

today will serve further to signify the esteem in which we of succeeding generations hold this outstanding Marylander.

As many of you probably know, a chestnut tree for many years served as the only marking of General Smallwood's grave, following his wish that no stone be used. It is said that the tree sprang from a chestnut that had been put into the soft mound of the grave.

This retreat which gave him peace and rest, and which was once a meeting place for General Washington and other outstanding men of that era, itself fell into a sad state of neglect and the manor house into ruins. It was not until 1898 — a full century after his death — that he was given proper recognition with the erection of a granite tombstone, and it was not until recent years that the manor house was restored and the retreat dedicated as a public park. The park now encompasses 333 acres and is on its way to becoming one of the outstanding attractions in Southern Maryland.

General Smallwood, were he alive today, might consider that we are making too much of a fuss about him. But this is the way we preserve our heritage, by honoring those who contributed so substantially to it. A brief review of the Smallwood contributions therefore is in order.

First and foremost, he was Maryland's outstanding military figure of the Revolutionary War. He was 43 years old, and a bachelor, when the war with England started. He was a soldier at heart and, like Washington, had fought in the French and Indian wars. Five days after the first shot at Lexington he marched out of Annapolis with the rank of colonel and commanding a regiment of 1,444 men. His regiment joined the Revolutionary forces at Boston, took part in the Battle of Long Island and two days later, then at Fort Putnam, was designated by General Washington to cover his retreat into the lines below Fort Washington.

It is said by one historian, "The impetuosity of Colonel Smallwood prevented him from distinguishing between covering a retreat and making a charge, and he had the red coats on the run when Washington was forced to send a messenger after him and have his troops recalled."

He was known as a dauntless military leader who willingly sacrificed his troops to achieve victory and who himself was carried from the field disabled by wounds. His troops, however, saved the American army from destruction by land and sea forces during the retreat of