



NSDAR Educational Resources Committee

Washington's Spies: A Brief Understanding of American Revolution
Espionage on the Road to Independence

Contributor: Shilah Low **Grade Level:** 1st - 8th Grade

1. Identify the standards to be addressed:

Grades 1 - 8 – Colorado – As of August 2016

PGC in History:

1. Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
2. Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures

2. Statement of the objective and lesson outcomes:

Objective: To provide a general understanding of American Revolution Espionage.

Outcome: Students will gain general understanding of what it was like to be a spy in the American Revolution through learning about the Culper Spy Ring, Tracking General Washington's battles, and using the technology available at the time for passing along secret information.

3. Materials, resources, and technology to be used by teacher/students:

Lesson plan is set up in centers. Materials needed will be organized by the centers.

1. Intro: Script about Anna Strong (attached), Period costume, petticoat, 4 white clothes, clothes line, 3 Tricorn hats, a message
2. Center/Disguises and crafting of Tricorn hats: Intro sheet (attached), instructions to making a Tricorn hat (download available at <http://www.education.com/activity/article/yankee-doodle-hat/>), craft items noted in Tricorn hat instructions.
3. Center/Hidden Messages: Script (attached), Paper cipher wheels (template found at <http://hldennis.com/secrets-to-break/secrets-to-break-book-three/> and is attached), brads for the center of wheel, Hidden message worksheet (attached), a sample letter and a mask/plate (see <http://www.amc.com/shows/turn/exclusives/spy-tools-of-the-american-revolution> for an example)
4. Center/Invisible Ink: Script (attached), prewritten messages written with baking soda, grape or cranberry juice, milk, heat source such as a candle or craft heating gun, download a copy of the Culper Spy Ring code book (<http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-revolutionary-war/spying-and-espionage/the-culper-code-book/>)
5. Center/ Tracking the Spy Master: Script (attached), large Colonial map (attached) from http://www.emersonkent.com/images/american_revolution_campaigns.jpg, tent icons (image attached), tape.

6. Conclusion: Copies of puppet show script (attached), Stick Puppets (will need to create your own. Simply use an image of colonial period everyday people and soldiers. Image should be about the size of a sheet of paper, use a paint stick to attach the image to and you have a stick puppet), stage

4. **Introduction of the topic:**

Read the script regarding Anna Strong. Use volunteers to illustrate how the Culper Spy Ring worked.

5. **Procedure for instruction:**

Rotate to the different centers in small groups of 5-7. See the individual centers for instructions.

6. **Lesson Closure:**

Ask for volunteers to perform the puppet show. Teacher should be narrator.

7. **Assessment of Understanding:**

Group discussion.

Introduction

(Have the petticoat already hanging on a line.)

Script:

Hello and welcome! Please don't mind me; I just need to finish hanging up my laundry. (Turn and place a handkerchief on the line).

Well, now that that is done, let me tell you a story. Did you know that there is a tale that has been passed down through history about a woman that would do just what I did, hang up her laundry, and this simple act helped the Patriots in the war for Independence? Her name was Anna Strong. It is believed that Anna was part of a spy ring. Raise your hand if you can tell me what it means to be a spy?

Spy: a person who secretly collects and reports information on the activities, movements, and plans of an enemy or competitor.

What is a spy ring? It is a group of spies working to collect and report information.

So, back to our tale...the spy ring that Anna was part of also included Caleb Brewster, Abraham Woodhull, and Major Benjamin Tallmadge. In the beginning of the war, Abraham Woodhull also known as Samuel Culper would collect information in New York City about British activities. Then Woodhull would travel back home to Setauket (Se-talk-ett). However, Woodhull needed help in getting the information to Washington. This is where Anna would help.

"According to widely accepted local and family tradition, Anna Strong's role in the ring was to signal Brewster, who ran regular trips with whaleboats across the Sound on a variety of smuggling and military missions, that a message was ready. She did this by hanging a black petticoat on her clothesline at Strong Point in Setauket, which was easily visible by Brewster from a boat in the Sound and by Woodhull from his nearby farm. She would add a number of handkerchiefs for one of six coves where Brewster would bring his boat and Woodhull would meet him." ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Strong_\(spy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Strong_(spy))) **Once Brewster had the information from Woodhull a.k.a. Culper, Brewster would give it to Major Tallmadge. Tallmadge would then give the information to General George Washington. Although there is no evidence that points to Anna Strong directly, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that this tale is true.**

Does this all make sense?

