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Library Marketplace-Interview with Norman Desmarais, Professor Emeritus, Providence College

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both have lots of fun things planned. **Helen** is just back from a month driving a Jeep around the Rockies, and **Hazel** is planning to do a house swap with a friend in Australia for the spring. Once **Helen's** hip is up and running again, she and **Chris** have several grand plans for adventures, some of which include **Hazel** and **Fytton**. Thank goodness for Skype and email.

ATG: *We know Helen likes golf and kayaking. How about you Hazel? What are your favorite activities?*

HH: It is actually **Chris** who does the kayaking. I just watch him race or track him with special devices.

HW: I love walking, having just been up to the Lake District and scaling several peaks. I also love tennis, and I keep on promising **Helen** I'll continue my golf lessons.

HH: Once **Hazel** can actually hit the ball, we have some fabulous golfing holidays planned.

ATG: *Are there other favorite pastimes that we don't know about?*

HH: I'm having a wonderful time in Scotland cooking with our fabulous local produce. There are a lot of friends coming to stay in with us, so much of the time I am running an upscale bed & breakfast for them (however, they do have to reciprocate when I'm travelling to see them!). I'm beginning to

get involved with the local arts scene around Kirkcudbright, which is very vibrant.

HW: I am also a keen cook, and we love cooking together and swapping recipes. Don't ever let us loose in a market, as we'll spend a fortune. You should have seen what we brought back from Siena after the **Fiesole**

Retreat. A lesser known fact about me is that I am a volunteer custody visitor and spend quite a bit of time in police cells — which is very rewarding.

ATG: *Thank you both for taking the time to talk with us. It was fun! And we learned a lot.* 🍄

against the grain publisher profile

Information Power Ltd

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OFFICERS: Helen Henderson, Dr. Hazel Woodward, and Chris Leamy.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS: UKSG

KEY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES: Consultancy services for publishers, vendors, and libraries.

CORE MARKETS/CLIENTELE: Publishers, vendors, and libraries.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 2 (plus contractors)

HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR COMPANY/PUBLISHING PROGRAM: **Information Power** was originally set up in 2002 as a consultancy company providing services to publishers and vendors. It now carries out consultancy projects relating to e-content, strategic positioning, and product specification with research and focus groups. 🍄

Library Marketplace — Interview with Norman Desmarais

Professor Emeritus, Providence College and Author of *Battlegrounds of Freedom: A Historical Guide to the Battlefields of the War of American Independence* <normd@providence.edu>

Column Editor: **John D. Riley** (Eastern Regional Sales Manager, BUSCA, Inc.) <jdriley@comcast.net> www.buscainc.com

Congratulations Norm on your retirement as acquisitions librarian at the Providence College Library and also upon your Emeritus Professor status there. But you haven't slowed down a bit in your retirement. You have always been famous for your many projects, such as writing for CD-ROM Professional, CD-ROM Librarian, CD-ROM World, Against the Grain, and other periodicals as well as for your CD-ROMs and books on HTML and other subjects. In your spare time, you also devote a lot of energy to American Revolutionary War history and re-enactments. That passion has now become a full-time project for you (other than spending time with

your grandson Lucas). I think the Against the Grain audience will be fascinated to find out more about your transition from librarianship to full-time scholar, author, and re-enactor.

You are now the author of six books on the Revolutionary War, and you have covered all the major and minor battles from Canada to Florida. You have personally participated in many of the re-enactments of those battles, giving you a unique perspective as an author. Was it much of a transition from your library work to working full-time on your writing and publishing?

Norm: No, it wasn't. I have been involved in writing almost my entire career as a librarian. During my last sabbatical, I devoted myself full-time to writing and completed two volumes of my *Guide to the American Revolutionary War*. Toward the end of that sabbatical, I estimated that it would take me another 20 years to complete the rest of the set while continuing to work full-time as a librarian. I

decided to retire and write full-time, and I can now see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. I expect to finish the final volume by the summer of 2013. However, that doesn't mean I've exhausted the subject. During the course of my research, I found a number of topics that I want to research further and write about in journal articles.

