



The Patriot's Companion

Volume 1 – Issue 5

December 2010



*Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year
from the
9-12 Project
Education Committee*

The Battle of Trenton

By Susan Frickey, 9-12 Project Education Committee

Try to picture it. Try to feel it.

It's cold. It's East Coast cold, where the wet humidity makes the bitter cold cut right through to the bone. You're freezing even with a thick parka and good snow boots on. Your fingers are numb in your designer gloves. You hold your hot coffee/chocolate, thankful for the warmth making its way down your throat, as you walk down the paved, de-iced sidewalk.

But in 1776, you don't have a parka – or boots, hats, gloves, scarves. You're lucky if you have a shirt on your back and something on your feet between your skin and the ice and snow. You can't remember the last filling meal you had. You don't even mind picking the weevils off the chunk of stale bread you get for your day's ration, and the something warm to drink is hot water with some old vegetables floating in it. You're a soldier in the Continental Army and it's December in Pennsylvania.

You've just lost New York to the British, abandoned Fort Lee in the face of a British invasion, you're on the run, demoralized, cold, hungry, with the British under Gen. Cornwallis – the warmly clothed, well-fed, well-supplied British – hot on your heels determined to obliterate once and for all the “rebellion in the colonies.”

You and 5,000 soldiers reach sanctuary behind the Delaware River on December 7, but sickness and desertions cut your ranks relentlessly. The soldiers' contracts with the Continental Army are set to expire on December 31 and no one is getting paid anyway, so many of the demoralized just go home early to get out of the miserable conditions. The Continental Army is quickly unraveling in defeat.

General Washington sends out scouts to scour the countryside looking for food, horses and ammo. The horses have already been confiscated by the British, no ammo is found, and your countrymen sold their crops to the British for a better price than they were offered by the Patriots and their worthless Continental dollars, supposedly backed by a do-nothing Congress. What resources not commandeered by the British are burnt to the ground to keep it out of Patriot hands. *(Continued on page 2)*

Welcome to the 9-12 Project Idaho's family newsletter, *The Patriots' Companion*, with something for everyone. **Please share with family & friends.**

Got ideas for an article, feedback on this issue, add someone to our distribution list? Send email to sfsmallbiz@aol.com and include 9-12 Newsletter in the Subject line.

Please check “Events” on the 9-12 Project Idaho website for upcoming activities!

Inside This Issue

- Children's Gift Book Ideas
- Journal of a Young Patriot Soldier
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- Emergency Preparedness
- Christmas in Colonial America
- History Quiz
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FEATURED LOCAL BUSINESS

Feature Your Business

We will feature a local 9-12 business in each newsletter as a fund-raiser for our 9-12 group. Putting in a short advertisement for your business would cost a \$50 donation to 9-12 Project Idaho. We need your business card and a short blurb to tell us what you do in a way that makes us all want to rush over to your business!

For more information,
please contact:
Vicki Keen
208-344-2471 (home)
208-859-2212 (cell)
vkeen@hotmail.com

If ever a time should come, when vain and aspiring men shall possess the highest seats in Government, our country will stand in need of its experienced patriots to prevent its ruin.

~ Samuel Adams, 1776

So much of what is best in us is bound up in our love of family, that it remains the measure of our stability because it measures our sense of loyalty. All other pacts of love or fear derive from it and are modeled upon it.

~ Haniel Long

Can you feel it? the desperation? the cold? the hunger? the hopelessness?

Even the stoic George Washington writes to his brother, "I think the game is pretty near up," the "noble cause lost." The British agree with him, so they quarter up in warm colonial houses and prepare to watch the Continental army freeze/starve to death. Washington knows he has to do something quick and drastic to save the army, the cause, and that flickering dream upon which so many willingly staked so much.

Knowing the position and strength of the enemy troops (thanks to his dedicated spy network, and John Honeyman in particular), Washington and his officers hatch a desperate, dangerous plan. Rather than hunker down licking their wounds as the British expect, the Continental Army will launch a surprise attack! And they will launch it against the feared Hessian allies of the British: those vicious, professional German mercenaries. Seven days before the contracts expire for the Continental Army. One last all-or-nothing campaign. It's in the hands, once again, of Divine Providence.



