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Stealing away to Moncks Corner

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STEALING AWAY TO MONCK'S CORNER

By Joquita Burka

AT 3AM, THE TRAPPIST MONKS RISE FOR PRAYER.

The peaceful setting of Mepkin Abbey is a place of meditation, prayer and silence. All is serene in Moncks Corner.

But it wasn't always this way for these feisty folks.

First settled by French Protestant Huguenots in Colonial times, this area produced ardent rebels. The famous Swamp Fox, Francis Marion, was born in this area and has been memorialized in the naming of nearby Francis Marion

National Forest. The Swamp Fox tormented British troops throughout the American Revolution and served as the inspiration for the movie *The Patriot*.

British troops encountered the rebelling Colonists here at the Battle of Quenby Creek in July 1781. Then the English soldiers razed the Biggin Church to prevent its use as a supply depot, sparing St. James Episcopal (c.1714) because of the Royal Arms of Great Britain which rises over the chancel. The British were not so generous when they met the overseer of the St. Thomas-St. Denis Church. At this historic church, the overseer was reported to have been hung three times in an unsuccessful attempt to extract the location of the church silver.

Today, however, a peace-loving populous calls the area home and invites visitors to this beautiful Lowcountry town. History buffs love the walks through the Biggin Church ruins and the surrounding cemetery, the Berkeley Museum and the numerous rice planters' homes still existing in the area. And for authenticity, Rice Hope Plantation Bed and Breakfast on the Cooper River provides a beautiful getaway amid rice fields dating back to the late 17th century.

Give yourself a little time, and you'll be able to take yourself back through the years in a little corner of South Carolina where historic churches still welcome in their congregants, Mepkin Abbey shelters its permanent inhabitants and retreatants, original planters' homes still serve as residences and "authentic" is all you'll find.



Mepkin Abbey welcomes day guests, retreatants or Monastic Guests.