If so, can I have 3 volunteers? If not, can I have 3 volunteers to demonstrate the idea?

Place a hat on each head that says,

Woodhull

Brewster

Tallmadge

Brewster will need to close his/her eyes. Give Woodhull an envelope to hide in one of the coves. Tallmadge will be standing next to me.

Teacher will hang the # of clothes on the line and instruct Brewster to open his/her eyes and using the clothes line signal retrieve the envelope and hand to Tallmadge.

Tallmadge will read the message aloud.

Open the envelope

Instructions: Now it is time to explore the different coves in the room to learn more about what it was like to be a spy during the American Revolution on the *Road to Independence*.

Disguises

What is a disguise?

to conceal or cover up the truth or actual character of by a counterfeit form or appearance; misrepresent.

Can you think of a few disguises that were used during the American Revolution?

Wearing of a uniform or being commonly dressed

Hollow bullets

Secret Eggs

A story/lies

There is a tale about a lady by the name of Lydia Darragh that lived in Pennsylvania. The story goes, that she overheard British plans for a sneak attack on the Continental Army. She wrote small messages and disguised them in the cloth buttons of her son's coat. He then carried the messages without detection to the Continental Army's camp.

British spies placed rolled up letters and small notes into a variety of holsters to hide potentially sensitive information. The hollowed out quills of large feathers that were used as writing utensils, for example, could hide a tightly rolled up letter. Other materials were used to hide messages such as silver balls. One particularly unlucky British spy named Daniel Taylor was caught in New Windsor, New York with a message sent from Henry Clinton to John Burgoyne hidden inside one of these small silver balls. In haste, the spy swallowed the silver ball to avoid detection. However, Patriot soldiers forced the spy to drink a purgative and vomit up the ball. Momentarily undeterred, Taylor grabbed the ball and swallowed it again. Under the threat of being hanged and having the ball cut out of his stomach, Taylor relented. However, Taylor would eventually meet the cruel fate of the gallows, executed on October 16, 1777.

Activity: Making a tricorn hat. They were 21st Century kids, now they are American Patriots



Let the kids decorate 3 pieces of paper strips. Glue the short ends of the paper together to make the "hat". Tape feathers to the hat.

Hidden Messages Script

In this cove we are going to explore the world of hidden messages.
I need a volunteer to read this letter out loud.

Seems like a normal letter, right? However, there is a hidden message in it. Using a mask or plate we can figure out what the hidden message is...place mask over the letter and have the volunteer read it aloud.
So, this message was only useful when both parties had the mask. Without the mask it is hard to figure out what the hidden message. If a mask was lost, the message was lost.

Another way of using hidden messages was with the use of a cipher wheel. We will be making Cipher Disks and then you will try to decipher a few messages.

Activity:

Place a brad in the middle.

Place a paper clip on the letter A in the smaller wheel.

OUTTER WHEEL IS YOUR CODE LETTERS. INNER WHEEL DECIPHERS MESSAGE ONCE YOU KNOW THE SECRET LETTER

Once your wheel is put together grab a pencil and use the worksheet to help you practice decoding messages. Your answers will give you a few facts about espionage in the American Revolution.

Key to Worksheet

Who invented the Cipher Wheel? Secret Letter= J

Thomas Jefferson

CQXVJB SNOONABXW

What was the name of the Patriot Spy who was captured and executed by the British? This hero is known for his famous last words, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

Secret Letter = H

Nathan Hale

UHAOHU OHSL

What is the name of the Continental Army General that became a Spy for the British?

Secret Letter = V

Benedict Arnold

WZIZYDXO VMIJGY

This person was later added to the Culper Spy ring. His code name was Samuel Culper Jr. What was his real name?