Washington crossing the Delaware at the Battle of Trenton on Christmas night 1776 by Emmanuel Leutze

Washington stealthily rounds up every boat he can find. On Christmas night, in the midst of a bitter sleet storm, Washington loads the entire Continental army, horses, cannon, cooking kettles, and supplies into the boats and crosses an ice-swelled Delaware River in the dark in transport wave after wave.

They get behind schedule because of the treacherous conditions, but finally move everything across – without a single mishap! – by four in the morning on December 26. There are still 9 miles to cover before dawn. Frozen, hungry men, many without shoes, march in absolute silence towards Trenton. Total surprise is essential for the plan to work

Soaked muskets and ammo become useless, so Washington directs his troops to use bayonets and for once bayonets are available. Ice forms on the roads, men fall and are pried to their feet to stumble on in the dark and cold. Two men freeze to death on the road, the only casualties this day.

Dawn is approaching, so the exhausted men break into a long trot to reach their destination under the element of surprise.

Washington's plan works! In 45 minutes the battle is over: 900 Hessians are captured, hundreds more flee in terror, their commander, Col. Rall, is killed, and the Continental army wins six desperately needed cannon, 40 horses and a vast array of much needed supplies.

Morale is greatly improved after this brilliant victory, and Washington wants to compound it by attacking Princeton next, but the men are too exhausted. And they had found the stores of rum. *(Continued on page 3)*

BUT WAIT!! ...that's not the end of this amazing story!!

When the British found out what happened in Trenton, they were stunned and ENRAGED, and immediately started moving troops to capture Washington's army and "bag the fox." Cornwallis left 1,200 troops in Princeton as a rear guard and proceeded to march towards Trenton with 5,500 troops.

During this march, the British encountered some American resistance intent on slowing their progress. The Americans gradually fell back, joining the main body of Washington's army along the main bank of the Assunpink Creek. Several attempts by the British to cross the creek were thwarted, but Cornwallis believed he had the Continental Army cornered, so decided to wait until the next day to finish the battle.

Washington, in the meantime, had another master plan in the works. He left 400 men in the camp to stoke bonfires and "make digging noises" so the British would think the Continental army remained just across the creek preparing defenses. In actuality, a mass evacuation was underway. The main body of the Continental army wrapped rags around their wagon wheels, horses' hooves, and feet and – in the middle of the night, with the aid of muddy roads quickly freezing – silently crept around the entire sleeping British contingent.

The next morning, the British attacked the American camp . . . only to find a few still-smoking bonfires—it was completely deserted! . . . By that time, Washington's army was miles away attacking and taking Princeton.

The results of these two bold strokes by Washington, and the ensuing victories, were enough to convince France to support the Patriots with badly needed supplies.

And the rest, as they say . . . is history.

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*So this Christmas season, as we share time with our families and friends over a holiday feast in the warmth of our lovely homes by blazing fireplaces, please take a few moments to read this story to your children and dwell on the hardships, the bitter cold, the lack of food and shelter, the supreme sacrifices our forefathers made with honor and commitment a little over 200 years ago to pursue a whisp of a dream we are all living today.*

*Merry Christmas and God, please continue to Bless America!*



**Patriot Children Christmas Book Ideas (at Amazon.com):**

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For the young ones:

Books written by Lynne Cheney, beautifully illustrated, telling the story of our early days: (\$15-20)

- *When Washington Crossed the Delaware*
- *We, the People*

~~~~~  
**For young readers: (\$6-7)**

*If you* series - about 60-70 pages with lots of pictures:

- *If you Traveled West in a Covered Wagon*
- *If you Traveled on the Underground Railroad*
- *If you Lived at the Time of the American Revolution*
- *If you Lived 100 Years Ago*
- *If you Sailed on the Mayflower*
- and several others . . .

~~~~~  
For older readers: (\$6-10)

Anything by Richard Peck-about 150 pages:[fantastic books even for adults!](#)

- *On the Wings of Heroes* about the beginning of WWII and civilian efforts
- *The River Between Us* about paddle boats on the Mississippi & the Civil War
- *Fair Weather* about the first World's Fair in Chicago-1893

John Paul Jones/The Pirate Patriot by Armstrong Sperry

The Barbary Pirates by C.S. Forester

The Captain's Dog by Roland Smith (291 pages), about the Lewis and Clark Expedition from the dog's point of view! Wonderful, entertaining adventure story for early-teens.



