

The Family Heritage Series

A weekly discussion of Americanist truths and traditions for those "heirs of all the ages" who will have to preserve that most important inheritance of all — freedom. Produced by the Movement To Restore Decency.



Volume II

Lesson Fifty-Seven

General Sam Houston

LESSON IDEA

To show the importance of Sam Houston's leadership in winning Texan independence from Mexico and in paving the way for Texan statehood.

PREPARATION

Be prepared to discuss the effect the siege of the Alamo had on the morale of the Texans.

* * * * *

“REMEMBER the Alamo!” was the cry that sent Texans racing toward the Mexican barricades on the plains of San Jacinto, rifles loaded and bayonets ready. Though outnumbered and outgunned, they stormed the enemy stronghold, sending General Santa Anna's troops into confusion and terror. Leading the Texans' charge was General Sam Houston, the rugged frontier fighter whose love for freedom drove his army to victory.

But Sam Houston's story does not begin nor end at this battle, for at one time or another in his life, he was everything from the adopted son of a proud Cherokee Indian Chief to a United States Senator from Texas. Houston was a man who fitted well into the age in which he lived. He was a big rugged man — an adventurer — who was willing to risk everything for the cause in which he believed. From the beginning, Houston was restless, never content to stay in one place or work at one job very long. As a teenager he ran away from his Tennessee home to live with the Cherokee Indians, but later returned to become a schoolmaster. His fighting career began in 1813 when a group of

American soldiers marched into Maryville to recruit Tennessee men to fight the British in the War of 1812.

Almost immediately Houston took the silver dollar from the top of one soldier's drum — an indication in those days that you were willing to enlist — and ran home to get his mother's consent. Before he left, she gave him the family musket and a stern warning about its use in battle. “Never disgrace it,” she said, “for I had rather all my sons fill one honorable grave than that one of them should turn his back to save his life. Go, and remember that while the door of my cabin is open to brave men, it is eternally shut to all cowards.” In addition to the musket, she placed a ring on his finger with the admonition that he should always live his life according to the single word inscribed inside the ring. [Can you guess what that word was? We'll find out later in our story.]

SO WITH A MUSKET slung over his shoulder, a ring on his finger, and a shiny silver dollar in his pocket, Sam Houston marched off, expecting to be sent into battle against the British, who at that time were threatening our coastlines. As it turned out, Houston first saw action under the command of General Andrew Jackson at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend against a band of Creek Indians who were fighting for the British.

In leading one furious charge against the savage enemy, Houston was struck by a Creek arrow, but this failed to stop him. A friend yanked the arrow out, bringing with it both blood and flesh, and