Secret Letter = Y

Robert Townsend

PMZCPR RMULQCLB

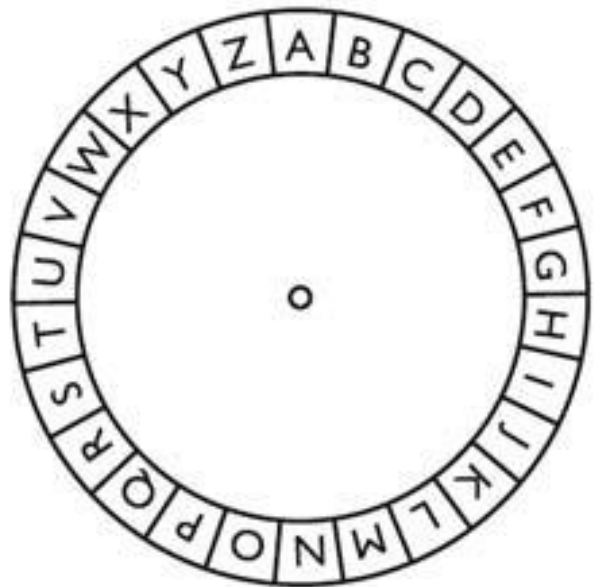
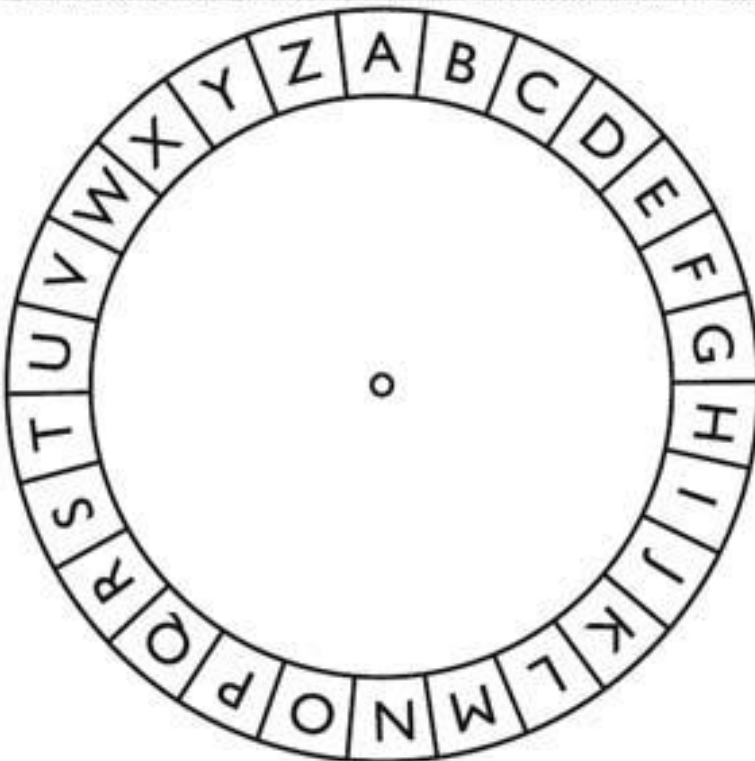
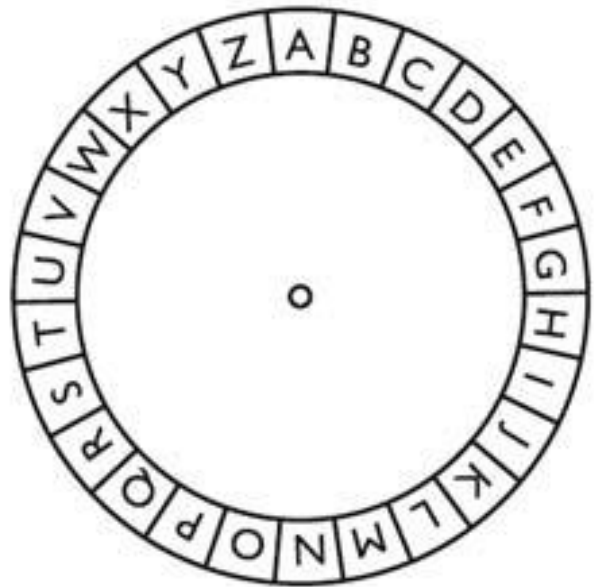
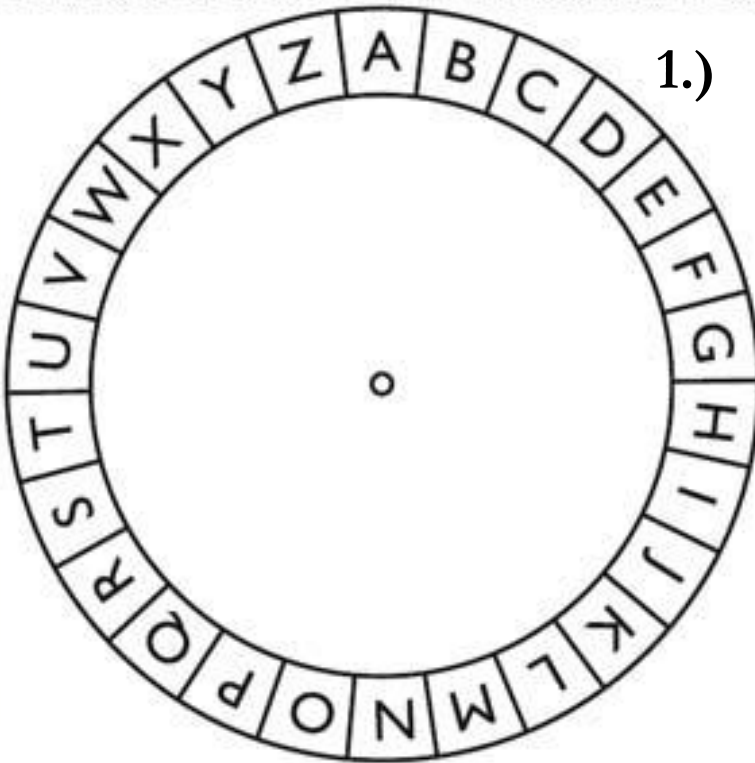
The Culper Ring is accredited for uncovering correspondents between Benedict Arnold and which British officer?