Journal of a Young Patriot Soldier

by Jory Farnsworth,
Age 15, Emmett, ID

December,

Cold. So cold. We are sitting here on the other side of the river of Trenton, where those fancy Hessians are. We have lost many brave men in the past couple weeks. Cold, hunger, desertion, injuries, malnutrition, they are all taking a toll on our ranks.

We are the lucky ones. A couple days ago we (the marines) raided a British supply ship and managed to get some boots and ammo. But the reds managed to push us off the ship with support from a frigate. It didn't help much because the boots we got were summer boots, not freeze your head off boots.

I met with General Washington. Lord is he a man that they should study. He is amazing. Tall, respectful, a leader, but most of all, a true American. He took me into his tent and sat me down. The general started by saying how proud he was to have boys our age fighting for the greatest cause. Then he told me that they had lost New York, but my father refused to let the reds advance any farther and stayed to slow them down.

He told me to write this down but keep it secret. General Washington-" We are going to go for an all or nothing attack on those German mercenaries. Several days before the continental contracts expire, we shall launch an attack. Our dedicated spies have reported that they don't think we will even bother because they believe we don't have the strength, mentally or physically. I'm afraid they might be right though."

I stood up and said, "Sir excuse me cutting you off. I can't speak for the entire army, but i can speak for my boys. This cold is like nothing we have ever had or experienced. We are frozen to the bone. But we all sooner die as Americans taking a stand. We refuse to leave and live under the Brits heel for the rest of our lives. The rest of the army may not be willing, but my men, my men are Americans and know it and Americans don't give up without a fight."

The General responded-" Calm down son." With a big grin. " I do not doubt your loyalty to this country. I want you and your southern boys in my boat when we land." "Yes sir."

The General-"Get the men ready."

"Yes sir."

The next day we were all there. We were all cold. Most even without boots. But the fire in our hearts that burned for our great nation seemed to melt the ice in our path.

His plan worked! Not one mishap. We only had two casualties, these two froze to death on the march here after the crossing. Our ammo and muskets were soaked, so Washington ordered us to use bayonets. Some would call us blood thirsty by the yells and shouts we let out when they yelled attack. But it was the love for our new country and the boys around us. We took 900 prisoners and killed their commanding officer.

Soon Cornwallis decided to get even and corner us and "bag the fox". He thought he had us. Ha. They decided to wait a day to attack, bad mistake. We left 400 soldiers there to make big fires and make it sound like we were digging in for the attack. I wish I could have seen his face when he stormed the camp to find not a soul there. We were up north taking Princeton. Those six cannon, 40 horses and supplies we took from the Germans really made a difference. Washington said that maybe with these two great victories France would help our cause.

I will write later I got to see if these British winter boots and clothes fit.

The 17th Amendment

By Gail Bartlett, 9-12 Education Committee



With the passage of the 17th Amendment, which allowed Senators to be elected by the general population of the state as opposed to being appointed by state legislatures, the states lost the right to be represented in the Senate and are no longer considered sovereign commonwealths at the federal level; far from what our Founders intended. The states now have no veto power over Congress when federal statutes violate their rights. Senators currently represent the people of the state “at large”, and with no one appointed to watch over states’ rights and sovereignty, they have deteriorated since the passing of the 17th amendment. As do House members, Senators now clamor to get federal funding to stay in good favor with their electorate, as opposed to solely focusing on what is best for the individual, sovereign states.

Like many topics that stirred debate at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the method of choosing representatives in the two Houses of Congress raged for weeks. The delegates from the small states threatened to leave the convention several times in protest because they believed their states would not be fairly represented in the union. Because of the contention between the small states and the large states regarding this issue, a special committee was chosen to address it. After much deliberation, the committee submitted a report that proposed one representative for each 30,000 people in the House and equal representation for each state in the Senate. The Representatives would be chosen by popular vote and two Senators per state would be appointed by state legislatures.

