heimke told the crowd at the ceremony, held at a graveyard behind a house on Carole Road Sunday afternoon.

While researching her genealogy for acceptance into Daughters of the American Revolution, Heimke discovered Bryan had been a private, a spy and an Indian fighter in Virginia, Georgia, and North and South Carolina.

In Kentucky in 1780, Bryan also was a chain bearer for Daniel Boone's survey crew.

Bryan moved to Sangamon County in 1834, at the age of 76.

"He continued visiting Kentucky, riding each way on horseback, annually for 11 years," Heimke said. "Imagine, no car to have to get gas for, no McDonalds for a quick meal, no motels for sleeping."

Heimke and her husband, Karl Heimke, former mayor of Wheaton, found Bryan's grave in August of 1994. Bryan was buried there in November of 1845 after dying at age 87.

Mrs. Lyle Hinshaw, Illinois State Regent for the DAR, said it is necessary for Americans to value the country's history.

"Nothing has really ended until it is forgotten," Hinshaw said.

Hinshaw also said she believes families should recognize and celebrate their roots.

"I think it's important that every grandchild knows where their grandparents came from," she said. "The roots from the past are what's going to build the future."

R. Garey Hodge, a member of the Sons of the American Revolution color guard that also helped dedicate the grave, said more than 50 known Revolutionary War soldiers are buried in Sangamon County.

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Shawn Poynter/The State Journal-Register

Betsy Heimke unveils the new marker on Revolutionary War veteran George Bryan's grave Sunday at Harmony Cemetery in Woodside Township. Heimke, an officer in Daughters of the American Revolution, is joined by other Bryan descendants for the presentation.

20 May 2001

Marker Dedication

D.A.R., S.A.R. and decedents

honor

Revolutionary

War Vetran

George Bryan

with an

historical

marker.

Old Harmony

Cemetery,

Chatham, Illinois.