Secret Letter = I

Major John Andre

UIRWZ RWPV IVLZM

1.)



Hidden Messages Worksheet

1.) Who invented the Cipher Wheel?

Secret Letter= J

C Q X V J B

S N O O N A B X W

2.) What was the name of the Patriot Spy who was captured and executed by the British?
This hero is known for his famous last words, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

Secret Letter = H

U H A O H U O H S L

3.) What is the name of the Continental Army General that became a Spy for the British?

Secret Letter = V

W Z I Z Y D X O

V M I J G Y

4.) This person was later added to the Culper Spy ring. His code name was Samuel Culper Jr. What was his real name?

Secret Letter = Y

P M Z C P R

R M U L Q C L B

5.) The Culper Ring is accredited for uncovering correspondents between Benedict Arnold and which British officer?

Secret Letter = I

U I R W Z R W P V

I V L Z M

Invisible Inks

Instructor:

Ask the question: Why would a spy want to use invisible ink?

To keep information secret to everyone, except to the person who is meant to know the information.

Activity:

1. Give each person a piece of paper and a pencil. (Use the Pencils from Hidden Messages) Write their name on the paper.
 2. Then handout a Q-tip to each person.
 3. Dip the Q-tip in the milk and then write a message, whatever they want to write. A few ideas are:
 - a. SOS
 - b. Name
 - c. A # from the Culper Code book.
 - d. A smiling face
 4. Set messages aside to dry.
-
- 1) Then handout a pre-written message.
 - 2) Explain Sympathetic Inks
 - a. A sympathetic ink uses a chemical reaction. You write with one chemical and the writing would disappear, which the paper you are holding already has a message written on it with 1 chemical. By applying a second chemical to the first this causes a chemical reaction and the writing would be made visible again. There were several sympathetic ink formulas available at the time of the American Revolution. George Washington in 1780 had a log building constructed at Fishkill, New York to manufacture the “medicine” as they called sympathetic inks. We are now going to apply a second chemical to our paper to react with the message so that we can read it.
 - 3) Dip the other end of their Q-tip into the Cranberry Juice and apply it to the paper
-The messages will be coded numbers from the Culper Code Book. Kids will need to look up their number in the book to read the word.
 - 4) Go around and have the kids read their messages out loud.
-
5. Milk messages should be dry now. Ask the kids if they can guess what is needed in order to read their milk message.
 - a. Heat
 - b. Explain how this works: Milk is acidic, just like lime juice, vinegar, and lemon juice. The acid weakens the fibers of the paper. When heat is applied to the document, the weakened fibers turn brown faster than the fibers that are not weakened and the message is visible.
 6. Using the heat gun, make the messages appear. If time allows, have them share their messages.

<http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-revolutionary-war/spying-and-espionage/spies-dead-drops-and-invisible-ink/>

Tracking the Spy Master

“Two hundred and forty years ago General George Washington, the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, took to the field with his troops and spent the next eight years engaging in a military campaign to secure freedom for our patriot ancestors and their posterity. He made some of his toughest decisions in his sleeping and office tent, what we like to refer to as the “First Oval Office.” (N.S.C.A.R. National Program Packet 2015-2016)

Together we will follow the ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE and track our Spy Master.