The Founders believed in this method of choosing representatives and trusted they had found something that had eluded political scientists thus far in history. They had read how Polybius, Locke and Montesquieu had searched for a balance in government between the *one* (someone to administer the law and lead during wartime), the *few* (those who would be the guardians of property and establish order), and the *many* (those who would represent the will of the people). In the end, The Founders believed they had achieved this; the *one* became the President, the *few* became the Senate, and the *many* became the House. With this thinking, it could be said that the 17th Amendment to our Constitution, which took away the right of the state legislature to appoint its Senators, essentially eliminated the *few* from The Founder’s formula.

The Founders believed that the anxieties and desires of individuals differed from that of the sovereign state, whose job it was to protect the sovereign individual. Therefore, the individual and the state stood on different grounds and should be represented accordingly. To keep government power in balance, The Founders felt strongly that the state legislatures should appoint the Senators, not the general population.

Charles C. Pinckney, a delegate from South Carolina wrote, “The Senate will be elected by the state legislatures, and represent the states in their political capacity; and thus each branch will form a proper and independent check on the other, and the legislative powers will be advantageously balanced.” They also thought it essential to secure the rights and sovereignty of the states. Fisher Ames, a Massachusetts assemblyman wrote, “...The Senators represent the sovereignty of the states; in the other house, individuals are represented...” and in response to what would happen if Senators were elected by individuals, he stated, “This would totally obliterate the federal features of the Constitution. What would become of the state governments, and on whom would devolve the duty of defending them against the encroachments of the federal government?”

(Continued on page 6)

So how did the 17th Amendment come about when The Founders were so clear in their position on this issue? As stated previously, there were those at the Constitutional Convention that thought the Senators should be elected by popular vote, but that idea didn't win out. During the Civil War, the people began to abandon their local loyalties, and the idea of a central government was being discussed. An amendment to change the way Senators were appointed was first introduced in 1828, but was defeated. Again in 1893, 1894, 1898, 1900 and 1902 the House passed a bill to change the appointment to a general election, but it was defeated in the Senate each time.

After a series of scandals in state legislatures, and some say, a push by special interest groups to gain more control over Senators, another bill made its way to the Senate in 1913. By this time, 29 states were already electing their Senators by popular vote, with their state legislatures ratifying the votes to appoint their Senators. As state legislatures became labeled by Progressives as too conservative, too far removed from popular Democratic influences, and too associated with big business, it became apparent the inevitable would happen. The Senate voted to pass the 17th Amendment, and it became part of our Constitution on April 8th, 1913.

Currently, state governments claim to address their citizens' concerns on education, health care, public safety, property rights, and employment among others. But these areas are primarily regulated, mandated and controlled in Washington DC. The creation of the Department of Education and the Environmental Protection Agency, the take-over of our state lands, the mandate of a minimum wage, and the latest Obamacare legislation are all examples of the federal government's over-reaching control that has occurred since the 17th Amendment was added to our Constitution.

Our Founders knew that state legislators, who live and work among the people of their state, would be the citizens' best representatives and would hold their Senators in Congress accountable, and in turn keep the federal government in check. The 17th Amendment took the primary responsibility of the local governments and moved it far away from the people it would affect. The local governments now have secondary authority to a large and ever-expanding federal government.

Whether or not there is enough momentum in our country to return to the ideas of The Founders and have this amendment repealed has yet to be seen. But states' rights have certainly incurred enough damage to justify a healthy debate.

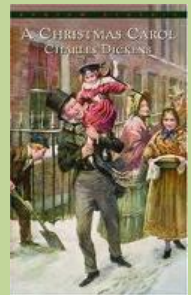
In politics as in religion, my tenets are few and simple. The leading one of which, and indeed that which embraces most others, is to be honest and just ourselves and to exact it from others, meddling as little as possible in their affairs where our own are not involved. If this maxim was generally adopted, wars would cease and our swords would soon be converted into reap hooks and our harvests be more peaceful, abundant, and happy.

~George Washington

Our citizenship in the United States is our national character. Our citizenship in any particular state is only our local distinction. By the latter we are known at home, by the former to the world. Our great title is AMERICANS..."

-- Thomas Paine

It was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed...



