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The portrait of Peter Francisco that hangs in the Governor's Mansion in Richmond, Virginia, a copy of the original 1828 painting by James Westfall Ford that is owned by the subject's descendants. Courtesy of the Virginia State Library.

PEDRO FRANCISCO: PORTUGUESE GIANT IN THE WAR FOR AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

by John P. Cann

At the Guilford Courthouse Battleground near Greensboro, North Carolina, there is a tall octagonal granite shaft marking the place where in the words of the monument, "Peter Francisco, a giant of incredible strength, killed eleven British soldiers with his own broad sword, and although badly wounded by bayonet made his escape". Who was this hero with an unusual name for colonial North America?

The story begins on a calm morning in early June 1765 when a barque of foreign build anchored offshore near a James River harbour in the colony of Virginia. The port town there at the confluence of the Appomattox and James Rivers was then known as City Point and is the present day Hopewell. According to accounts pieced together, the vessel entered the harbour and lay at anchor only briefly while its longboat with several oarsmen came to the town pier to deposit a small boy. It then departed swiftly. So quickly had the strangers moved, so unexpectedly had they deserted the child, that those present could scarcely believe what they had seen.

The boy in his tattered clothes was clearly from a family of means. His shirt had a lace front, and his coat and breeches were made of handsome velvet. He also wore silver buckles engraved with the initials "P.F." on the remnants of

his shoes.¹ He spoke with a mixture of French, Portuguese and Spanish, and although only just short of five years old, he captivated the onlookers with his engaging manner and courageous bearing.² Eventually he spoke with one James Durell, who understood some Spanish, and identified himself as Pedro Francisco. We now know from subsequent research that he was born on 9th July 1760 and baptised in the parish of St. Anthony in Porto Judeu on the island of Terceira, Azores. His name was Pedro Francisco Machado Luís, and he was the son of Francisco Machado Luiz and his wife Antónia Maria.³ Francisco's ancestors appear to have been among the courageous defenders of Terceira who defeated the Spanish as they landed at Vila da Praia da Vitória by releasing their bulls onto the beach and thus driving the invaders back into the sea.⁴

According to the vague memories of his childhood, Pedro had lived in an elegant home overlooking the sea with his parents and younger sister. On the evening that he was abducted, there had been a brilliant dinner, and he and his sister had watched the guests from the stairway of the great hall. After the procession had passed into the dining room, he and his sister had gone into the garden to play. In the midst of their game, they became aware of several rough men watching them through the bars of the large garden gate. The men, later thought to be Moorish pirates, decoyed the two into the street with offers of sweets, grabbed them, and ran toward the harbour. The little girl screamed and fought and was soon

¹ Judge Anthony Winston, with whom Francisco lived during his youth later had the buckles converted to be used on knee breeches, and Francisco wore them on nearly every occasion.

² Nannie Francisco Porter and Catherine Fauntleroy Albertson, *The Romantic Record of Peter Francisco* (Staunton, Va.: McClure, 1929), 13.

³ William Arthur Moon, *Peter Francisco, The Portuguese Patriot* (Pfaftown, N.C.: Colonial Publishers, 1980), 76.

⁴ *Ibidem*, 77.

released, but Pedro was not so fortunate. A cloak was thrown over his head to muffle his cries, and he was spirited aboard a ship, which immediately weighed anchor. The subsequent voyage was characterised by hunger, cold, storm, and cruel treatment by his captors. This bleakness was broken by the kindness of a Spanish crewman.⁵ Pedro had always wanted to thank the man properly and learn of his home, but despite his efforts their paths never crossed again. Many years later suspicions of Pedro's background proved to be true, but in his lifetime he never learned or knew of his heritage. When he died in 1831, no one had ever been able to determine his origins or identify his parents.

