

# Free Reading The Swamp Fox: How Francis Marion Saved the American Revolution by John Oller

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By: John Oller

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This comprehensive biography of Francis Marion, the Swamp Fox, covers his famous wartime stories as well as a private side of him that has rarely been explored. In the darkest days of the American Revolution, Francis Marion and his band of militia freedom fighters kept hope alive for the patriot cause during the critical British "southern campaign." Employing insurgent guerrilla tactics that became commonplace in later centuries, Marion and his brigade inflicted enemy losses that were individually small but cumulatively a large drain on British resources and morale. Although many will remember the stirring adventures of the "Swamp Fox" from the Walt Disney television series of the late 1950s and the fictionalized Marion character played by Mel Gibson in the 2000 film *The Patriot*, the real Francis Marion bore little resemblance to either of those caricatures. But his exploits were no less heroic as he succeeded, against all odds, in repeatedly foiling the highly trained, better-equipped forces arrayed against him. In this action-packed biography we meet many colorful characters from the Revolution: Banastre Tarleton, the British cavalry officer who relentlessly pursued Marion over twenty-six miles of swamp, only to call off the chase and declare (per legend) that "the Devil himself could not catch this damned old fox," giving Marion his famous nickname; Thomas Sumter, the bold but rash patriot militia leader whom Marion detested; Lord Cornwallis, the imperious British commander who ordered the hanging of rebels and the destruction of their plantations; "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, the urbane young Continental cavalryman who helped Marion topple critical British outposts in South Carolina; but most of all Francis Marion himself, "the Washington of the South," a man of ruthless determination yet humane character, motivated by what his peers called "the purest patriotism." In *The Swamp Fox*, the first major biography of Marion in more than forty years, John Oller compiles striking evidence and brings together much recent learning to provide a fresh look both at Marion, the man, and how he helped save the American Revolution.

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## Sommaire

Étape 1 -

Commentaires

Matériaux

Outils

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Étape 1 -

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