"God Bless Us, Every One!"

~ Charles Dickens

Emergency Preparedness:

APPLE SAUCE CAKE-IN-A-JAR

Ingredients:

- 1 large can (24 oz) of apple sauce, or 3 cups of peeled, chopped apples.
- 3 eggs
- 3 cups flour (all purpose)
- 1 cup corn oil
- 1 ½ cups chopped walnuts or hazelnuts, pecans, etc
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup raisins, currants, or chopped dates

Pre-heat oven to 325 degrees F.

Grease and flour 6 or 8 **wide mouth** PINT jars. Fill the jars about HALF full with cake batter. Bake at 325 for about 30 minutes, or until a tooth pick comes out dry. Remove the jars from the oven ONE at a time, wipe the rim, then cap with simmered canning lid and secure the ring. Cool the jars on a towel until they "ping" and seal. Store on a dark, cool shelf.

~from End Times Report
http://www.endtimesreport.com/cake_in_a_jar.html

Christmas in Colonial America

By Nicole Harms

This article was originally published in the Christmas 2004 edition of the "Colonial Williamsburg" journal.

What was a new father to do? Recently married to a wealthy widow, George Washington had an ambitious shopping list for his new step-children that Christmas of 1759. He wanted to get them "A bird on Bellows, A Cuckoo, A



turnabout parrot, A Grocers Shop, An Aviary, A Prussian Dragoon, 6 Small Books for Children, and other toys." His list could easily rival or better some Christmas shopping lists today. But George Washington's Christmas was not typical of Christmas in early American history.

Christmas in colonial America did not resemble the brightly lit festivities we celebrate today. In fact, many colonial religions banned celebrations of the holiday, claiming that it was tied to pagan traditions. The New England Puritans passed a law in Massachusetts that punished anyone who observed the holiday with a five-shilling fine. The Quakers treated Christmas Day as any other day of the year. The Presbyterians did not have formal Christmas Day services until they noticed that their members were heading to the English church to observe the Christmas services. This sparked the Presbyterian Church to start their own services.

It was the Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and Lutherans who introduced Christmas celebrations to colonial America, but they were still much different than today's festivities. December 25th actually began a season of festivities that lasted until January 6-- the "Twelve days of Christmas." January 6 was called Twelfth Day, and colonists found it was the perfect occasion for balls, parties, and other festivals.

Colonial Christmas was a holiday for adults, not a magical day for children. Christmas celebrations originated in the southern colonies, and activities included parties, hunts, feasts, and church services, all of which were adult activities. We do get some of our traditions from colonial days. For instance, the main decorations were holly, laurel, and garland, because these were the only plants that looked good during the middle of winter.

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Mistletoe was hung prominently, and couples would find their way under it at the Christmas balls.

The plantation mansions festively donned their decorations, and large feasts were prepared. The foodstuffs of colonial Christmas celebrations were similar to today's Christmas dinner. A ham, roast, or turkey was usually the main course, followed, of course, by pie and other dessert treats. The wealth of the family determined the extent of feasting. Christmas trees were not a part of the colonial Christmas celebrations, for they did not make it to the states until the middle 1800s. Christmas carols were sung during the season and were religious in nature. "Joy to the World" gained popularity in Virginia, as noted in many journals and historical records of the time.

The tradition of gift giving did show up in colonial America, with an interesting twist. People gave gifts to their dependents, whether it be servants, apprentices, or children. People did not return the gift giving to their superiors. And the gift giving was not the elaborate ordeal that it is today. Each recipient would most likely receive one special treasure. And the gifts were more treasured than they are today.

As more and more immigrants migrated to the New World, the Christmas holiday became more wide spread and incorporated traditions from around the world. The Christmas tree was brought to America from Germany, and Christmas cards came from London. Santa Claus himself is a combination of Saint Nicholas and Father Christmas from Dutch and English traditions. As many new people came into the country, Americans accepted and absorbed much of their culture, especially their holiday traditions. Today's Christmas holiday is an ever-changing, yet traditional day. Perhaps this combination of nostalgia and new ideas is why we love Christmas so much!

