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### EMILY GEIGER.

#### Interesting Account of the Famous Ride of that Brave Revolutionary Heroine.

The following article was written by W. T. Brooker, M. D., of Lexington county, and published in the Lexington Dispatch under date of Wednesday, January 16, 1901:

A quiet country home between the Broad and Enoree rivers and near their confluence. Midnight. Waning campfires in the grove near by mark the resting place of an army sleeping. The stillness of the quiet summer night is scarcely disturbed by the gentle footfall of the wary sentinel as he paces to and fro in the weird shadows of the towering oaks. Suddenly the silence is broken by the sound of the clattering hoofs of a horse approaching rapidly. Quickly are heard the formal "Halt! Who comes there?" and the usual response "Friend with the countersign." After exchange of a few words in hurried converse, the rider moves promptly in the direction of the farm house, and dismounting, enters the chamber of General Nathaniel Greene—the officer in command of the Continental army operating in upper and central Carolina—whose headquarters for the time are here. The courier proves to be a trusted scout who brings the intelligence that Lord Rawdon, before whom Greene has been retiring, has declined further pursuit and decided to retrace his steps and recapture Fort Granby, near Friday's Ferry on the Congaree. Cruger had been ordered to abandon the fort at Ninety-Six, and, keeping the North Edisto between his column and the American army, to move to Orangeburg and form a junction with Stuart, who had been directed to march there from Monk's Corner. These two columns were to move together up the Congaree and join Rawdon at Friday's Ferry.

The natural course for Greene to pursue would be to attack the enemy in detail—to attempt the destruction of Rawdon's column while he was separated from his main army. Unfortunately his own troops are widely separated. Lee in command of the cavalry is near by. Marion is on the Santee trying to intercept or harass Stuart, Huger and the Hamptons are near Camden. Colonel Wm. Washington is on the Congaree, while Hill and Bratton are above Winoosboro in the direction of Charlotte. Just where Sumter was at this time (the night of July 1st, 1781) was not even known to Greene himself, as he had not been heard from in some days. The week before he was moving to form a junction with Greene who was being pursued by Rawdon. Subsequently he had been ordered to move down to the Congaree—from his position between the Broad and Saluda. To accomplish his purpose, Greene

must communicate quickly with his subordinates, and couriers are dispatched to each of them. The uncertainty of finding Sumter immediately, and the certainty of exposing messengers to danger and delay in a country infested by bands of Tories, made it important that extreme care and caution should be exercised. Spies were constantly near, and every movement closely watched. An invalid John Geiger, a wealthy planter, in whose home Greene was quartered, was a trusted patriot. The blood of the best German families coursed his veins. He was in the confidence of the commanding officer and fully acquainted with his environments. His daughter Emily who was only sixteen was his nurse and companion and equally loyal and true. Fully informed with references to the general's embarrassment, she eagerly sought the privilege of bearing the message to Sumter, feeling sure that she would not be suspected. She had frequently visited relatives on the Congaree and was familiar with the route. The importance of instant communication with Sumter; the doubt as to the possibility of having the message safely delivered by a trooper; and above all the eagerness and earnestness of the brave girl, overcame all scruples, and on the morning of July 2, 1781, just as Greene was moving off to Winoosboro, she left his camp on her perilous mission, bearing instructions to the game partisan to move rapidly to Friday's Ferry where it was desired to concentrate the forces with the view of surprising and intercepting Rawdon at that point.

There were spies in the camp and the truth was soon known to these watchful foes. Near by lived a rabid Tory, one Lowry, who was soon informed of the girl's departure and that she carried an important paper. She must be stopped if possible before Morgan's Range is passed and friendly hands are ready to protect her—a horseman is quickly dispatched but she has been gone more than five hours and has ridden rapidly and with a steady rein and the dangerous point has been left behind and she has not been intercepted. A notorious and merciless Tory—Bell Mick—is chosen to continue the pursuit. Weary and almost exhausted by her long and tiresome ride, the child at nightfall reins up at a farm house near her road and inquires the distance to Elwood's, where she hoped to rest until morning. Being informed that she was ten miles from the point she wished to reach, she accepted the invitation so kindly offered to remain till morning. There has been no news of Sumter, only that he was thought to have crossed Broad river, and she accordingly indicates that she