How did you first become interested in the history of the Revolutionary War?

Norm: I've been interested in the Revolutionary War since I was in junior high school. When I was editor of *CD-ROM World*, I did some consulting for a publisher who asked me, in a casual conversation during dinner, if I had all the funding and necessary resources at my disposal, what topic would I cover and how would I go about it. I responded immediately that I would create a multimedia CD-ROM on the Revolutionary War because nobody was writing about it at the time, and it's the period

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that gave birth to our nation. After a series of technical difficulties I re-thought the project and decided to produce it in traditional book format, which is the project I'm currently working on. During the 225th anniversary cycle, I attended several reenactments where I overheard people asking, "What happened here?" That gave me the idea to write a history in the form of a guidebook. There had been no guidebooks published since the Bicentennial, and those books only covered the major sites. There was nothing that covered minor sites and places that should be listed on the National Register of Historic Places but are not.

What did you learn from re-enacting that helped you in your writing?

Norm: First of all, I became intimately familiar with the lifestyle, clothing, and equipment of the common soldier of the Revolutionary War period, which helps in understanding why they did things the way they did. For example, military strategy depends on the technology of weaponry. Secondly, reenacting on an actual site gives you a better appreciation for the events that occurred there. It's one thing to visit a site as a tourist and quite another to do so as a re-enactor. Climbing a hill at a leisurely pace on a sunny afternoon is one thing. Attacking that same hill on a hot, humid day, carrying all your gear and under gunfire is quite another. We all know that we're only firing black powder but the emotions and feelings are as real as if it were live ammunition. It's somewhat analogous to playing video games. Studies have shown that the player has much the same emotional and physical experience as a participant.

When we go to a historic site which has a visitor center or a museum, we often get a behind-the-scenes tour or a more thorough tour than is available to the public. These tours are generally given by the site director or top personnel after the site closes to the public. The staff know they have a very knowledgeable audience, and the quality of the questions sometimes engenders interesting discussions. Information we learn can help us interpret sources by viewing the terrain and comparing it with the written documentation.

We also get a better understanding of and appreciation for the physical rigors our ancestors endured. When selecting a location from multiple possible sites, some can be ruled out simply by physical constraints, such as how far a person can reasonably travel in a certain period of time. Some historians seem to attribute decisions to what amounts to a whim of the commander when in reality physical conditions are the deciding factor. For example, when the French fleet arrived, they expected to go to Sandy Hook, New Jersey. However, when they arrived, they found that their ships could not get over the sandbars and could be trapped in the harbor at low tide; so they went to Newport, Rhode Island instead. Some historians make that decision appear as though the French were afraid of being attacked by the British in New York.

against the grain people profile

Dr. Hazel Woodward

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BORN AND LIVED: Born in Leeds, Yorkshire, UK. Subsequently lived in Nottingham, Loughborough, and currently Bedford.

EARLY LIFE: Eldest child with a brother 7 years younger. Attended **Keyworth Primary School** (Keyworth was a small village near Nottingham). Then attended **West Bridgford Grammar School**, also near Nottingham.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: First job after graduating was at **Trinity and All Saints College Library** in Horsforth, near Leeds, where I was appointed as an Assistant Librarian. I then moved to **Loughborough University Library** and held various posts, the final one being Head of Electronic Information. I was also involved in a research team based in the Department of Information Science at the university, and we undertook early research into e-journals. I wrote my PhD at this time. I ended my academic library career as Director Libraries at **Cranfield University**, which is situated between Bedford and Milton Keynes. I retired from this post in March 2012.

FAMILY: I am married to **Fytton Rowland**, who, before he retired, was an academic in the Department of Information Science at **Loughborough University**. Between us we have four children, three boys and one girl (all now grown up and independent — whew!)