~Reprinted with permission from the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation



Let no pleasure tempt thee,
no profit allure thee, no
persuasion move thee, to do
anything which thou
knowest to be evil; so shalt
thou always live jollity; for
a good conscience is a
continual Christmas. -
~ Benjamin Franklin

Christmas is not a time nor a
season, but a state of mind. To
cherish peace and goodwill, to
be plenteous in mercy, is to
have the real spirit of Christmas.
~ Calvin Coolidge



... Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no child-like faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished...

From the Editorial Page of The New York Sun, written by Francis P. Church, September 21, 1897

History Quiz – Could you become a citizen?

Part 3 of 4. To be concluded next month.

U.S. Citizenship Test - Part 3	
51. According to the Constitution, a person must meet certain requirements in order to be eligible to become President. Name one of these requirements.	Must be a natural born citizen of the United States; must be at least 35 years old by the time he/she will serve; must have lived in the United States for at least 14 years.
52. Why are there 100 Senators in the Senate?	Two (2) from each state
53. Who selects the Supreme Court justice?	Nominated by the President and Approved by the Senate
54. How many Supreme Court justice are there?	Nine (9)
55. Why did the Pilgrims come to America?	For religious freedom
56. What is the head executive of a state government called?	Governor
57. What is the head executive of a city government called?	Mayor
58. What holiday was celebrated for the first time by the Americans colonists?	Thanksgiving
59. Who was the main writer of the Declaration of Independence?	Thomas Jefferson
60. When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?	July 4, 1776
61. What is the basic belief of the Declaration of Independence?	That all men are created equal
62. What is the national anthem of the United States?	The Star Spangled Banner
63. Who wrote the Star-Spangled Banner?	Francis Scott Key
64. Where does freedom of speech come from?	The Bill of Rights
65. What is a minimum voting age in the United States?	Eighteen (18)
66. Who signs bills into law?	The President
67. What is the highest court in the United States?	The Supreme Court
68. Who was the President during the Civil War?	Abraham Lincoln
69. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?	Freed many slaves
70. What special group advises the President?	The Cabinet
71. Which President is called the "Father of our country"?	George Washington
72. What Immigration and Naturalization Service form is used to apply to become a naturalized citizen?	N-400, Application to File Petition for Naturalization
73. Who helped the Pilgrims in America?	The American Indians (Native Americans)
74. What is the name of the ship that brought the Pilgrims to America?	The Mayflower
75. What are the 13 original states of the U.S. called?	Colonies

Young Patriots Corner -- Word Search

Name: _____ Date: _____

All About Santa Challenge- Word Search

How many vocabulary words can you find in this puzzle using the word bank below? Words go in many directions.

G	L	A	S	S	E	S	Q	M	S	R	U
P	R	E	D	S	U	I	T	E	Z	E	S
S	S	N	Z	S	L	J	I	K	R	E	R
F	A	O	G	O	J	K	O	U	V	E	S
F	C	R	B	P	O	Z	D	L	I	T	L
A	K	T	U	O	O	O	E	N	L	B	E
T	V	H	C	Y	L	H	D	O	E	Y	I
S	M	P	V	P	J	E	S	A	A	M	G
G	Y	O	H	W	E	T	R	K	M	K	H
H	S	L	I	R	T	D	O	I	R	C	E
L	H	E	A	J	A	I	L	Y	N	O	U
U	C	F	A	L	H	K	L	M	S	K	W

BEARD	GLASSES	NORTH POLE	SACK
COOKIES	HAT	RED SUIT	SLEIGH
ELVES	JOLLY	REINDEER	TOYS
FAT	MILK	RUDOLPH	WORKSHOP

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Young Patriot's Corner -- Christmas Ornament Paper Craft

