

**GEN. FRANCIS MARION**

The following facts about Gen. Francis Marion are taken from the *Magazine of American History*, of September, 1893:

"The British soldier trembles when Marion's name is told."—*Bryant*. The recent erection of a new monument over the grave of General Francis Marion, in place of the one which had marked the spot for nearly a century, calls to mind the daring exploits of one of the most distinguished heroes of the American Revolution. The original tomb was built of brick surmounted with a marble slab bearing an elaborate inscription. Several years ago a large tree was blown down, and falling directly across the tomb wrecked it completely, breaking the slab into fragments. The inscription, too, had become almost obliterated by the action of the elements. It was time, therefore, that a new monument were erected, even if the accident had not occurred.

The new memorial erected by the general assembly of the State is of solid Winsboro granite. The base block is thirty inches wide, six and a half feet long, and fifteen inches high; upon this rests the centre, or die-block, thirty inches high, and weighing about three tons, upon which are the inscriptions wrought upon bronze panels sunk in the sides of the block and permanently secured. At the ends of the die-block are the dates of his birth and death—"1732"—"1795"—cut into the granite.

The material of the old structure has been used up entirely in the concrete foundation of the new work—thus identifying the old with the new monument—excepting only the fragments of the old slab, which have been carefully preserved for the further action of the State authorities.

It is gratifying to notice that the original epitaph upon the old tomb has been carefully transcribed upon the bronze panel of the new as follows:

**SOLDIERS' MONUMENT TO GENERAL FRANCIS MARION**  
Sacred to the Memory  
of

**GENERAL FRANCIS MARION**  
Who departed this life on the  
27th February 1795,  
in the 63rd year of his age,  
Deeply regretted by all his fellow citizens.  
History will record his worth  
and rising generations embalm his  
memory as one of the most  
distinguished Patriots and Heroes of  
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION,  
which elevated his native country  
to Honor and Independence  
and secured to her the blessings of  
Liberty and Peace.

This tribute of veneration and gratitude is erected in commemoration of the noble and disinterested virtues of the citizen and the gallant exploits of the soldier who lived without fear and died without reproach.

The opposite side of the die block bears another panel in bronze, with the coat-of-arms of the State, and the following inscription:

To preserve to posterity this burial place of an honored son The General Assembly of South Carolina replaces the crumbling and broken tomb nearly a century old, with this enduring memorial cut from her own granite hills.  
Esto perpetua.  
1893.

Marion's first military experience was in the Cherokee war of 1761, which, however, was of short duration. But in 1775, when war was declared with England, he promptly took the field as captain in the second Carolina regiment. But he was without men or money, and linking his fortunes with another as destitute as himself, and finding they could get nothing from the assembly or from their friends in Charleston, they boldly ordered appropriate uniforms, and thus equipped made another appeal, and procured contributions to the amount of one hundred dollars, paid for their regimentals, and started for Georgetown to recruit their companies. In a little while they had enrolled sixty men each and returned to Charleston harbor, arriving in time to participate in driving off the British fleet (June 28, 1776), Marion in the mean time being promoted to the rank of major.

It is said that it was reserved for him to fire the last shot at the retreating commodore's ship, the gun being ready, loaded, and nothing to be done but level it and apply the match. Such was the havoc effected by this one shot, as reported by five impressed seamen who managed to escape in the confusion, that two officers were killed in the cabin, three sailors on the main deck were wounded, and the fore-castle was badly wrecked before the force of the shot was spent and it fell sullenly into sea.

News of the Declaration of Independence did not reach Charleston until the 20th of September. Savannah was now threatened, and finally surrendered to the British, and Charleston soon encountered the same fate. Marion meantime, having accidentally broken an ankle, escaped in a litter to his seat in St. John's parish, and as soon as he could be moved

set out for the north, for such reinforcements as he could procure. With the first ten men he started to retrace his steps. These were joined by others to the number of thirty, well mounted and well armed; and now began his history as a partisan leader.

He adopted tactics of his own—living on the enemy, depending on him for arms, ammunition, camp equipage, horses, and forage. Allowing his men frequent paroles, subject to summons, his force was economically maintained, and readily augmented on emergency, varying from thirty or forty to two hundred men, with which latter number he at one time surprised six hundred of the enemy, seized the arms, equipments, and stores, and marched them off as prisoners.

On another occasion, with a force of only thirty men, he surprised a British guard of ninety, having two hundred American prisoners on their way to Charleston, seizing their arms, which were all stacked near the gate, and made prisoners of the whole party without having been obliged to kill more than three of them. After everything had been secured, on searching for the captain of the party, he was found up the chimney. Strange to say, not one of the two hundred prisoners he had rescued could be persuaded to shoulder a musket. All were anxious to be relieved and go home, and Marion had no desire to recruit his little force with such material. He now had more arms and munitions of war than he knew what to do with, and so retreated to Britton's Neck with his plunder, and established a little arsenal there.

