

“I Spy---Espionage During the American Revolution”

Fifth Grade  
600 words

Challenger Elementary

Princess Timpanogos DAR Chapter

November 28, 1777

I am being escorted through a camp by armed troops to the tent containing the man who will decide my fate. I am cold from my journey and anxious about what will become of me. My name is Richard Callaghan, I am 14 years old, and I am a spy.

I did not intend to be a spy; I was just trying to survive. My father, a schoolteacher, died in the Boston Massacre of 1770. My mother and I moved to Philadelphia, where she died a year and a half ago of influenza. I found that soldiers would take pity on a ragged, dirty boy and would give me food if I helped them. I shined their shoes and fetched their water, doing anything I was asked. Sometimes they would let me sleep in their camps. I was unimportant to them and I found that they spoke freely in my presence. Even their General seemed more concerned with his social life than with military secrets. A trader in the market noticed my ability to slip in and out amongst the officers and offered me payment for any information I could gather. At the time, I agreed because I wanted whatever he would give me. But soon I found I enjoyed the thrill of the secrecy and of upholding my father's beliefs.

This month, the trader in the market gave me a new assignment. I was to linger among the officers I was most acquainted with, listening for plans and strategies for battle. If successful, I was to report personally to the General. For days I lingered among the troops offering my services. One evening while shining boots, I overheard the General and his Lieutenants as they made plans for attacking the camps at White Marsh.

That night, I stole a horse out of the stable, crossed the Schuylkill River, and made my way toward White Marsh. That is how I found myself being escorted by armed

guards into a cold, mundane tent where, sitting behind a writing table, was General George Washington.

“I understand our sentries found you wandering around the outskirts of our encampment. You say you have information for me?” said the General.

“Yes, sir. I overheard General Howe and his men planning an attack on your camp. They plan to march out of Philadelphia on December 4<sup>th</sup> with about 12,000 soldiers. They think they will destroy you, General. Major John Clark told me to come directly to you with this information. He told me to give you this scrap of paper,” I replied.

General Washington took the paper from my hand, held it over an oil lamp, nodded to himself and said, “So you are the ‘young fellow of character’ who has been supplying Major Clark with such fine information. Your efforts have been much appreciated. This information may save many lives. You are a brave young man.” Washington looked to the guards and said, “Take this fellow to warm up and get something to eat.”

With my heart pounding, I asked, “Sir, please...my father was a patriot, as am I. May I join your Army?”

General Washington looked thoughtful for a moment, and then replied, “Very well. You are young, but you have certainly proven worthy. I will reserve the right to use your considerable skills as a spy in the future should the need arise.”

“Thank you, Sir. I will be happy to serve however you think best,” I said. As I left the tent, I knew I was now serving a better purpose; I would either live or die for liberty.

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