will make her way in that direction next morning. While her host was caring for her horse the good woman of the house plied her with confusing questions, to which she necessarily gave evasive answers. She told her true name, however, and that she was making her way to the home of relatives on the Congaree. The husband is quickly informed that their guest is the daughter of "the rebel John Geiger!" but replies that she should have food, and shelter and rest if she were his worst enemy. Emily retires early and sleeps soundly until awakened by the halloo of a belated rider who asks of her host the alarming question, "Have you seen a bit of a girl riding a small bay horse, pass the road during the afternoon?" A negative response is given, and in the short conversation that follows she learns that the ruthless Bill Mick has traced her to her resting place. Her host told the rider that he would "go on a fool's errand" if he proceeded further that night—and easily persuaded him to stop. The watchful girl caught occasional words of the low voiced conversation that ensued and she learned that they were depending on a vicious yard dog to prevent her from leaving the house before morning.

Some hours after, while all were sleeping, she quietly dressed and opening a window on the piazza aroused the formidable brute who was converted into a friend. With the faithful dog as an escort she found and bridled her horse, and lightly mounting bade a kind adieu to her mute companion, and was soon on the highway and beyond the hearing of her sleeping foes.

Quick witted as well as brave she turned across the country to Kennerley's (now Loric's) Ferry on the Saluda, instead of continuing her journey to the Broad as she had intended the night before. A kindly shower of rain had removed the traces of the foot prints of her horse before her departure was discovered, and her pursuer was easily misled when he attempted to follow. It was still early in the day when she crossed the Saluda, and after passing Zion church and riding some miles on her way she was accosted by three British troopers and learned for the first time that Rawdon had passed down the river on the south side the night before and had retaken the fort at Friday's Ferry. Young and inexperienced and alarmed for the safety of the concealed paper, her replies to the questions of her captors were confused and unsatisfactory and she was conducted to the headquarters of Rawdon at a house near Granby, now known as the Cayce house (still standing) and there confined in the south east room. Realizing that her secret was in danger of being revealed, she tore up the paper and swallowed it piece by piece.

Near the banks of Dry Creek, a short distance above the point at which the creek crosses the old State

road, lived a Tory leader named Hogabook; from whom came the name of the well known Hogabook Swamp. This man had the full confidence of the Royalists, and to his wife and daughter were assigned the task of searching the person of the brave and lovely Emily Geiger, with the hope of discovering the hidden paper and thus disclosing Greene's plans. The proud girl so overcame her chagrin and scorn as to aid her enemy in hastening the search, as she had been all the while in dread of the approach of Mink who had passed the day in a fruitless search for the courageous messenger. Nothing was discovered to incriminate our heroine and Rawdon gallantly offered to place her in care of a female companion till morning, as it was then near nightfall. For reasons known to the reader she asked to be permitted to go on to the home of her uncle, Maj. Jacob Herman Geiger, who lived some five miles below. (This home was afterwards burned by the Tories and was just below the mouth of Congaree creek, in the plantation now belonging to the Kinsler's. The grave yard is still to be seen, and is near the old homestead.) She was sent under an escort to the place designated and after a light repast and a short rest, still in dread of her hated pursuer, continued her journey under the care of a brave young cousin, down the Congaree to McCord's Ferry. Crossing here the next morning and riding and inquiring all the forenoon, she succeeded at three in the afternoon of July 4th, 1781, in reaching Sumter's camp on the Wateree where the road to Camden crosses that stream. In less than one hour after receiving the dispatch the brave officer had his troops in motion, and though Greene failed in his original purpose, the movement of his troops in consequence of this effort hastened Rawdon's retreat to Orangeburg; arrested the march of Stuart, and placed Greene's army in possession of Fort Motte (which was captured by Marion and Lee) and on the line of communication between Charleston and the up country.

The troops thus concentrated continued to press the Royalists in the direction of the sea and soon came the decisive battle of Eutaw Springs which practically ended the struggle in the Carolinas.

Among the captives at Granby when the fork fell into the hands of the American forces in May 1781—when Greene surprised and captured Maxfield with four hundred officers and men—were four brave patriots who were then prominent and influential and whose names are identified with that of our heroine—Randal Geiger—a cousin—Wm. Rea who afterwards married Mrs. Tateman who was originally Annie Geiger, Randal's sister, and John and Llewellyn Threewitts. The last named soon learned to admire the brave young girl of whom we are writing, who was as beautiful as brave. Eight years later in the summer 1789, at the home of her uncle, Maj. Jacob Geiger, he led her to the altar a charming young bride. Her father had long been an invalid and she his constant attend-

ant and devoted nurse and it is probable that he had passed away before her marriage.

