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The Revolutionary War in Woodbridge Township in a Child's Eyes

I am Anna Inslee and a few years ago, in 1777, we were right in the middle of the Revolutionary War. The colonies had declared their independence from Britain in 1776 in the Declaration of Independence, which stated that King George III was a tyrant and it listed all of the abuses the colonists suffered from. The "shot heard round the world" (The Battle of Lexington and Concord) was the beginning of the Revolutionary War. During the war, there were little skirmishes all around Woodbridge. I was a 12 year old girl living in the colony of New Jersey at the time, and what makes it worse is that this war was taking place inside of my family and friends' homes.

Maybe you have noticed my last name, "Inslee" well that is because I am the daughter of Elizabeth Inslee. The woman who was almost mutilated by a British soldier. My mother was just relaxing on her front porch when all of a sudden a British soldier walked by and saw a shiny diamond ring on her finger. The ring was given to her as a birthday present from one of her closest friends, and it meant very much to her. I was at my grandma Grace Moore Inslee's house when the incident happened. Her husband Jonathan Inslee was currently fighting in the War of Independence so I went to her house to keep her company. Just when the British soldier was about to cut off my mother's finger, an officer who knew my mother and I stopped the assault. I was so grateful that the officer had come, that British soldier had no reason to try and hurt my

mother, this memory makes me hate the British more than I already do. **(The Revolution: War Comes to Woodbridge)**

To give you some background information, let me tell you a very vivid memory I have from the summer of 1776. One of my good friends at the time was Eunice Bloomfield. Her father is Timothy Bloomfield, an early Fords patriot. It was my first time visiting her lovely house but the visit was much less than pleasant. As we were playing with our dolls and drinking tea, the British Red Coats broke into the house! We hid under one of the tables and saw them take the family Bible and brindle cow. I was an extremely brave 11 year old girl, so when Eunice insisted that we should follow them and get her family's stuff back, I agreed. We followed the British quietly, making sure we made no sound at all. After following the enemy for a few miles we had arrived on the shore of the Raritan River, and there like it was waiting for us was an old sow. We hopped in it and padded across the Arthur Kill, it was a bumpy ride but the show kept us afloat. Once we arrived on the other side we found the commander and told him that we really needed our stuff back because we came all this way just to get it. The soldier returned our belongings along with a British escort home. As the British escort was taking us home I was pretty scared, but I sat quietly and watched the sky change from a beautiful blue to a dark starry night. **(Timely Told Tales of Woodbridge Township, pg. 30)**

My brother, Isaac Inslee was always leaving the house late in the night, and if I'm being honest I was getting sick and tired of hearing the door open and close multiple times a night. I decided to follow him one Tuesday and he was heading straight for Timothy Bloomfield's house. I had been there before when I visited Timothy's daughter Eunice and a British soldier took her family's belongings. So many questions were running through my mind, I knew he was a patriot

but I didn't know he wanted to actually fight! He could get himself killed! I remembered that the 'Jersey Blues' only consisted of young men not yet serving in the army, but that didn't mean I couldn't hide in a bush outside the window and listen in. They were discussing (in secret) the progress of the war and were proposing means for harassing the enemy. After that day I continued to follow my brother every night, one night news was brought to the boys that a British war vessel had appeared at Amboy! My own brother proposed that an old swivel cannon should be taken down and fired at the ship, just to scare them off. The Jersey Blues including my brother decided to carry out his plan before dawn, they took the cannon down to Amboy and it was pulled by oxen. I ran so much that night that my feet were blue and purple, when I arrived where the British vessel was I prepared for the noise and the huge bright light from the cannon ball. The British were scared out of their minds and pulled up the anchor. I immediately ran home, scared to be caught by my awakening parents and the Jersey Blues themselves. **(Timely Told Tales of Woodbridge Township pg. 29)**

On January 6, 1777 the British realized they were being beaten by the Patriots so they sent even more troops to Woodbridge to receive some assistance from the Hessians, German soldiers that worked for the crown. The Hessians were stationed in Woodbridge and were staying in place, it was absolutely terrifying! I would occasionally see them walking around when I would be playing in the bushes. They must have been defying orders because I don't think anyone was supposed to see them. Women these days had to protect themselves while the men of the house were at war. I was left home alone while our mother was on a very long trip and my senses were telling me to leave the house, since Hessians would occasionally break into homes. I headed to Grace Lacky's house, she was so smart and knew exactly what to do to keep the

Hessians away. My mother personally knew Grace Lucky because they went to school with each other when they were little and I was allowed to go to her house whenever I pleased. To make sure that the both of us were safe, Grace Lucky painted the words "Small-pox!" on her door. The Hessians soon translated the word and stayed away from her house. I understand where they are coming from, I wouldn't want to catch small-pox either, even if it was imaginary. **(The**

Revolution: War Comes To Woodbridge)

On April 16, 1777 was the first time I saw Janet Gage. She was known, or maybe just her husband because he was a soldier, but everyone soon found out that he was actually a Tory and betrayed the colonies. When he left she was able to confiscate his belongings along with his war clothes and gear. One day as I was walking down an old abandoned road in Woodbridge and I saw her passing an empty house, and through a crack in the window I could see a Hessian soldier! What surprised me was that there were no other Hessians around, it seemed very peculiar so I stayed around to see what Janet Gage was going to do. Janet Gage went to her home and dressed in her husband's clothing and carried a firelock with her just for protection. She then took the Hessian soldier and took away all of his weapons, I tagged close behind making sure not to step on any tree branches. Janet soon found the patrol guard of the New Jersey Regiment and gave the prisoner to him. It was nice to see justice served, after all of those evil and corrupt British and Hessian soldiers tormented us. **(The History of Woodbridge, New Jersey -Ruth Wolk Woodbridge 1970)**

This shows that Woodbridge went through a huge struggle during the Revolutionary War, whether it was an assault or break in, things were tough. You had to keep your eyes wide open, you never knew if a British soldier was going to attack. All I want everyone to know is that if

you never let what life is throwing at you hold you back, you will be fine. It doesn't matter if you aren't a man, soldier, or adult! You can make a big change in your community during any difficult time.

Bibliography

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