In this cove we will locate when and where General Washington was during the American Revolution. We will also learn just a few facts on the notable battles he was in during the Revolution.

Hand each child a tent, which they will place onto the map. A piece of tape will need to be rolled and stuck onto the back of the icon so that it can adhere to the map.

LOCATIONS

The below information was compiled from multiple Wikipedia sources

1). Place an icon on Boston, Massachusetts

June/ July 1775 Massachusetts

The Battles of Lexington and Concord were the first military conflicts of the American Revolution. Shortly after that conflict George Washington became the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army and headed to Massachusetts which is where the majority of the Patriot Militia where camped. Here is where George Washington began organizing, building, and training the Continental Army. Between April 1775-March 1776 it is known as the Siege of Boston. General Washington wanted the British removed from the city, however, his officers refused to fire. However, the General did not give up his desire to dislodge the British and in the beginning of March 1776 General Washington began to point cannons at the city. A snowstorm prevented the British from taking out the cannons and fearing a brutal bombardment, British General Howe ordered the evacuation of the city. March 17 1776 is known as Evacuation Day because 11,000 redcoats and hundreds of Loyalist left Boston by boat.

2.) Place an icon on Long Island, New York

27 Aug 1776 Long Island

The date 27 Aug 1776 is known for the Battle of Long Island or the Battle of Brooklyn. Having been kicked out of Boston, MA the British headed towards New York. In this Battle the Patriots loose New York to the British. The British believe that George Washington will be forced to surrender and thus the Patriot's cause would be lost. However, with the cover of night, rainfall, and fog, George Washington and his men were able to escape along the East River.

Due to the successful British occupation of New York, the Culper Spy Ring will be created in 1778 to help gather important intelligence about British activities within the city.

3.) Place an icon on White Plains, New York

28 Oct 1776

White Plains

The Battle of White Plains took place on 28 Oct 1776. The British advanced on the Continental Army in hopes of capturing General Washington. General Washington took a defensive stance against the British, however, lacked significant control over high ground. General Washington was forced to retreat. Hessian artillery was a major contributor to the British victory at White Plains.

Hessians is the term given to the 18th-century German soldiers contracted for military service by the British government, which found it easier to borrow money to pay for their service than to recruit its own British soldiers.

As a fun fact, some historians believe that the [Headless Horseman](#) depicted in [Washington Irving's](#) short story "[The Legend of Sleepy Hollow](#)" was inspired by a real-life Hessian soldier who died during this battle

4.) Place an icon on Trenton, New Jersey

26 Dec 1776

Trenton

The Battle of Trenton was a small but pivotal battle, which took place on the morning of December 26, 1776, in [Trenton, New Jersey](#). On Christmas Day 1776, General [George Washington](#) and his men crossed the Delaware River which is north of Trenton. The river was icy and the weather severe thus proving the crossing to be very dangerous. Two detachments were unable to cross the river, leaving Washington with only 2,400 men under his command in the assault. After the crossing, the army marched 9 miles south to Trenton. Once there, Washington led the main body of the [Continental Army](#) against [Hessian](#) soldiers garrisoned at Trenton. The Hessians had lowered their guard, thinking they were safe from the American army, and had no long-distance outposts or patrols. Washington's forces caught them off guard and after a short but fierce battle, most of the Hessians surrendered. Despite the battle's small numbers, the American victory inspired rebels in the colonies. With the success of the revolution in doubt a week earlier, the army had seemed on the verge of collapse. The dramatic victory inspired soldiers to serve longer and attracted new recruits to the ranks.

5.) Place an icon on Brandywine, PA

11 Sept 1777 Brandywine

On the afternoon of 11 Sept 1777, British General Sir William Howe and General Charles Cornwallis launch a full-scale attack on General George Washington and the Patriot outpost at Brandywine Creek, PA. The morning had provided the British troops with cover from a dense fog, so Washington was unaware the British had split into two divisions and was caught off guard by the oncoming British attack.

Although the Americans were able to slow the advancing British, they were soon faced with the possibility of being surrounded. Surprised and outnumbered, Washington ordered his men to abandon their posts and retreat. This battle marks the start of the British's occupation of Philadelphia.