For several days on the wharf Pedro led a haphazard existence. The village authorities made a bed for him in a warehouse near the dock, and the housewives of the neighbourhood fed him abundantly. Later he was taken to the Prince George County Poor House, where he remained until a local judge, Anthony Winston, heard about him and agreed to raise him. Judge Winston lived at "Hunting Tower" plantation in Buckingham County, Virginia, a 3,600-acre colonial farm. When Peter, for he had by then assumed his Anglicised forename, arrived at the estate in late summer, he did so as an indentured servant in which he would compensate Judge Winston for providing for him by working on the plantation until his maturity. Labour was in short supply in the early days of the colonies, and this arrangement was an accepted practice. In addition to his formal education, Peter learned to shoot and hunt, to plant tobacco, and to perform the myriad other tasks of country life. Over the years he grew to enormous stature at six feet six inches tall, about a foot taller than the average man of the time, and 260 pounds (1.98 meters, 18 stone 8 pounds or 118 kilos).

⁵ Porter and Albertson, 16-17.

He also grew in political awareness. Judge Winston was the uncle of Patrick Henry, and thus Peter lived in the atmosphere of debate over the colonists' dream for a land free from the yoke of oppressive English government. It was thus natural for Peter to travel with Judge Winston from time to time to visit friends and particularly to hear debates on the issue. It was also in these travels that he became fast friends with the Anderson family in nearby Cumberland County. In the spring of 1775, Peter and the Judge went to the Virginia Convention held in St. John's Church in Richmond. There Peter heard a rousing debate and listened to Patrick Henry's now famous "give me liberty or give me death" oration. Peter was immediately drawn to enlist in the colonial army, but the Judge told him that he was too young. By December 1776 the Judge finally relented and released him from his indenture. Peter immediately joined in the Tenth Virginia Regiment of the Continental Army under Colonel Hugh Woodson and was sent to Middlebrook, New Jersey, for his basic training.

On completing his training, Peter rejoined his regiment, which was now with General Washington and the bulk of the Continental Army in its winter quarters at Morristown, New Jersey. General Sir William Howe was determined to bring Washington's army to battle, and consequently he left a garrison of eight thousand men in New York under General Sir Henry Clinton and sailed in July 1777 with the main part of his army for the Chesapeake Bay. Instead of concentrating their forces, the British had spread them over five hundred miles of country and divided them between General John Burgoyne in Canada, Howe on the Chesapeake, and Clinton in New York. With this development, Washington moved from Morristown southwestwards to protect Philadelphia and Chester County, which was an important source of food and munitions for his army. Peter moved with him.

Washington had earlier abandoned New York to the British with scarcely a fight and felt that he could hardly do the same thing with Philadelphia, the capital of the Continental Congress. He knew, however, that with his ill-disciplined and fluctuating force he could only hope to delay the British advance. At the beginning of September, Howe advanced with about fourteen thousand men. Washington with a similar force established it in a strong defensive line on the east bank of Brandywine Creek, barring the road to the capital. Howe perceived and exploited the general weakness and inefficiencies of his opposition and made the same feinting moves that had served him well on Long Island. On the morning of 11th September he divided his army, and leaving a powerful body of eight thousand Hessians under Baron Wilhelm von Knyphausen to make a frontal assault, marched upriver with Lord Cornwallis, crossed it, and descended on Washington's right flank. The Hessians made feint after feint to hold the colonials in place and to give Howe ample time for his flanking manoeuvre. Washington received erroneous reports and did not know of the danger until too late. Cornwallis struck, and his attack was successful. Disorder spread, and the Hessians were able to cross the creek and drive the American force before them in disorderly retreat.

It was here that Peter first distinguished himself. His regiment held the line at a narrow defile called Sandy Hollow Gap on Washington's flank in front of Howe and Cornwallis for a crucial forty-five minutes, and thus allowed Washington adequate time to recover from an all-out rout.⁶ Fortunately, Howe here as at Long Island was reluctant to pursue and capture the enemy. On 26th September his advance guard entered Philadelphia, and the capital fell.