IN MY SPARE TIME: I love walking, and we try and get out into the beautiful English countryside as much as possible. I am passionate about food and cooking. I am also a member of my local Tennis Club and play regularly throughout the year.

FAVORITE BOOKS: Always a difficult question to answer, as there are so many and they change. But we do have a house full of books.

PET PEEVES: People who are intolerant; people who are selfish.

PHILOSOPHY: As the years go by I think it is important to make sure you do the things you want to do. Don't put things off — enjoy life to the full.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Being awarded an MBE in 2010 for "services to higher education."

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Getting the right work/life balance.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: The pace of change continues to accelerate, particularly with regard to technology. Our industry has undergone significant change during my career, and the shifting balances of power between providers and consumers is interesting to observe. I believe both librarians and publishers need to continue to focus on our primary goals of ensuring the ongoing dissemination of scholarly information and providing access to it for all. I would like to think that will still be the case in five years' time. 🌱

How realistic do you and your fellow re-enactors try to get in your battles?

Norm: When we re-create an actual historical event, we try to be as historically accurate as possible. Sometimes, we're even able to re-create an event at actual scale. At other times, we do what we call a tactical weapons demonstration. We create a scenario and play it out like a war game. Some scenarios are more thoroughly "scripted" than others. At these events, one side wins one day and the other side wins the next day. Others are open-ended

and, as in real life, the outcome is determined by how the action is played.

Many of us own original weapons that we use for demonstration, talks, or school presentations, but we use reproduction weapons for reenactments. Our clothing is all documented, but that's not to say that it's authentic to a particular engagement. Uniforms changed considerably during the course of the war. Most of us have a few different sets of clothing that we can use for early war or late war or for

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civilian or military impressions. Clothing is also determined by location. For example, a frontiersman impression would not be appropriate for an urban or a marine engagement.

Our appearance is much cleaner and less ragged than that of the soldiers back then. We're also concerned about our health and safety so we can return to work on Monday morning and continue enjoying this hobby. More men died from disease than from battle, but that's something we don't portray. We don't want to suffer from the same illnesses or jeopardize our health.

We're usually constrained by site rules and modern safety regulations. For example, national parks prohibit casualties and don't allow face-to-face firing. So we have to make accommodations that are satisfying for the participants and that appear realistic to the public. Our weapons also have some safety modifications to protect us and the people around us. Artillery also has to wait 2 to 3 minutes between shots instead of firing as rapidly as possible.

You mentioned safety and casualties. Would you elaborate on that?

Norm: This is theater on a grand scale, and it's an inherently dangerous hobby, so safety is a prime concern. We usually have rescue vehicles on standby at major events and some of our members are medical personnel: doctors, nurses, EMTs etc. The organization I belong to has an excellent safety record as far as weapons. It set the standards for the care and handling of weapons and black powder that other organizations have adopted.

If anybody notices a safety violation, he can raise his hat on a musket or a sword and the action will stop immediately. This is an instance where a private can overrule an officer's command. Sometimes we have a field hospital to demonstrate 18th-century medical practices. The surgeons often look for people to portray patients. Occasionally, they'll get somebody with a real wound and treat them with modern medical techniques.

How do you know when to "die?"

Norm: When your weapon misfires two or three times in a row or when you run out of ammunition, it's a good time to die. Sometimes you're tired and just want to rest or you want to go down to watch the rest of the battle from a good vantage point. Sometimes an officer will say that we need casualties. At other times, the circumstances demand it. For example, one time this summer, a company of redcoats had just discharged their weapons and took cover behind some bushes. My company pursued them, anticipating capturing them before they reloaded. As we came around the bushes, most of them had reloaded and fired at us. Most of us went down. I think we surprised them as much as they surprised us. Usually when we go down, we alert the people aside of us so that nobody thinks we're a real casualty.