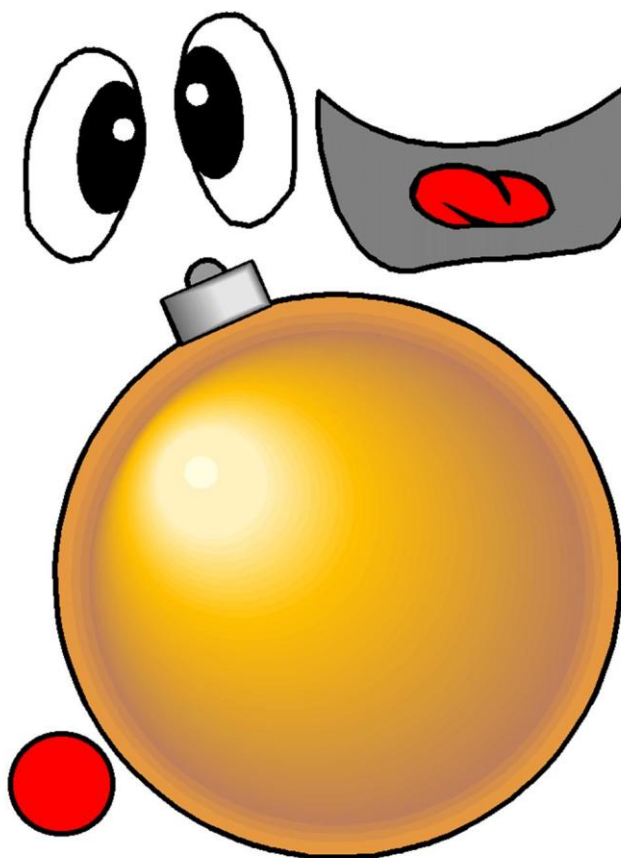
This paper ornament craft is very easy for young children to make and it turns out really cute. They love the little face on the ornament. The craft is made with a printer, paper, some crayons (or markers or paint), scissors and glue.



- Print out the template below.
- Cut out the template pieces (may require adult assistance, but they're pretty quick to cut out).
- Glue the face onto the ornament.
- You can add the child's name and the year onto the back.
- You can glue this craft onto large butcher paper or plain wrapping paper to make personalized gift wrap or onto the front of a large piece of construction paper to make a card.

Template

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http://www.dltk-holidays.com/t_template.asp?t=http://www.dltk-holidays.com/xmas/imag... 12/4/2010

Young Patriots Corner – Bedtime Story

Washington's Secret Spy

John Honeyman came to the American colonies as a soldier in the British army. He fought in the French-Indian war and when it ended, decided to stay in America. He married and bought a small farm outside Princeton, NJ.

In 1776, John was sympathetic to the American cause and eager to help. When he heard that the Continental Congress was meeting in Philadelphia, he decided to go there and present his proposal to George Washington. They met privately and John offered to spy on the British army. It would be easy for him to convince the British of his loyalty and he knew what to look for in a military camp.

Washington agreed only if it were kept a secret between the two of them. They worked out a plan for exchanging information so they could keep the secret. (A little known fact about Washington was that he was a master of deception and had spies everywhere.)

A big concern of John's was his family's safety. He would be known as a Tory and the patriots might try to do them harm while he was away. Washington wrote a letter and sealed it in an envelope. He told John to tell his wife that she was to keep it a secret and only use it if she were in danger. The letter stated that no harm was to come to Mary, her children, or the farm and was signed by General George Washington. Over the years that John served as a spy, she had to use the letter twice.

John went home and started building his reputation as a proud Tory and talked about how he had served in the British army. To build up trust with the British army, he started selling cattle to them. He carried his honorable discharge and a commendation from the British hero, General James Wolfe, as proof of his loyalty.

One evening in mid-December 1776, John was in the barn milking his cow when he heard someone whisper his name from the darkness beyond. He turned and a man moved from behind a stall. He told him he had a letter for him from General Washington. John took the letter and the man disappeared as silently as he had come. The letter told John that Washington's army was camped on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River and he needed information about the Hessians' camp at Trenton.

The next day, John rounded up 3 steers, packed some food and told his wife he would be gone for a while and not to worry. Halfway to Trenton, he tied one of the steers to a tree off the road and continued on to Trenton. John delivered the remaining two steers to the cattle pen in the Hessian camp and mentally counted the number of cattle and horses. The soldier on duty gave him a receipt and he took it to headquarters for payment. While waiting, he memorized the map on the wall showing the location of soldiers, officers, ammunition stores, cannon, gunpowder, saddles, muskets, food and clothing. He spent the night in the barracks and listened to the Hessians talk about their contempt for the starving American army and their plans for a big Christmas celebration.