⁶ Moon, 5.

Peter suffered a gunshot wound in the leg during the hard-fought rear-guard action and was removed to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a Moravian community some fifty miles north of Philadelphia. The Continental Hospital was established here and a steady stream of wounded poured into the area. The Marquis de Lafayette, a twenty-year-old major general in Washington's army, had also been wounded in the fray. He and Peter were among this stream and were apparently housed together at the home of George Frederick Boeckle. Mrs. Boeckle and her daughter Liesel nursed them back to health. The vast differences in their rank notwithstanding, the two men recuperating together became friends.⁷ Peter's wound healed quickly because of his youth and excellent physical conditioning. Within a few weeks he was able to rejoin his regiment in time to participate in the confused action at Germantown.

After the fall of Philadelphia, Washington regrouped his forces to the west. The British formed their defences facing him five miles to the northwest of Philadelphia and straddling the main road from Philadelphia through Germantown. Washington planned to attack the British using a silent approach with a double envelopment. General John Armstrong was to flank the British left, General Nathanael Greene was to flank the British right, and Generals Anthony Wayne and John Sullivan were to make the frontal attack. Washington began the move on 2nd October, when he marched to within fifteen miles of Germantown and rested his troops. On the evening of 3rd October, he advanced to within two miles of the British outposts using only bayonets. Although no shots were fired by the colonials, apparently there was enough stirring that a British sentry at an outpost sent up a signal flare and alerted the main force. Shortly thereafter a dense fog descended, and one of Greene's units made a wrong

⁷ Ibidem, 7.

turn that took it away from the fight. The fog led to confusion and friendly fire incidents among the colonials. The British too were in some disarray, but reorganised, counterattacked, and forced a disorderly retreat of the colonials. Greene's lines held with Peter in the forefront, while other colonials passed through them in retreat. Gradually the Continental Army was gaining experience and confidence, although it still suffered from major deficiencies.

Peter next appears on army muster rolls at Fort Mifflin on Mud Island in the Delaware River between 22nd October and 16th November. During this period British ships bombarded the site mercilessly and killed over half its defenders. It was finally abandoned in mid-November after this ferocious shelling, and the defenders were forced into the wintry hell of Valley Forge.

In the meantime the colonials under General Horatio Gates had won a great victory over the British and their popular and dashing commander, General John Burgoyne, at Saratoga, New York, on 17th October. This loss led to much debate in England between addressing the colonists' grievances and hammering them into submission. In the midst of the debate, Benjamin Franklin signed a treaty with the French on 6th February 1778.

Over the winter of 1777-1778 Washington attempted to preserve his army in its winter quarters at Valley Forge to the north of Philadelphia. He was now reduced through desertions to about nine thousand men and would experience a further one-third reduction by spring. Short of clothing, food, fuel, and shelter, the force shivered and grumbled through the winter months. Records show that Peter was hospitalised during the worst two months of the winter period.⁸ In contrast,

⁸ Ibidem, 8.

some twenty miles away twenty thousand English troops were quartered in comfort. The social season was at its height, and Howe had no plans to attack the colonial army. As at earlier opportunities, Howe failed to capitalise on his opponent's weakness and annihilate him. This reluctance caused his reassignment and replacement with Clinton at the beginning of 1778.

Clinton brought a new look to the British strategy. He resolved to abandon the northern offensive and begin subduing the southern half of the colonies, for here was the bulk of the population and wealth. There were also many Loyalists there. He would need a new centre for his offensive, and Charleston and Savannah were the obvious candidates. Unfortunately, there was a new factor in the equation. With the French entry into the war, Britain no longer held command of the sea and thus did not have the flexibility to shift its troops at will to outmanoeuvre the colonials.