You are also working on compiling background documentary databases utilizing

against the grain people profile

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BORN AND LIVED: Born in Essex, then moved around to university in Hull and Leeds, jobs in London, Oxford and Glasgow, and finally semi-retired to Scotland.

EARLY LIFE: Living in a small village with a brother six years younger and attending school in Frinton-on-Sea and Colchester. I set up my first library aged ten and lent my books for a penny a time to my friends and neighbours.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: My first job was with a small consultancy developing computer-aided indexes, followed by a period at the **BNB** (pre-British Library) doing Dewey classification for the retrospective conversion (I specialize in the 900s). After that, various jobs in Glasgow before coming back to London to work in another consultancy specializing in patent information. I then started my first company doing consultancy and library system software which was sold to **Dawson**, for whom I worked briefly doing publisher relations and licensing. When it was taken over by **RoweCom** I moved swiftly back into consultancy and started working with publishers to organize their customer information and create a master database. In 2005 I merged this company with a Portland based company to form **Ringgold**, which then developed the customer database further. In 2011 I retired from **Ringgold** to go back to the consultancy business.

FAMILY: I am married to **Chris Leamy**, who worked in various roles with the **British Library**, Department for Culture, Media, and Sport and the European Commission. He was also part of the original **Information Power** team and the genius behind the **Ringgold** database.

IN MY SPARE TIME: I love to play golf, and if the weather is too bad I cook or read. I'm joining in the artistic community in Kirkcudbright, but more in a marketing capacity than actually creative (so far).

FAVORITE BOOKS: How do you choose from the many hundreds? Every room in our house is full of bookcases. I love **Bill Bryson**, whose accurate observations can always make me laugh out loud, even after multiple readings. **Jane Duncan** is a Scottish author to whom I completely relate.

PET PEEVES: Profanity, intolerance, people who wear strong perfume on aeroplanes.

PHILOSOPHY: Just get on with it.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Pushing for a standard identifier for institutions which is now the International Standard Name Identifier.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: Get my golf handicap down.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: If we have the same changes as in the last five years, publishers will have entirely different business models and librarians will become information scientists (I always considered myself an information scientist rather than a librarian, although I have both qualifications) rather than custodians. 🌿

diaries and other firsthand documents. How much of that have you released, and would you tell us more about that project?

Norm: I've compiled over a thousand published diaries and personal accounts. Many of these were quite difficult to locate and obtain. I thought that if I, as a professor and academic librarian, encountered these obstacles, it would be next to impossible for

the average researcher to get access to much of this material without spending a small fortune on travel.

That convinced me to digitize these accounts to help me in my own research and to benefit that of others. About half of these accounts are available on thematic CD-ROMs from Revolutionaryimprints.com. I also have

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more than 100 that are covered by copyright and will not be publicly available.

How does your work differ from the many histories of the Revolutionary War?

Norm: Most historians cover only the major engagements, those that were strategically important. I also cover the forage wars, raids, and skirmishes. While many of these engagements are not strategically important, they did result in casualties on both sides and significant property damage that also had an impact on local communities and the civilian population. Some historians are using my work as the basis for their research in creating social histories, such as how the war affected the towns in the Hudson River Valley or the Mohawk Valley.

The most comprehensive published list of military engagements I found totals 1,330 actions. I've compiled more than 3,000. The extensive notes also document these events with primary and secondary sources. In addition to learning about individual actions, the reader can get a sense of how the war affected a given community or region. Some people are also using my work for genealogical research.

Did you learn anything that surprised you?

Norm: Yes. There were many events that I discovered as I pursued my research. I found that many professional historians and museum curators also know nothing about them. One event that surprised me was **Paul Revere's** court-martial for treason. (That's going to be the subject of one of those articles I mentioned that I plan to write.) There were also a number of ironies of war that I found interesting. One of these involves the terms of surrender at Yorktown. They are identical to the terms of surrender the British imposed on the Americans at Charleston the year before. Another is that **Patrick Ferguson** had an opportunity to shoot **General Washington** at Brandywine. He thought it inappropriate to do so because **Washington** was unarmed at the time. Had he done so, the British might have won the war after only two years. Another is the story of a free black man who enlisted in the army, was captured as a prisoner of war, and was sold into slavery. He managed to regain his freedom and rejoined the army — only to be captured and sold into slavery again. There were quite a few human interest stories that I learned about and included in the books.