After a brief rest at this place, learning that the Tories were mustering in force on the Pedee, he mounted his men, and, after a brisk ride of about forty miles, came upon their encampment in the dead of night when all were asleep. Not a shot was fired on either side until Marion and his men were in the camp, loading the arms and ammunition upon the captured horses of the party. Of the forty-nine men who composed the company, Marion's men killed and took about thirty, and fell back in good order to Britton's Neck, each leading a horse loaded with plunder, and without the loss of a man.

News of these reported exploits spread like wildfire over the country, to the dismay of the British and their allies, who soon sent three well-mounted companies to smoke out the "Swamp Fox" and his followers. But Marion made a masterly retreat to the north, the British falling back upon Georgetown and the Tories to Black Mingo, where they made a stand. But Marion's scouts soon brought him news of the camp, and he promptly turned and attacked them at night, as usual, although the Tories were twice his strength and well posted. Nothing could withstand the fury of the attack; the commanding officer was soon killed, and two-thirds of his men were horsed combat when the survivors mounted their horses and escaped.

Loading his horses with such plunder as could be secured, and destroying the fragments, he now promised his men a little rest, and led them down to Waccamaw, where he had some wealthy patriot friends among the planters. The descendants of the Hugers, Trapiers and Alstons are very fond of relating how their ancestors feasted General Marion and his men after this adventure.

But Marion and his men were a band of heroes, and their reputation was such that neither friends nor foes allowed them much time for "rest," however well deserved. After a very few days of their rest and high feeding at Waccamaw, they were in their saddles again, sixty strong, headed for the Pedee, where the Tories were again mustering a force to surprise the "Swamp Fox" and treat him and his men to some of their own music. Halting within a few miles of the place, he sent forward two trusty scouts who secreted themselves at the side of the public road leading to the Tory camp, carefully noting all they could hear and see, and returning to the Marion bivouac at night, confirmed the news that had been given.

Soon as the night had well set in, the eager little band were again on the backs of their horses, and, riding at a nimble gait, soon came within sight of the three fires of the enemy; for so little thought had they of Marion or his men that they had not posted a single sentinel. Marion picketed his horses at a convenient distance, and, dividing his men into three parties, proceeded cautiously until they could hear the voices of the Tories as they sat at cards or occupied themselves with singing, dancing, cooking, etc., when he fired his pistol as a signal, and a deadly volley responded from sixty well-aimed rifles, killing twenty-three, wounding as many more, and ensuring more spoil than they wanted. Eighty-four stand of arms, one hundred horses and their equipments, camp equipage, a plentiful supper ready cooked, a half barrel of old peach brandy, and thirteen half-drunken prisoners were the result of this frolic.

Loading up their pieces and loading the captured horses with the plunder, the victorious little band now returned to their camp in the

swamp and prepared to enjoy a season of actual rest.

A surprise, however, was in store for Marion and his officers, in the shape of an express from Governor Rutledge with a general's commission for Colonel Marion and full colonelcies for his two captains. But there was not a man added to the force nor a dollar to their exchequer. Marion called his officers about him and told them the governor had given them dominion over the land and sea from Charleston to Georgetown, and thence westerly to Camden and back to Charleston again, if he could take it from the British, which they must now proceed to do. And, said he: "We are to be generals and colonels now from this time forth and forever."

The chivalry of Georgetown and its vicinity now flocked to the standard and the camp of Marion, anxious to be enrolled upon his staff, or to enlist in the ranks and participate in the crusades of "Marion's men." Their numbers were increased by new enlistments, and notwithstanding the proclamations of Lord Cornwallis and the cruelties of his "deluded followers," as Marion styled the Tories, "Marion's men" were a constant menace and terror to the British forces to the very close of the war.

"The British soldier trembled when Marion's name was told."

**MARION'S FLIGHT TO NORTH CAROLINA.**

Early in December, 1780, Cornwallis determined, if possible, to cut short the career of Marion, and dispatched Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton with a superior force, which was to have been joined by a legion from Camden for the purpose. But Marion got wind of the matter and sent Major James to reconnoitre. James reported the enemy in such force that an order was promptly given to break camp and fall back to Lynch's Creek, and the next evening Marion commenced his "flight to North Carolina," accompanied by only sixty men, pitching his camp finally near the head of Waccamaw. In the meantime he had sent his men back to South Carolina to rally the militia prepared to rejoin him on signal, and determined on his part to decoy Tarleton into some morass where his cavalry and artillery would be of no avail, and, perhaps, take him back a prisoner.