In April 1778, twelve French ships of the line, together with their attendant frigates mounting over eight hundred guns, set sail from Toulon. Four thousand soldiers were also on board. The aim of the fleet was to seize New York, Clinton's main base, and imperil the British position on the Continent. On 18th June, Clinton accordingly abandoned Philadelphia and began the march across New Jersey with his ten thousand troops to protect New York. Washington, whose army had been swollen by spring recruiting to about equal strength, began a parallel line of pursuit.

As spring approached, every attempt had been made to improve conditions at Valley Forge. On 2nd March, Greene was appointed by Congress as Quartermaster General. Under his able direction food, clothing, and the other necessities of an army began arriving regularly. Baron Friedrich von Steuben was also appointed to drill and train the colonial

troops. He adapted European drill regulations to appeal to the colonials and ceaselessly imposed this regimen on Washington's army. Peter was subjected to this drilling day after day and learned the important techniques that would guide him in later battles.

On 27th June, the British bivouacked just south of Monmouth Court House, near present-day Freehold, New Jersey. Early on the 28th, Clinton attacked Washington's lead forces and routed them. Washington with the help of Wayne, Lafayette, and Greene, reorganised the colonial lines and held off the British. Peter at this time was serving in a reconnaissance party in the lead elements, when a musket ball tore into his right thigh.

Clinton reached New York in the middle of July 1778 just in time to witness the arrival of the French fleet. It was confronted by a British squadron under Admiral Richard Howe, the brother of the superseded army commander, and was frustrated in its attempts to intervene. By autumn, the French fleet had departed for the West Indies; however, its action had forestalled Clinton's southern campaign for a year. Stalemate ensued on both sides. Washington was crippled by the financial chaos and weak credit of the Continental Congress, and the British for want of reinforcements. The French kept the pot stirred by sending stores of munitions and clothing to Washington and threatening to invade England.

Following his recovery from the wound at Monmouth, Peter participated in skirmishes at Paoli and was later stationed at White Plains outside of New York between July and August 1778. In September, he was transferred to the Sixth Virginia Regiment and moved to Middlebrook, New Jersey, until May 1779.⁹

⁹ Ibidem, 9.

During this period there were a number of important but lesser operations. One of most prominent was the storming of Stony Point, the British Army stronghold on the Hudson River north of New York, in July 1779. It was considered impregnable, as it was on an isolated peninsula protruding into the river, and any approach by land would have to pass through a wide swampy morass, across two rows of abatis, and up a steep stone incline to the fort itself. Washington's army needed a success to boost its morale and confidence and chose this site to challenge the British. General Wayne was placed in charge of the operation and spent weeks planning and gathering intelligence for the assault. So dangerous was the operation and so important its success that Washington offered a reward of \$500 and an immediate promotion to the first man inside the fort. The second through the fifth were also to receive bounties.

In this *coup de main* surprise was paramount in overcoming the defences. Wayne intended to begin the attack at midnight on a moonless night and thus sought his best troops for the enterprise. He turned to his Light Infantry Corps, which was an elite volunteer unit. Traditionally in the field it formed the advance elements or skirmishers, who made initial contact with the enemy and guarded against surprises. These troops were always engaged whenever there was any action and always suffered heavy casualties. Peter was one of these elite.

In preparation for the operation, Wayne had all dogs in the area taken and all civilians wandering into his camp interned to prevent any warning. Muskets would be unloaded and only fixed bayonets used. A piece of white paper was attached to each man's hat for identification, and passwords issued. At exactly noon on the 15th the force began its march to the assembly point for the assault and arrived within a mile

and a half of the target by eight in the evening. At eleven-thirty the force moved forward in two columns, each to attack the fort from different directions. Each column of 150 men was preceded by a platoon of twenty, called the "forlorn hopes." The platoon with the right column was commanded by Lieutenant James Gibbon. Peter was one of those in this platoon.