6.) Place an icon on Germantown, PA
7 Oct 1777 Germantown

Near the British-occupied city of Philadelphia, Patriot forces under General George Washington attempt an early morning attack on General Howe's British troops at Germantown. Heavy morning fog threw Washington's divisions into disarray, and by 10 o'clock the battle was over. Although the Americans were forced into a retreat, both sides suffered heavy losses, and the battle demonstrated Washington's strategic abilities. Coupled with the American victory at the Battle of Saratoga in New York on October 17, the Battle of Germantown convinced France to recognize and support American independence and give open military assistance, thus marking a turning point in the American Revolution. After Germantown, General Washington led his forces into their winter quarters at Valley Forge.

7.) Place an icon on Monmouth Courthouse, NJ
28 June 1778 Monmouth Courthouse

Departing [Valley Forge](#) in June 1778, General George Washington moved his army across the Delaware River with the goal of attacking General Sir Henry Clinton as his troops marched from Philadelphia to New York. On June 28, Washington dispatched Major General Charles Lee with 5,000 men to assault the British rear guard near Monmouth Court House, NJ. Lee mismanaged the fight and was forced to retreat with the British in pursuit.

As Lee fell back, Washington advanced with the main army and rallied the troops. Repeated British attacks were beaten off before the fighting ended with both sides ultimately claiming victory.

8.) Place an icon on Yorktown, VA
28 Sept 1781 Siege of Yorktown

On this day 28 Sept 1781, General George Washington, commanding a force of 17,000 French and Continental troops, begins the siege known as the Battle of Yorktown against British General Lord Charles Cornwallis and a contingent of 9,000 British troops at Yorktown, Virginia, in the most important battle of the Revolutionary War.

Earlier, in a stroke of luck for the Patriots, the French fleet commanded by Francois, Count de Grasse, departed St. Domingue (the then-French colony that is now Haiti) for the Chesapeake Bay, just as Cornwallis chose Yorktown, at the mouth of the Chesapeake, as his base. Washington realized that it was time to act. He ordered Marquis de Lafayette and an American army of 5,000 troops to block Cornwallis' escape from Yorktown by land while the French naval fleet blocked the British escape by sea. By September 28, Washington had completely encircled Cornwallis and Yorktown with the combined forces of Continental and French troops. After three weeks of non-stop bombardment, both day and night, from cannon and artillery, Cornwallis surrendered to Washington in the field at Yorktown on October 17, 1781, effectively ending the War for Independence.

Although the war persisted on the high seas and in other theaters, the Patriot victory at Yorktown ended fighting in the American colonies. Peace negotiations began in 1782, and on September 3, 1783, the Treaty of Paris was signed, formally recognizing the United States as a free and independent nation after eight years of war.





Map from http://www.emersonkent.com/images/american_revolution_campaigns.jpg

Image from the Facebook page First Oval Office

<https://www.facebook.com/FirstOvalOffice/photos/a.395114210587245.1073741825.395113067254026/514851375280194/?type=3&theater>



Characters:

- 1) Narrator
- 2) Emily Geiger
- 3) Emily's father John Geiger
General Sumter
- 4) Amos, a neighbor and fellow Patriot
General Greene

NARRATOR

This play was found online at www.libertykids.com and was inspired by the book,
Emily Geiger's Dangerous Mission written by Dyana Stan.

In the summer of 1781 in a farmhouse in South Carolina, Emily Geiger worried about her brothers. They were Patriots who were fighting in the rebel army for independence from England. Many of Emily's neighbors were Tories. A Tory is a person that is loyal to the Crown. Emily and her father feared for the boys' lives. We first met Emily, her father, and a friend named Amos in the family's cabin.

(Have Emily, Father, and Amos in view)

AMOS

Emily, I need to speak with your father.

FATHER

Amos, what's going on?

AMOS

Is it safe to talk?

FATHER

No one is here except Emily and we can trust her.

AMOS

One can't be too careful; the Tories and their spies are everywhere. We're a divided people. We have to watch what we say in front of our neighbors. Are you expecting to see your boys tonight?

FATHER

No. I don't expect them again soon. Why? What's going on?

AMOS

It's bad news, I'm afraid. The British have forced General Greene into a retreat. The British have set up at Fort Granby.

FATHER

That is terrible news. It cuts off General Greene's communication with the rest of the Continental army. If General Sumter and General Greene were together they could beat back the British and earn the Patriots a victory.

AMOS

That's the problem. Greene can't get a message to Sumter because of all the Tories and their spies. It's too dangerous. A lone rider would face certain death.