You mentioned that there are a number of British historians who study and write about the Revolutionary War from a British perspective. Does their narrative differ very much from the American historical record?

Norm: The American War for Independence, which the British referred to as "the Troubles," was not as important to them as the war in India. The most important British book on the war, in my opinion, is **Christopher Hibbert's** *Redcoats and Rebels: The American Revolution through British Eyes*. Other historians include **Jeremy Black** (*War for America: The Fight for Independence*),

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Brendan Morrissey (*Yorktown 1781: The World Turned Upside Down*), **Armstrong Starkey** (*European and Native American Warfare, 1675-1815*), and **David Syrett** (*The Royal Navy in American Waters, 1775-1783*). A contemporary history written by one of the participants is **Charles Stedman's** *The History of the Origin, Progress, and Termination of the American War*. There are also many diaries and memoirs of British officers such as **Frederick Mackenzie**, **Anthony Allaire**, **Banastre Tarleton**, and **Henry Clinton**. The papers of **General Charles Cornwallis** have also been published recently.

The facts remain the same. How different authors interpret them is what changes and what's important. History is written by the victors, so it's rare to get contemporary accounts from the losers or accurate casualty totals. This war is one of those rarities. Not only do we have many diaries from the British and French perspectives, we are getting more and more from the Hessian perspective as well, particularly thanks to **Bruce Burgoyne**, who has translated several Hessian diaries.

What other books and authors do you think are important in studying the American

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Revolution? Which ones have influenced you the most?

Norm: Mark M. Boatner's *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* is the single most valuable source and is considered the *Bible* by anyone studying this war. **Harold E. Selesky** revised it and published it in a much more expensive updated version in 2007. Another good alternative is *The Encyclopedia of the American Revolutionary War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (5 vols.), edited by **Gregory Fremont-Barnes** and **Richard Alan Ryerson**. The *Naval Documents of the American Revolution* (11 vols.) is a very valuable set. The title may mislead people into thinking it covers only the major naval battles. It covers almost anything involved with watercraft. If somebody crossed a river in a canoe to attack an enemy camp, it's likely to be covered in this set. Since the British didn't venture very far from the water, there are primary sources for a large number of engagements. **Thomas Fleming** and **David Hackett Fischer** are also favorite authors. I posted a 119-page bibliography online at: https://www.buscainc.com/publishing/guide_american_revolution_bibliography.html.

If you could be a personage from the Revolutionary War who would you choose? When you are in a re-enactment who do you normally play?

Norm: We usually portray the common soldiers of the Revolutionary War. Of course, when we do a historical action, we know the names of the officers. The people selected to portray them are usually selected from the officers of the participating units. They may be an officer this weekend and a private next weekend.

Several years ago, we were interpreting **General George Washington's** visit to Kingston, Rhode Island. I was standing guard at the entrance to the old statehouse when I learned that the person who was supposed to play **Washington** had gotten injured the day before and was unable to come. I was asked to portray His Excellency, but I didn't have the proper uniform and accoutrements on such short notice. I kept saying that you've got to love this army. You're a private standing guard one moment, and half an hour later you're Commander-in-Chief.

If I could pick a character to portray, I'd like to interpret **Joseph Plumb Martin**, but I'm too old to do so now. He lied about his age to join the army at the age of 15. He fought almost the entire war from Bunker Hill to Yorktown. He was illiterate when he joined. We know that because his early pay records, now in the **Library of Congress**, were signed with his mark. They were also authorized by **Gen. Washington**. **Martin** learned to read and write while in the army and became a sergeant, a position which required the ability to read and write. He wrote one of the most fascinating, and probably the most republished, diaries of the War. It has a variety of titles such as *Private Yankee Doodle*, *A Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dan-*

gers and Sufferings of a Revolutionary Soldier, and *Uncommon Courage*.