As the assault unfolded, Peter's unit cleared a path quickly through the abatis with axes and advanced up the stone face of the hill. The British, alerted by the noise of the axes, began firing continuously into the dark night. Gibbon was over the wall just ahead of Peter. As Peter pressed forward to seize the bastion, he received a nine-inch gash in his stomach, but that did not stop him from killing three enemy grenadiers and capturing the enemy flag. Seventeen of Peter's platoon of twenty were casualties. The rest of the column was immediately behind the lead platoon, however, and the fort was overcome within thirty minutes. News of the victory spread rapidly.

Peter was sent to Fishkill, New York, to recuperate and was apparently well enough to participate in a skirmish at Paulus Hook, New Jersey, on 18th August. He moved from Ramapough in September, to Camp Haverstraw in October, and to Morristown in November. His three-year enlistment expired in December 1779, and he returned to Virginia to visit the Anderson family for Christmas that year.

Except for these small actions, Washington's army remained incapable of any major engagement and could only watch Clinton. The fact that he had simply kept it in existence during these years was probably his greatest contribution to the colonial cause. In December, Clinton again looked to subduing the southern colonies. He sailed on the 26th for South Carolina to lay siege to Charleston. For a time things

went well for him. The French fleet had been reduced by Admiral George Rodney's British fleet, and although bad weather delayed his arrival and deployment around Charleston until March 1780, the town fell in May and five thousand colonial troops surrendered in the biggest disaster for Washington yet.

Now Clinton faced another problem. While he had gained a valuable base, he was confronted with a civil war. He faced not an army but rather innumerable guerrilla bands that harassed his communications and murdered Loyalists. It became apparent that only a large army could occupy and subdue the country. In the midst of this realisation, news of another French fleet crossing the Atlantic caused Clinton to hasten to New York and leave Lord Cornwallis, his second-in-command, to resolve the southern problem. Washington did him a favour in sending a small force under General Gates, the unpleasant intriguer whose victory at Saratoga had puffed up his reputation, to check the Redcoat advance. Peter in the early months of 1780 enlisted in the Virginia Militia and was assigned to Colonel William Mayo's regiment. This unit was in turn assigned to Gates for the ensuing operations, known as the "Camden Campaign." These were a fiasco, and Peter was there to experience the disaster.

Cornwallis with his Colonels James Webster, Francis Rawdon, and Banastre Tarleton were expanding British presence throughout South Carolina with plans for subduing Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia, so it was inevitable that there should be a clash with Gates. Gates advanced irregularly through North Carolina and into South Carolina, and seemed to be suffering from an unfortunate case of hubris. He would not consider the advice of his officers who knew the country and often took roads through deserted areas where supplies were unavailable. The only food obtainable at one point was green corn. The consequent dysentery and the heat of the

summer caused many to collapse from exhaustion and debilitation. The march has been described as nightmarish.¹⁰

Clutes began to make preliminary contact with the British through several skirmishes and detached a brigade in the course of his advance. Gates had now foolishly split his forces in the vicinity of a superior British one. Contact was made by the main bodies on the evening of 15th August in the vicinity of Camden. Early in the morning of the 16th, Webster advanced on Gates' left and drove it back in disorder. He then turned on the exposed right and with the aid of Rawdon and Tarleton defeated the colonials badly. It was said the Gates was swept from the field by his own fleeing men.¹¹ Overtaken and surrounded by the enemy during the panic, Peter speared a British cavalryman with a bayonet thereby lifting him from his horse, and mounting it himself, sped through the enemy by pretending to be a Loyalist. When he had regained his unit, he gave the mount to Colonel Mayo and thus saved the exhausted officer's life.

Again on foot, Peter noticed that the artillery horses pulling a cannon had been killed and the piece would fall into enemy hands unless rescued immediately. As the story has it, Peter crouched beneath the 1,100-pound gun, lifted it from its carriage onto his shoulder, and carried it to safety. As improbable as this feat may seem, no such doubt stopped the U.S. Postal Service in 1975 from issuing a commemorative stamp depicting the hulking Peter performing this stupendous deed.

¹⁰ Ibidem, 11.