This brief campaign of December, 1780, proved to be one of the most active of the war. Taking advantage of the absence of Marion, the Tories and their allies had committed every description of outrage upon the people, and especially upon such as were attainted of treason. The result was, that as soon as Marion's signals had been given out, the little "brigade" seemed to rise up out of the very earth, with the face of every man turned toward Snow's island.

"Each valley, each sequestered glen, Sent forth its little band of men."

And Marion and his captains in their turn, fighting their way back as they had opportunity, were soon under the leafy canopy of the rendezvous. Several of these running engagements were of signal importance. The whole south state seemed to be aroused, and Cornwallis sent an express to recall Colonel Tarleton from his fruitless beating of the bushes and marshes in search for Marion, who, he said, "has so wrought upon the minds of the people that there is scarcely an inhabitant between the Santee and Pedee that is not in arms against us. Some parties have even crossed the Santee and carried terror to the gates of Charleston."

Tarleton, already jaded out and sick of his muddy chase of Marion, and discouraged at the sight of "Ox swamp," to which he had been lured, was only too happy to obey the summons; and, turning to his men, exclaimed: "Come, boys, let us go back. We will soon find the *Game Cock* (Sumter), but as for this d—d *Swamp Fox*, the devil himself couldn't catch him."

It was from this circumstance, it is said, that Sumter and Marion derived the popular appellations by which they were ever after known. Sumter's men adopted the game cock as their badge, and Marion's men wore a fox-tail in their caps.

Tarleton now obtained leave to hunt in the other direction for "the game cock," but from this time forth Tarleton proved unfortunate and Marion's star was in the ascendant. Several expeditions, more or less formidable, were sent against him, but he either eluded them or lured them to their own destruction. The war was now drawing to a close, but was prosecuted with untiring vigor and energy upon both sides until the final evacuation of Charleston in 1782.

**THE SWORD OF MARION.**  
Found on Snow's Island, South Carolina, by Captain T. N. Britton, in the year 1826 or 1827.

Captain Britton, in forwarding this valuable relic to Mr. S. Emanuel of Georgetown (June 20, 1876), in order that it might be present at the Fort Moultrie Centennial (June 28th), said: "I found this sword in a limb of a sycamore tree on Snow's Island, the tree having been blown down. The negroes made a fire in a large limb; when the limb burnt into the tree, it exposed the point of the sword, which was in the hollow of the limb. The fire and weight of the limb broke the scabbard and bent the blade so that I

cut a part of the blade and scabbard off. I see marked on the handle "F. M. 1776," which I saw on it the day after I found the sword. You can make what disposition of it you see proper.

Very respectfully yours,  
T. N. BRITTON."

The inscription spoken of is on the back of the hilt, and has evidently been scratched in with the point of a penknife, probably by Marion himself. The blade is a French cut-and-thrust, the scabbard of copper, the grip of ivory, and all the mountings originally plated with silver, traces of which remain. It is unmistakably an officer's sword, and was originally a stylish affair—more of a dress sword, however, than a weapon for service, and was probably hung upon the tree and left behind on Snow's island while Marion and his men were off on some of their raids. It was deeply embedded in the wood of the tree when discovered by Captain Britton, and nothing but fire or the woodman's axe would ever have released it.

Two other circumstances concur in assisting us to identify this as the veritable sword of Marion. (See Note to *Simms' Life of Marion*.) Simms says: "The dislike or indifference of Marion to anything like mere military display was a matter of occasional comment and some jest among his followers. Among other proofs which are given of this indifference, we are told that on one occasion, attempting to draw his sword from the scabbard, he failed to do so, in consequence of the rust. The result of his infrequent employment of the weapon. (Certainly a rich event in the life of a military man.)"

Long swords were then in fashion, but he continued to wear the *small cut-and-thrust of the second regiment*. "Such a weapon better suited his inferior physique, and necessarily lessened the motives to personal adventure."

Now, this sword is a "small cut-and-thrust;" it is very slightly rusted, even after all these years, there being no affinity between the steel blade and the copper scabbard, but it is very snugly fitted, and is therefore difficult to draw. Marion wore it as a designation—more for ornament than use—and, owing to "his inferior physique," as above quoted, the pistol was his favorite weapon.

It was discovered by Captain Britton himself, and remained in his possession fifty years before he sent it to Mr. Emanuel to be loaned to the Fort Moultrie Centennial, June 28, 1876; and has been in the possession of Mr. Emanuel ever since. The peculiar character of the sword and the remarkable manner of its preservation admit of no doubt in the mind of any expert that it is the veritable "cut-and-thrust" sword worn by General Marion who probably scratched his initials upon it himself with the blade of a penknife, and hung it upon that sycamore tree within his camp on Snow's island about fifty years before it was discovered by Captain Britton.

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