When I do the Boston Tea Party, I usually impersonate **Benjamin Edes**, the printer of the *Boston Gazette*. A printer in the 18th century is more akin to a publisher today.

I sometimes reenact with the Regiment *Bourbonnais*, which was the senior Regiment of **Count de Rochambeau's** army and was commanded by his son. Occasionally, I'll portray their chaplain, **l'abbé Robin**. That gives me an opportunity to portray incidents that are never seen at reenactments. We use French commands on the field and for drills, but most of the people who portray the French do not speak the language. I think many people know that and bait us. When someone greets me in French, I respond accordingly and engage them in conversation, sometimes catching them completely by surprise.

Who are some of the neglected figures from that time? What don't most of us know about the War?

Norm: There are many neglected figures. **Sgt. Elijah Churchill**, **Sgt. William Brown**, and **Sgt. Daniel Bissell** are totally unknown to most people. They are the only three known recipients of the Badge of Military Merit that most people think was the forerunner of the Purple Heart. Rather, it's more equivalent to the Congressional Medal of Honor. **Daniel Bissell** was also a spy. The contributions of **Washington's** spy network are usually ignored. **James Rivington**, printer of *Rivington's Gazette*, a Loyalist newspaper, was actually a double agent. He provided **Washington** with the British Navy signals prior to the Battle of Yorktown. After the war, **Washington** visited him. Nobody knows what they discussed, but **Washington** entered with a bag of money and came out without it.

There are many other nationally important people like **Alexander Hamilton**, **John Knox**, **Casimir Pulaski**, **James Mitchell Varnum**, **Elias Boudinot**, and local heroes like **Elias Dayton**, **William Moultrie**, **Joshua Huddy**, and **Joseph Borden**.

One man I've come to appreciate more, believe it or not, is **Benedict Arnold**. I think he could have been one of our greatest generals. **Arnold** despised the French but, had he not disobeyed orders at the battle of Saratoga, we most likely would've lost that battle, which was the major factor in the French joining the war. Without the assistance of the French, it's not likely we would have won the war. There are several factors that contributed to **Arnold's** treason. One of them is the refusal of the French to help him with his constant money problems. I covered that topic in an article entitled *Arnold's Treason: The French Connection*, which is in the **Providence College** digital depository.

Most people think the Revolutionary War was fought to obtain independence. That was the end result, but there was no talk of independence for the first year of the war. The colonials were British citizens and wanted to redress their grievances with Parliament. When news arrived, in February 1776, that **King George III** proclaimed the colonies in

rebellion, the people abandoned that hope and soon began to talk about independence. Rhode Island became the first state to declare its independence on May 4, two months before the rest of the country.

We usually talk about the War being between the British and the Americans. In reality, it was a world war. The British were allied with the Hessians, and the Americans were allied with the French and, later, the Spanish and the Dutch. There were also attempts to get Russia, Sweden, and Denmark involved.

The War was also a civil war, particularly in the South. People sometimes took the opportunity to get revenge on their neighbors. Some colonies had sharply divided loyalties, and people would take any opportunity to "punish" people of the opposite political persuasion.

The Hessians are often referred to as mercenaries. They were professional soldiers who fought for their prince. The financial arrangements were agreed to by the rulers. It didn't make any difference to the soldiers whether they were fighting at home or abroad. They were paid by their prince, who got paid by Britain. Consequently, you have to interpret casualty reports differently. Any incident that draws blood is considered a wound, whether that wound was a cut from a flint or a stab from a bayonet or a bullet wound.

Could you tell us more about the crucial part that Charleston played in the Revolutionary War?

