

Chasing the Swamp Fox

New ETV Program about Francis Marion

(Unlimited rights)

- Highlighting Marion's partisan campaigns during the American Revolution in South Carolina, this special program features the artwork of Illustrator James H. Palmer.
- Produced and directed by ETV's Dave Adams, it combines interviews with some of the state's most prominent historians and writers, including Walter Edgar, Roy Talbert, Christine Swager, Daniel Littlefield, and Archaeologist Steve Smith to paint a mosaic of what life was like in those years and how Marion's participation led to the birth of modern day guerilla warfare as well as the liberation of our country.
- An artistic approach to an age-old tale that incorporates the research of historical accounts and delineates the contrast between folklore and fact, **Chasing the Swamp Fox** creates a historical visualization of Marion. It is a visually stunning and dramatic documentary on one of the south's most colorful historical figures.

More details about the content:

Francis Marion, nicknamed "The Swamp Fox," is one of the seminal heroes of the American Revolution in South Carolina. All South Carolinians - young and old - are familiar with his exploits, from his early military career fighting the Cherokee to his role as partisan guerilla leader during the Revolution. Countless books and several movies and television programs have dramatized his adventures and further cemented his legacy into the American vernacular.

As beloved and revered as he is, Francis Marion's life, especially in the context of the Revolution in South Carolina, is still very much shrouded in folklore and mythology. Before the first shots of the Revolution were fired at Lexington in 1775, Marion was just another member of the gentry, a farmer trying to make a living on his plantation above the Santee River. This transformation from mild-mannered, semi-literate planter into a formidable guerilla leader is, in part, what makes him such an attractive historical figure. He embodies the romantic (and American) ideal of the partisan fighter. The tales told around campfires about Francis Marion and his brigade of Whigs chasing bloodthirsty redcoats through the swampy wilderness provide a pleasant narrative. They do not however tell the whole story. They say nothing of the acts of violence committed on *both* sides of the conflict. They don't mention the starvation, the privation, and the disease. They don't tell the story of the desperate need for clothes, shoes, weapons and, most of all, salt. They don't detail the extent to which neighbors and even families went to destroy each other. The obstacles that were overcome by Marion and his companions were more than most people realize, as is their contribution to history.

The hour-long program deals with Marion's campaigns from the fall of Charleston in 1780 to the end of the Revolution in 1782. It is a comprehensive examination of life in the midst of conflict in South Carolina during the Revolutionary War using Francis Marion's life and battles as a context. The intention is to juxtapose the distant folklore with the realities of what life must have actually been like for the early patriots. It looks closely at the hardships endured and overcome by those who fought, and the cruelties visited on the civilian population by both the patriots and the British. Many questions are considered. How did Marion's Brigade help turn the tide in favor of the Americans? How was he able to operate with so few supplies and men and in the midst of such privation? What tactics did he employ in his raids? What kind of a leader was he? What kind of a man was he?

The contributions of South Carolinians during the War for American Independence are undeniable. It is sad to think that in some discussions about the Revolution, those contributions have been reduced to a minor footnote. Without discounting the ample aid on the part of the French, it can be argued that our independence as a nation was born in the north and was hacked out of the wilderness of South Carolina. This program can help shed more light on the forgotten conflicts and people that helped.

Recommended for middle and high school students, the hour-long program is being segmented into three parts for use in schools. There is a dip to black between parts. More specific information about the three parts can be found in the ITV teacher's guide, which is available at the ITV web site at www.itv.myetv.org. This program is also now available through StreamlineSC.

Part 1 – South Carolina Under Siege (@ 20 minutes)

Part 2 – Partisan Warfare (@ 15 minutes)

Part 3 – Heroes of the Revolution (@ 20 minutes)

