

Historic Hotels!

VIII: Charleston's *Francis Marion*

During the American Revolution (or the "Colonial Rebellion"—depending on which side of the ocean you happen to be in), General Francis Marion, of South Carolina, in his swamp encampment, invited British General Tarleton to share his dinner of sweet potatoes and cold water. How could he have guessed that his gracious hospitality would one day be extended to create the greatest hotel in the Carolinas!

Named for America's Revolutionary War hero Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox," the Francis Marion Hotel opened in 1924. It has a 77-year tradition of gracious service, elegant accommodations and splendid banquets and meeting facilities. The hotel was built by local investors at a cost of \$1.5 million from plans by the noted New York architect W.L. Stoddard. It was the largest and grandest hotel in the Carolinas with 312 guest rooms.

Few buildings so represented the times as the Francis Marion. The 1920's was the Golden Age of railroads, radio, and grand hotels; the Charleston Renaissance was in full bloom; and the Francis Marion Hotel was "the place to be."

Since 1924, The Francis Marion Hotel has graced the historic cityscape of Charleston, South Carolina. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, it has been meticulously restored to its original splendor by a 1996 \$12 million National Trust for Historic Preservation award-winning project. In 1988, it was purchased by Westin Hotels and became part of that large chain. Thus it is that The Westin Francis Marion now combines 1920's style and grace with 21st Century comfort and convenience in the heart of historic Charleston on Marion Square. Boasting 12 floors of spectacular Charleston

panoramas, each of the 226 freshly appointed guest rooms and suites is an intimate place of retreat. The renovated facilities also include 66 suites, 9 penthouse apartments available for lease, 14,000 square feet of meeting/ banquet space, and 5,000 square feet of retail space.

Charleston, here I come!