¹¹ Ibidem.



Peter returned to Virginia following the Camden debacle and remained in Cumberland County with the Andersons, until he heard that Captain Thomas Watkins was raising a cavalry troop. He procured a horse and rejoined the fighting. Watkins' troop was assigned to Colonel William Washington and made its way south with the rest of the Continental Army toward the British. The Continentals were now under the command of Greene, a more modest and competent leader than Gates.

Clinton for the second time now found himself in great peril. The French fleet had indeed arrived, and he could not forestall a landing. Five thousand troops under the Comte de Rochambeau disembarked in July at Newport, Rhode Island. Washington was camped nearby in White Plains, and General Benedict Arnold at West Point. Clinton thus had his hands full and could give little attention to Cornwallis, who had long chafed under his direction. Clinton's instructions were to hold Charleston and wait, as any move inland would require naval control of the coast and with a French fleet sailing about that was not certain. Cornwallis was eager to press forward and to reduce the guerrillas in North Carolina with a view to moving on Virginia, the hotbed of the rebellion.

Cornwallis was wrong, as Charleston and not Virginia was the military key to the south. It was the major port through which he could receive supplies and deny them to the colonials. From this vital port he could control and dominate Georgia to the south and the North Carolina coast to Virginia. Nevertheless, Cornwallis was resolved to advance, and thus he marched to his destruction.

In January 1781, he moved toward the North Carolina border and on the 17th was mauled at Cowpens by Brigadier General Daniel Morgan, a subordinate of Greene's. Cornwallis pressed forward from this pyrrhic victory despite his vulnerability. His supply lines were now over-extended, and Greene was in friendly territory. Again he sought to bring Greene to battle, and the armies met at Guilford Court House on 15th March.

Guilford has often been described as the bloodiest and most decisive battle of the war.¹² Peter's furious fighting here is legendary. Witnesses describe how he cut down eleven men in succession with his broadsword, a feat that earned him the name "Goliath of Guilford" among his contemporaries. Later in the fray a British soldier pinned Peter's leg to his horse with a bayonet, and as he withdrew the weapon with Peter's assistance and turned to flee, Peter in a furious blow cleft the soldier's head all the way to his shoulder. Peter's sword was six feet long with a five-foot blade and was the heaviest in the entire army. It had been forged at the direction of Washington and delivered to Peter on 13th March, just days before the battle.¹³

¹² Ibidem, 14.

¹³ Ibidem, 15. The sword is part of the collection at the Virginia Historical Society.

Despite this first wound, Peter remained in the fight and in his last assault killed two more Redcoats before receiving another bayonet thrust in his right thigh to the hilt of the blade. The weapon penetrated just above his knee and exited at the hip joint. Peter fell from his horse unconscious and was left for dead by the departing colonials. Greene had ordered a withdrawal and left Cornwallis in control of the field. While Cornwallis claimed victory, he was so mauled with the loss of a third of his force that another such "victory" would destroy his army. Short of supplies, he headed for Wilmington and then Yorktown.

Peter was found alive the next day lying among a heap of his dead foes, a scene worthy of a Nordic or Celtic saga. He was taken by a Quaker named John Robinson and nursed back to health in his home. After eight weeks with the Robinsons, Peter limped back to the Anderson household in Virginia. Having been wounded five times, Peter could easily have elected to sit out the rest of the war, particularly at this late stage of the conflict. He simply could not rest while his country needed him.

