

**Francis Marion - Swamp Fox - III**

**Lead: Using hit-and-run tactics, Francis Marion and his partisan militia, kept the British off balance in the South during the American Revolution.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: After the Patriot defeat at the Battle of Camden in August 1780, the cause was kept alive by guerrilla partisans. The most successful of these bands was led by Francis Marion. Like the morning mist, he**

**and his troops would suddenly appear in lightning attacks that steadily eroded British strength and morale. At first the raids astonished the Brits, then they grew angry. Major James Wemyss was sent after Marion's band, but when he could not find them, cut a path of destruction through the Carolina low-country, seventy miles long, at times fifteen miles wide - crops destroyed, livestock slaughtered, plantations leveled. In the mistaken belief that all non-Episcopalians were Rebels, Wemyss burned many Presbyterian churches. Then General Clinton declared that those who remained neutral in the fight were considered enemies of the British crown. Thus, wanton**

**destruction and foolish politics helped swell the ranks of the partisans. Operating from his base deep in the Pee Dee swamp on Snow's Island in the southeastern corner of present-day Florence County South Carolina, Marion made full use of the new recruits.**

**Frustrated, the British then sent Colonel Banastre Tarleton, known affectionately as Butcher Tarleton for his brutal tactics, but after seven days of wandering around in the muck he arrived empty handed at Ox Swamp. Tradition records that he said, "Come, my boys, Let's go back, ....as for this damned old fox, the devil himself could not catch him." The**

**name stuck and as later embellished by William Gilmore Simms, Marion is known to history as the “Swamp Fox.”**

**Research assistance for this series on Francis Marion has been provided by Joe Rowley. At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

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## Resources

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**Pancake, John S. *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1985.**