

Lesson Eighteen

The Old Wagoner

LESSON IDEA

Our lessons this month will recall the courage, character, and heroic acts of four generals of the Revolutionary War: Daniel Morgan, Nathaniel Greene, Francis Marion, and George Washington. A fifth lesson will contrast their laudable records with the unheroic behavior of other personalities of Revolutionary War era.

Our first lesson, about Daniel Morgan (the Old Wagoner), will help instill a "hero image" of the Founders while teaching family members about key battles of the war.

PREPARATION

Gather pictures of Revolutionary War soldiers or generals that show the uniforms and manner of fighting of the period. Suggested sources include *Quest Of A Hemisphere*, pp. 114-145, and other books and pictures available at a public library.

AT AT THE BEGINNING of the War for Independence, Great Britain seemed assured of victory. It had more soldiers, guns, ammunition, money, and ships than most nations in the world at the time. The Americans, on the other hand, had only one major strength: leaders with a will to win and the intelligence to find ways to do it. Can you name some of the Revolutionary War heroes? [Give everyone a chance to answer. Names could include George Washington, Nathan Hale, Paul Revere, and John Paul Jones.]

There were many others who served which honor and helped make the American victory possible. One was Brigadier General Daniel Morgan, a wagoner from Virginia. [Ask someone to define "Wagoner." Explain, if necessary, that it was someone who drove a wagon

and team of horses carrying supplies from one place to another, much as trucks do today. Morgan was nicknamed "Old Wagoner" by those who fought with him because he owned his own wagon and team.]

Morgan moved from his native Pennsylvania to the frontier settlement of Charlestown, Virginia, at age 17. The tough, brawny lad worked with what seemed like the strength of two men as he cleared trails, felled trees, and hauled supplies to new settlements west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. His education came, not from books, but from woods, mountains, and wilderness trails.

Like George Washington, he fought with British troops to protect settlers against Indian massacres. He had watched the British foolishly march their men to war in European formation, only to be mowed down by Indians concealed behind trees, rocks, and bushes. It was a lesson he never forgot. [Ask a member of the family to describe the British method of fighting. Mention the brilliant red uniforms that made easy targets of the troops; formations similar to marching bands; and the drum beat which announced the troops' arrival.]



General Daniel Morgan

WHEN THE WAR with England began, Morgan was commissioned a captain and asked to raise a company of Virginia riflemen. He chose his men with care. Muskettoting volunteers were dismissed in favor of woodsmen who used long rifles. Morgan explained the difference to

a raw but eager recruit.

"That musket of yours can hit a man only if you wait to see the whites of his eyes before you fire,"