He next volunteered to be a scout against the raiders of Tarleton, who were plundering and burning the southern Virginia countryside and wrecking havoc and desolation on the civil population. While performing reconnaissance in the late summer of 1781, Peter stopped at the tavern of Ben Ward in Amelia, now Nottoway County. While he was there, nine of Tarleton's troopers rode up with three Negroes, surrounded the building and announced Peter's arrest. Seeing that he was outnumbered, he made no resistance. As Peter seemed peaceable, eight of the nine went into the tavern and left Peter alone with one. The single soldier asked for Peter's valuables, of which Peter had none. Frustrated, the soldier bent to remove the silver buckles from Peter's shoes while tucking his sabre under his arm to free his hands. Peter seized the

opportunity, grabbed the sabre, and delivered a blow across his captor's head. Not fully dispatched, the trooper drew his pistol, and as he fired, Peter nearly cut off his hand. The bullet grazed Peter's side for his sixth wound of the war. The arms of the other eight troopers were with their mounts, so in a treacherous move Ward gave a musket to one of the British soldiers who aimed it at Peter's chest. The gun misfired, and Peter rushed the man, wounding him. The nine fled on foot. Peter left eight horses with Ward, intending to retrieve them the next day. When he returned, Ward insisted on keeping two for his trouble. Peter was prepared to thrash him, but with the enemy nearby he left with six horses. As Providence would have it, Ward died from a broken neck shortly thereafter when he fell from one of the two mounts.



Peter Francisco at Ward's Tavern dispatching one of Tarleton's troopers. Ben Ward and the Negroes can be seen behind Peter, while the remaining troopers flee on foot. Courtesy of the Virginia State Library

Cornwallis arrived at Yorktown in August hoping to be resupplied by sea and make direct contact with Clinton. The French naval commander in the West Indies, Comte de Grasse, sent word to Washington that he intended to attack the

Virginia coast and that Washington and Rochambeau should move south to trap Cornwallis. Nearly nine thousand colonials and eight thousand French assembled before Yorktown, while de Grasse blockaded the coast with thirty ships of the line. After a two-month siege, the British capitulated on 19th October. Peter and his friend the Marquis de Lafayette were there to witness the surrender. The French departed leaving Washington to worry about Clinton and the threat of an invasion from Canada, but no actions of any note occurred, and peace came to America with the signing of the final treaties in Paris in 1783.

Peter then returned to Richmond in the company of Lafayette. The two were strolling in front of St. John's Church, when a young lady tripped on her way out of the building and was caught by Peter. Her name was Susannah Anderson, and they were married in December 1784. The couple moved to a farm of 200 acres named "Locust Grove," where Peter transformed himself into a country squire with property awarded for his service and his new wife's dowry. They had two children, Peter, who died in infancy, and James Anderson, before she died in 1790. He next married Catherine Fauntleroy Brooke in 1794, and their children were Peter, Benjamin, Catherine Fauntleroy, and Susan Brooke. She died in 1821. In 1823 he married Mary Grymes West, the widow of Major West, a Virginia planter.

In 1824 when Lafayette made a triumphal return to the United States, Peter accompanied his old friend on the Virginia portion of his trip. The next year Peter forsook farm life to move to Richmond and became the Sergeant-at-Arms for the Virginia House of Delegates. He served in this capacity until his death on 16th January 1831. Peter was honoured with a public funeral at which The Right Reverend R. C. Moore in his remarks noted Peter's enormous strength, greater than that of any man in modern times, and the fact that

he had exerted it in defence of the country that had given him a home. He was buried in Shockoe Cemetery in Richmond.

There are today a number of monuments to this Portuguese gentleman who was deposited on the shore of Virginia as a child and fought so bravely for the land and people he came to love. The monument at Guilford Court House cited earlier was erected in 1904. The handsome bust atop a marble pedestal marking the site where he came ashore was set in place in 1973, and in 1976 Peter Francisco Park in Newark, New Jersey, and Peter Francisco Square in New Bedford, Massachusetts, were both dedicated. Perhaps the greatest appreciation of Peter was voiced by his own commander-in-chief, when Washington said of him, "Without him we would have lost two crucial battles, perhaps the War, and with it our freedom. He was truly a one-man-army."¹⁴

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¹⁴ Robert Buckner, "America's Greatest Soldier," *Esquire* (March 1942); quoted in Moon, 81.