



The Life of Francis Marion [Annotated]

G. Wm., Jr. Foster, William Gilmore Simms

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The American War for Independence from England produced many famous and colorful heroes. One of those whose exploits, bravery and cunning which has captured the imaginations of countless youth and adults over the last two centuries was Gen. Francis Marion of South Carolina, nicknamed the “Swamp Fox.” This partisan-patriot and his guerilla band of “Marion’s men” were equally at home in swamp, bog, thicket and field. His name struck terror in the hearts of British soldier and American Tory alike. Noted not only for his military genius, but for his sterling character, his biographer concludes: “Marion, one of the noblest models of the citizen soldier that the world has ever produced. Brave without rashness, prudent without timidity, firm without arrogance, resolved without rudeness, good without cant, and virtuous without presumption.” — “The military operations of Marion . . . [his] daring exploits to resist the British invasion, and [his] efforts to preserve the dignity of the State during the most trying period of her history, should never be forgotten by the rising generations of our country.” (John B. Landrum, “Colonial and Revolutionary History of Upper South Carolina.”) — “Never was a partisan officer better suited to the times, in which he lived, and the situation, in which it was his fortune to act.” (Charles Caldwell, “Memoirs of the Life and Campaigns of the Hon. Nathaniel Greene.”) — “He died in February, 1795, leaving behind him an indisputable title to the first rank among the patriots and soldiers of our revolution.” (Henry Lee [father of Gen. Robert E. Lee], “Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States.”)

The author, William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870), was an antebellum writer who “was upward of thirty years one of the most prolific and one of the most popular of American authors.” Simms provided numerous biographies, historical novels and valuable historical materials for American and Southern studies. Originally written in 1844, his biography of a fellow South Carolinian has always been a noted resource for subsequent work on the subject. His home along with the large library and archived writings which it contained was specifically targeted for destruction by Federal troops in 1865 when Gen. Sherman laid waste to the city of Columbia, South Carolina. Afterward, he virtually became a forgotten American man of letters. — This book contains 347 pages.

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