Norm: Charleston was America's fourth largest city in the 18th century after Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. The city doesn't capitalize on its Revolutionary War history; but focuses on its Civil War history instead. Battery Park, for example, is full of Civil War era cannons but does not have a single Revolutionary War cannon. Fort Moultrie glosses over its contribution to the defense of Charleston in the Revolutionary War and focuses more on the period of the Civil War and later. The Old Exchange and Provost Dungeon is about the only building which Charleston promotes with ties to her Revolutionary War history. It is one of the nation's three most important buildings from the Revolutionary War, ranking with Faneuil Hall in Boston and Independence Hall in Philadelphia.

The British made two unsuccessful attempts to capture Charleston from the sea, once in June of 1776 and another in December 1779. The following year, they attacked by land. They laid siege to the city for three months before they captured it. **General Benjamin Lincoln** surrendered with 5,466 men on May 12, 1780. It was the third largest surrender of Americans in history, after Bataan in World War II and Harpers Ferry in the Civil War.

The Francis Marion Hotel is right on that battlefield. In fact, across the street, on the King Street side of Marion Square, is a small section of tabby wall which is all that remains of the city's defenses. The fort the Continental Army defended was on what is now Marion Square. The British besieged the city from the north, but urban development has obliterated any traces of both lines and the parallels the

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Crown forces dug as they moved closer to the Continentals. **Generals Henry Clinton** and **Charles Cornwallis** made their headquarters at **Rebecca Motte's** house, on King Street, during the occupation of Charleston in 1780.

There's a tragic story to tell about that surrender. When the British collected all the captured weapons, they were warned that some were still loaded and should be handled carefully as they put them in wagons. The wagons were then driven to a warehouse which contained 4,000 pounds of ammunition. Another powder magazine, only 200 paces away, contained 10,000 pounds of black powder. As the troops began tossing the weapons into the warehouse, there was an explosion that blew debris and body parts about 0.3 miles and set fire to several nearby buildings. Between 200 and 300 people died in the explosion and fire, almost as many as were killed during the three-month siege of Charleston.

Could you tell us more about Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox" of Charleston fame?

Norm: While **Francis Marion** saw action at Charleston, that's not where he gained his reputation as the Swamp Fox. That was Ox Swamp on November 8, 1780. **Banastre Tarleton** chased him about 25 miles "for seven hours, through swamps and defiles." When **Tarleton** abandoned the pursuit, he suppos-

edly told his men, "as for this damned old fox, the devil himself could not catch him."

Tradition says that **Marion** used Snow Island as his camp from August 1780 to March 1781 because it gave him command of the rivers and made his camp inaccessible except by water. Recent archaeological research is questioning that location, as very few Revolutionary War artifacts have been found there, and there's no evidence of a camp. The camp may have actually been at Goddard's Plantation, a large site across the river from Snow Island. Many artifacts and burned remains of an 18th-century camp found there seem to agree with the description of the raid on **Marion's** camp.

There's a legend that a British officer came to **Marion's** headquarters under a flag of truce to discuss an exchange of prisoners. **Marion** entertained him at a dinner that consisted entirely of sweet potatoes baked in a campfire. The officer was astounded that men were willing to fight for a cause that provided such meager rations. When he returned to Charleston, the officer supposedly resigned his commission, saying that the British could never defeat an army that would endure such hardships. Whether true or not, there must be a kernel of truth for the legend. Nevertheless, the story is part of **Marion's** mystique and illustrates his influence and the respect he had from his men and fellow countrymen. **John Blake White** illustrated the story in a painting which later became a **Currier and Ives** engraving.

When will your next book be available?

Norm: The next book, which will be the final one in the series, will cover the deep South and the frontier: Georgia, Florida, west to the Mississippi and north to Michigan, including the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. When completed, the work will cover Canada and all the states east of the Mississippi River.

Thank you Norm for your time in this interview and for your dedication to reviving and reliving the Revolutionary War experience for all of us armchair enthusiasts.

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