EMILY

Father, I could do it. That's the way to Cousin Elizabeth's house and I know the way very well.

FATHER

Don't be foolish, girl. Women have no place being involved in war.

EMILY

Papa, we've been in this awful war for five years now. Women make clothes and raise money and write pamphlets. Some women follow their husbands in the army and take care of the wounded. Women are Patriots, too. We want our country to be free, just as men do.

AMOS

I'm sorry, John, but I think she's right. No one would suspect a woman, and if Sumter joins Greene, it could change the course of the war.

FATHER

Emily, do you really think you could do it?

EMILY

I'm sure of it, Papa. Please let me go to General Green and propose the idea.

FATHER

I will not refuse to let you try if the General approves.

(All puppets exit from view)

NARRATOR

In the morning, after a sleepless night, afraid, but determined, Emily rode her horse to find General Greene.

(Emily and General Greene are in view)

EMILY

Sir, I'm Emily Geiger and I understand you need someone to take a message to General Sumter.

GENERAL GREENE

How did you know that?

EMILY

My family and I are Patriots. Someone told us you need a messenger and I want to volunteer.

GENERAL GREENE

You heard right, I'm afraid, but . . . how old are you, girl?

EMILY

I'm a teenager, sir. General Sumter is camped near my Cousin Elizabeth's home. I know the way, and I have a fast horse.

GENERAL GREENE

What does your father think of this idea?

EMILY

He's a Patriot, too. He will allow it if you will.

GENERAL GREENE

General Sumter's camp is almost 100 miles from here. It's a long ride. (Pause) Do you understand that if you are caught, you'll be taken for a spy...and the British hang spies?

EMILY

I know that, sir, but I think I have the best chance of getting through.

GENERAL GREENE

I don't like this, but it may work, and we are in desperate circumstances. I will write a dispatch to General Sumter, but if you are captured you must be sure to destroy this paper.

NARRATOR:

General Greene writes on a piece of parchment and hands it to Emily, who folds the paper and slips it into her bodice.

(General Greene and Emily exit view)

(Enters view: Picture of Emily on a horse)

NARRATOR

Emily went home, packed, said goodbye to her father, and started her dangerous journey.

Emily traveled fast. On the first day, some Tories noticed a young woman riding alone and reported her.

On the 2nd day, she was captured by British soldiers.

They took her to Fort Granby and locked her in an upstairs bedroom to wait for a Tory woman to come to search her to see if she was carrying a message of some kind.

(Flip picture to show Emily sitting and eating the paper)

As Emily sat alone, she took out the message and read it until she had it memorialized. Then she tore the paper into tiny pieces, which she puts into her mouth and swallows.

Shortly after, the Tory woman searched every inch of Emily's clothing. With finding no evidence of being a spy, the British let Emily go.

(Picture exits view)

(Emily and General Sumter come into view)

EMILY

General Sumter? I am Emily Geiger. I have an important message from General Greene.

GENERAL SUMTER

Is General Greene sending young women to deliver his messages these days?

EMILY

Sir, it was the only way. Tories are everywhere. I will have to write the message out for you. I destroyed the original when I was captured, but I memorized every word.

NARROTAR

Emily writes down the message and hands it to the General. He reads the message.

GENERAL SUMTER

This is a crucial dispatch, young woman. You were very brave to bring it, and I thank you. What did you do with the original?

EMILY

I ate it. And, sir, no meal has done so much to keep me alive and healthy as that one.

(General Sumter and Emily exist view)

NARRATOR

General Sumter gave orders for his army to march and join with General Greene at a secret location. When the British heard that the two forces were coming, they retreated. So it was that a teenage girl with courage and conviction was a hero who helped the Patriots earn a victory in the Revolutionary War.

The END

(All puppet volunteers come into view and take a bow.)

Questions for discussion

1. Why was it so unusual for Emily to be allowed to carry the message?
 1. She was a girl
 2. She was a teenage girl
2. Do you think it would be unusual for a woman to be asked to go on such a dangerous mission today?
 1. No...we have a lot of women soldiers in today's military.
3. How would General Green's message be sent today?
 1. Mail
 2. Email
 3. Telephone
 4. Messenger
4. What made you think Emily was an intelligent, quick-witted girl?
 1. She ate the message.
5. What was a spy tool that Emily used?
 1. Disguise...she was a woman

Vocabulary to understand

Patriot

Tory

Bodice

Dispatch

Parchment