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Using his knowledge of South Carolina's swamps and waterways, General Francis Marion—known, to the British, as the "Swamp Fox"—led his guerilla forces to victories against the British. In this illustration, we see an artist's interpretation of "Marion's Brigade Crossing the Pedee River, S.C., 1778. On their way to Attack the British Force under Tarleton." Illustration published by Currier & Ives sometime between 1840 and 1900. [Online via the Library of Congress](#). Click on the image for a better view.

At about the time Benedict Arnold was negotiating a deal to harm the American cause in the North, British victories were demoralizing the South. Momentum in favor of the patriots had gone downhill since their decisive win at [Sullivan's Island](#) early in the war (1776).

Even huge American successes—like the [battle of Saratoga](#) (where [General Burgoyne](#) and his Redcoats were [routed](#)) and European powers (such as France, in particular) began to believe it was smart to support the colonies—did not change the British belief that they could hold the South.

To make matters worse, Southern families were divided. Loyalist fathers were pitted against patriot sons while brothers and cousins fought against each other. Charleston, once the fourth largest (and richest) city of the colonies was besieged and fell to the British in May, 1780.

Within months, South Carolina was the scene of more [American disasters](#): [Waxhaws](#); [Camden](#); [Fishing Creek](#). By the [end of the summer](#), there wasn't much of a Continental Army left in South Carolina.

But just as soon as the British and their young victorious general, [Banastre Tarleton](#), were confident that they would hold their [southern prize](#), a South Carolina patriot forever changed the momentum of war in the South. [Francis Marion](#) and his troop of 150 men ("Marion's Brigade") would soon chase the Redcoats out of South Carolina, setting-up the final British defeat at Yorktown.

Not bothered by his lack of men and supplies, Marion brilliantly used a weapon unknown to the British: the [swamps](#), [waterways](#) and marshes of the South Carolina low country. Employing guerilla tactics to harass the enemy, Marion and his men would strike without warning and then disappear into the swamps.

Tarleton, previously feared by southerners for his brutal and bloody attacks, was exasperated when his communications were interrupted, his supply lines were cut off and his hold on the south slipped away.

Powerless to stop the constant unconventional attacks,

*The British soldier trembles
When Marion's name is told.*

The Redcoats could not capture Francis Marion. He and his men were never defeated. Tarleton called him the "swamp fox." (*The Patriot* calls him Benjamin Martin—played by Mel Gibson.)

By the time Marion and his men forced a Redcoat retreat to a battleground called Cowpens, near the North Carolina border, ultimate victory was within the patriots' grasp.

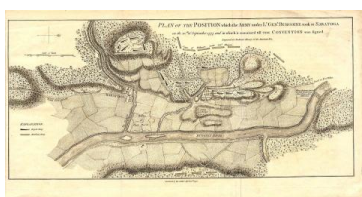
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

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Media Stream

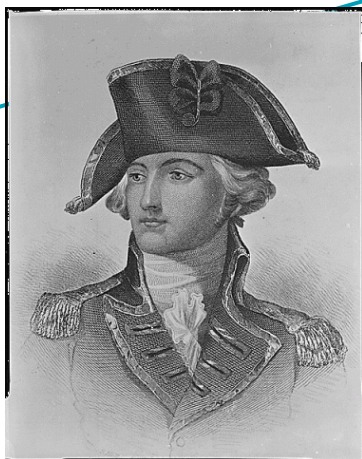


Battle of Saratoga - Map

Image online, courtesy earlyamerica.com website.

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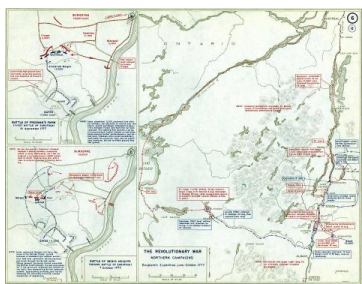
General Burgoyne

Image, engraving of Burgoyne by S. Hollyer. U.S. National Archives, image 148-GW-616.

Linked above: *Surrender of General Burgoyne*, by John Trumbull. Oil on canvas, 12 by 18 feet. Commissioned 1817; purchased 1822; placed 1826. Image, Architect of the Capitol web site.

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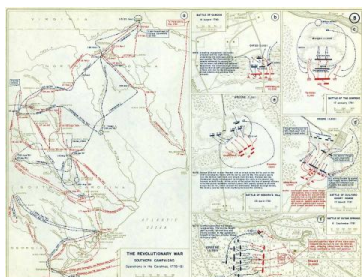


Battle of Saratoga - Map

Annotated map, courtesy United States Military Academy.

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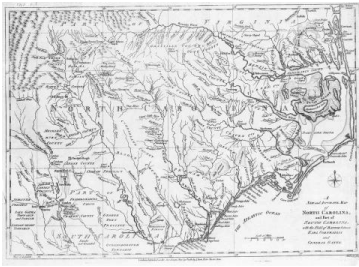
Revolutionary War - Southern Campaign

Map online, courtesy U.S. Military Academy Map Atlas page.

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Fishing Creek - Patriot Defeat

Images online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

Information, National Park Service - *The American Revolution* website.

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Banastre Tarleton

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

Information, and quoted passage, from the U.S. National Park Service website on the battles of Cowpens and Waxhaws.

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Francis Marion

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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Marion's Tactics - South Carolina Swamps

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Waterways of South Carolina - Patriots' Advantage

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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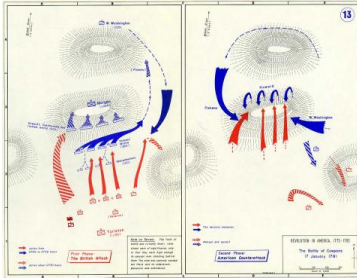
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Waterways-of-South-Carolina-Patriots-Advantage>



Cowpens - Battleground

Image online, courtesy hiwaay.net website.

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Battle of Cowpens - Map

Annotated map, courtesy United States Military Academy.

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