Major Threewitts and his wife, Emily, lived happily together for more than forty years. Their home for part of the time was at Granby, and later near the old State road about ten miles below Columbia on what is now known as the Patsey Jumper place. When Lafayette visited Charleston seventy-five years since a ball was given in his honor at which Mrs. Threewitts was an honored guest as the most distinguished heroine of the Revolutionary war. She passed away in 1825 when she was sixty years old and was laid to rest in the cemetery at the old Threewitts' Homestead (now owned by W. N. Martin) near the Congaree river and about ten miles from the city of Columbia. The ancestor of the Geiger family in this county was Herman Hans Conrad von Geiger who was once private secretary to the king of Nurtemberg. He came over in the earlier half of the eighteenth century, (probably about 1745) and settled in Lexington county on the Congaree river, just south of the mouth of Congaree creek. The place during the Revolutionary war belonged to his son Major Jacob Herman Geiger. Another son, Hans or John, was Emily's father. Her mother was Emily Murph from Switzerland and was a member of the Murph family so long and favorably known as citizens of Orangeburg. Mrs. John Geiger's brother, Colonel Murph, was a distinguished officer in the American army. A number of Swiss palatines came over together, and some of them settled on the Saluda and probably gave the name to Switzer Neck near the mouth of that river.

John Geiger moved after his marriage to that fertile section between the Enoree and the Broad, now known as Maybinton township in Newberry county. If Emily was born after the removal it is probable that she was a native of Newberry as is claimed. Otherwise it is most likely that she was born at the paternal homestead in Lexington. At any rate all of Emily Geiger that could die sleeps beneath the soil of the last named county, which was for many years the home of her adoption.

The honored subject of this sketch, so far as the writer has been able to learn, left no lineal descendants.

Very many of her relatives and their descendants have been prominent and influential, while not a few have from time to time been trusted public servants. Major Jacob Geiger, after the death of his first wife, married Miss Dorothy ("Dolly") Kinsler, a charming daughter of a Revolutionary hero who was killed from ambush by a Tory while at home suffering from a wound received at Fish Dam. This estimable lady, after the death of her first husband, married Major Abram Geiger, who was Lexington's first member of the house of representatives. She lived to extreme old age, dying in 1857. She knew Emily Geiger well and frequently entertained her at her home. After the death of Mrs. Threewitts her husband placed in keeping of Mrs. Geiger certain fam-

ily relics which are still in possession of members of the family and are prized above rubies. Among them is a shawl of light texture which was worn at the Lafayette ball.

General Greene always gratefully remembered his fair young courier and presented her with a handsome set of jewels on her bridal morning. Among the descendants of the Geigers of the Revolution are the Geigers, Kaiglers, Kinslers, Mullers, Patricks, Davises, Wolfes, Cayces and many others who are more remotely connected. W. T. B. Swansea, S. C., January, 1901.

#### POSTSCRIPT.

Miss Anna Pamela Cunningham, who was living at or near Cokesbury less than forty years since knew Emily Geiger well and frequently related the story of her brave adventure. There are now living—one in Bamberg and the other near Bakersville in Lexington county—two very estimable ladies, of superior culture and intelligence, who are granddaughters of the Mrs. Dorothy Geiger whose name appears in the narrative, and who remembers clearly the story as it came from the lips of their venerable grandmother.

The story of the heroic deed of the splendid girl has been so familiarly known to the members of the family and their friends; is so well authenticated historically and by tradition; and is so clearly sustained by the family records, that the futile attempt of a recent writer to discredit the incident has excited wonder and amazement at the temerity of the author of the paper, and surprise and chagrin that the fame of Carolina's most illustrious daughter should have been assailed by one of her cultured and intelligent sons.

The author of the sketch which appears in the current issue of your paper, has made patient and untiring research extending over a period of several months, has conducted a voluminous correspondence, with the hope of eliciting the truth, has acquired facts heretofore unpublished and is convinced in his own mind that the story here told is true as it is written or it would not now see the light.

That it is substantially true does not in any wise admit of doubt anything that has appeared to the contrary notwithstanding.

These papers will be continued from time to time as opportunity is afforded and the necessary facts obtained.

A biographical sketch of the Rev. Tost Meetez will probably appear soon. W. T. BROOKER. Swansea, S. C., January, 1901.

All of the roads in the county have been pretty well worked up and many have been claved, but the road from Bamberg to Ehrhardt is very heavy and should be claved. This is one of the most important highways in the county, and we trust that our Supervisor will have it claved very soon.