

## **Wambaw Bridge   February 24, 1782**

**Location:**        Near McClellanville, SC  
**Commanders:**   American: Francis Marion's Brigade under Col. Wm. Benison  
**Loyalists:**        Col. Benjamin Thompson  
**Casualties**        Unknown

While Francis Marion was serving in the SC Geneal Assembly, he turned over command of his men to Lt. Col. Peter Horry. This angered Lt. Col. Hezehiah Maham so that he refused to take any orders from Horry. By February, Maham turned over command of his part of Marion's Brigade to Capt. John Carraway Smith. Horry became quite ill, and returned to his home, turning command to Col. Archibald McDonald.

Loyalist Col. Benjamin Thompson learned of the confusion among Marion's ranks and began his move to attack on February 24. News of this activity was conveyed to Col. William Benison who rode to alert McDonald. Having dinner at the time, McDonald simple didn't believe the news. Benton rode on to Durant's Plantation only to encounter Thompson's advance guard.

Benison's dragoons raced across Wambaw Bridge but the old bridge broke down, sending Benison's men into the creek. Some tried to swim across and a few drowned. The rest made it to nearby thickets.

Patriot Maj. John James charged the broken bridge with 2 pistols blazing and his horse leapt the 20-foot chasm to safety. The remainder of the Patriots withdrew to Tidyman's Plantation.

This ordeal of confusion among his men and the poor leadership of his officers caused Francis Marion to leave the Assembly at a very crucial time of important decision making. The safety and wellbeing of his troops was paramount to him.

### **Source**

Oller, John    *The Swamp Fox, How Francis Marin Saved the American Revolution*   2016  
American Battlefield Trust