Before leaving, he borrowed a whip so he could catch a steer that he said had gotten away – the same steer safely tied to a tree outside Trenton. Once he left the city, he rode back to the hidden steer and waited until he saw an American patrol approaching. He untied the steer and cracked the whip so it looked like he was chasing it. The patrol caught the steer and arrested him as a loyalist traitor.

They took him back to camp where they reported to General Washington. Washington told them that he wanted to interrogate this traitor personally.

After they were alone, they greeted each other warmly. John then pointed out on Washington's map the location of everything in the Hessian camp as well as roads in and out, fields and orchards around the town and areas that were impassable.

He told Washington about the low morale of the Hessians and how they were looking forward to a day off to drink and carouse on Christmas. John also told him all the information he had gathered about the British garrison in Princeton.

Washington and John planned his escape from the stockade and his return to the Hessian camp. Washington told him to tell them about the sorry condition of the American troops so they wouldn't expect them to attack. Using the information John had given him, Washington planned an attack on the Hessian camp. Once their conversation was finished, Washington ordered that John be escorted to a cell to be locked up with guards posted. By prearrangement, a "distraction" at the other end of camp suddenly erupted requiring all the men to rush over. John used the key given him by Washington to free himself and took off running towards the river. Sentries spotted him, took pursuit shouting that the prisoner was escaping and several musket balls tore through John's coat.. He dived into the frigid, ice swollen river and started swimming to the other shore as fast as he could go while musket balls whizzed over his head.

He climbed out of the water on the other side and collapsed on the bank, freezing and exhausted. Not too long after, British soldiers found him collapsed, clothes frozen stiff. They got him back to Trenton where he was interrogated by British officers. They recognized him from the steer transactions as he explained that he had been caught by the rebels and jailed but that he had escaped in a hail of musket balls. They looked at the holes in his coat the musket balls had made and accepted his account of the events as he then relayed the story about the sorry shape the Continental Army was in. John was thanked for his information and released to make his way home.

On Christmas day, Washington took his entire army -including horses and cannon -across the Delaware River. The weather was horrendous and the river treacherous. Raging winds combined with snow, sleet and rain to produce almost impossible conditions. Huge chunks of ice floated into the full boats and had to be knocked away to prevent capsizing. One third of the army further up the river was unable to get across in those treacherous conditions. That night just 2,400 men held the fate of a continent in their hands.

At 4 in the afternoon, Washington lead the first boat -Durham freight boat, 32 feet long, 8 feet wide. The last boat finished crossing at midnight. They then marched nine miles to Trenton. Most of the soldiers didn't have shoes and the entire army could be tracked by the bloody footprints left in the snow and ice. Patriots died of exhaustion and exposure during the march and were left along the route.

At 8 in the morning of Dec 26th, the ragtag army hit Trenton at both ends, catching the Hessian soldiers recovering from a day and a night of drinking, totally by surprise. Fierce fighting raged in the streets and when the Hessians retreated to an orchard, the Americans surrounded them and took 900 captives. The battle was over in less than 90 minutes.

The entire German garrison was either dead, captured or had deserted. Their commander and 300 Hessians had died. On the American side, only two officers and two enlisted men were wounded. There were no Americans dead from the battle, but two froze to death on the way to Trenton.

The victory electrified the American patriots throughout the colonies. Their faith in their quest for freedom blossomed as never before. If their sick and starving army could cross the Delaware at night in a snowstorm, walk nine miles barefooted, and defeat an entire Hessian command in 90 minutes, they could do whatever was required to win their independence and freedom!

Two weeks later, Washington followed up his victory with another successful attack on the British in Princeton.

Although not apparent at the time, these battles were a decisive turning point in the Revolution. The victories pulled the languishing Revolution out of the depths of despair — galvanized colonial support — shocked the British — and convinced potential allies such as France, Holland and Spain, that the Continental Army was a force to be reckoned with.

After the war ended, General Washington visited Mary Honeyman and told her about John's heroism. She and her children had endured ten years of insults and attacks from patriots who believed John to be a British loyalist. Word spread, and for the first time, John and his family were greeted in the streets with the reverence, warmth, and respect reserved for the true heroes of the American Revolution.

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