

## Lesson Twenty

# The Swamp Fox

### LESSON IDEA

To indicate the courage, sacrifice, and heroism of General Francis Marion, who fought the British in the South and helped keep the American cause alive during some of the darkest hours of the Revolutionary War.

### PREPARATION

Read "During The Week" and prepare the suggested "hero chart." At the conclusion of the lesson, explain the chart and the procedure for earning marks, then determine an appropriate award and decide the winner.

**I**N APPEARANCE, Francis Marion was hollow-chested and slender, with knobby knees and thin arms. He seemed at first glance to be too frail to last a day in the hot sun, yet he was as tough as a steel rod.

Raised on a plantation near Charleston, South Carolina, Marion learned to outride, outshoot, and outlast his friends when they raced, played, and hunted together in the thick underbrush and mucky swamps of the Santee and Pee Dee Rivers. He seemed to have a special sense of direction when roaming the uncharted creeks that wound through cypress and swamp oak. His ability to lead others to any of his choosing was remarkable.

Eventually, he became so capable at managing the family property that he was placed in charge of a nearby plantation. Within four years, he earned enough money to buy 800 acres high on the bank of the Santee River, where he settled into a comfortable life as a planter. His love of the land was matched only by his love of freedom, a legacy from his grandparents who had fled to America to escape religious persecution in France.

Francis Marion fought with the South Carolina militia to protect the frontier from pillaging and

killing by Indians. He learned such aspects of Indian warfare as hitandrun, ambushes, and concealed sharpshooters.

In 1775, as rebellion against English rule began to mushroom, Marion began training a militia unit for what he believed was an inevitable war. Volunteers were reluctant to sign up, even after Lexington and Concord, since the fighting would be hundreds of miles away after a journey of many days by land or sea. Many Southerners viewed New England as virtually a foreign country. Some even sided with England in the dispute, while others who could neither read nor write were easily lured by British gold into His Majesty's army.

As a militia leader, Marion had to take what he could find for the new army of patriots, including swamp dwellers, backwoodsmen, small farmers, and hunters. But he did not mind, as he knew that the recruits were crack shots and brave fighters. And they, in turn, knew him not as a plantation owner, but as a man who could ride, shoot, and lead others with skill that inspired confidence. Under his firm, patient training, swamp rats became seasoned as



**General Francis Marion**

soldiers. They ceased to slouch, submitted to discipline, shaved their dirty beards, and even combed their hair.

**B**Y MARCH 1776, Marion and his men were ready for action that was not long in coming. The British Navy was en route to the southern seaport of Charleston, hoping to pinch off a major source of colonial shipping and supplies. Marion and Colonel Moultrie were ordered to fortify Sullivan's Island, a small square of tangled swamp land that protected the Charleston

