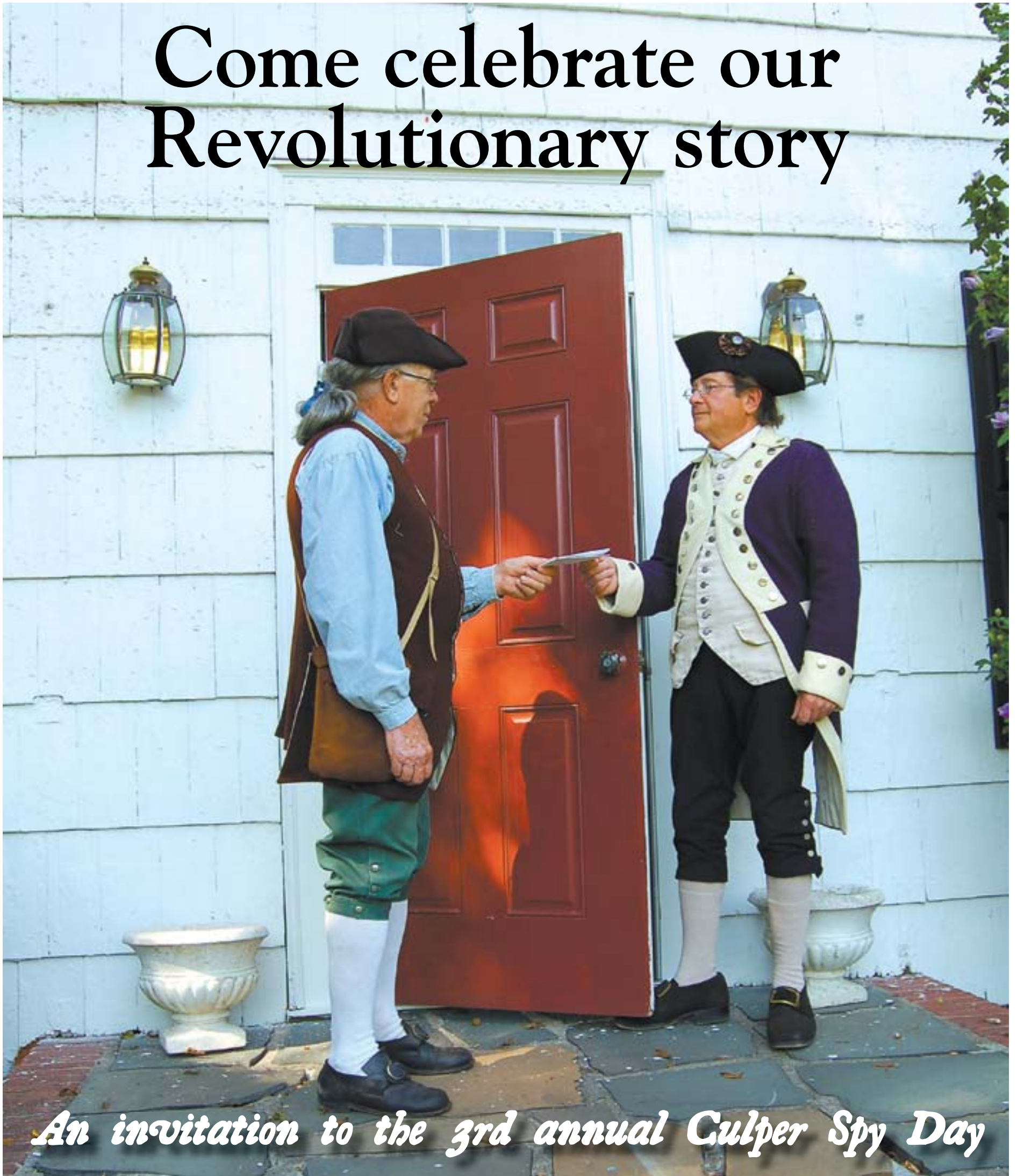


Come celebrate our Revolutionary story



An invitation to the 3rd annual Culper Spy Day

Inside: Event Guide and Map

VISIONS OF CULPER SPY DAY 2016



Photos by Talia Amorosano

CULPER SPY DAY

Third annual Culper Spy Day celebrates our Revolutionary story

BY JENNA LENNON

'Lucky is the child who listens to a story from an elder and treasures it for years.'

— Barbara Russell,

Brookhaven Town Historian

Margo Arceri first heard about George Washington's Setauket spies from her Strong's Neck neighbor and local historian, Kate W. Strong, in the early 1970s. Arceri lights up when talking about her favorite spy, Anna Smith Strong. "Kate W. Strong, Anna Smith Strong's great-great-granddaughter, originally told me about the Culper Spy Ring when I used to visit her with my neighbor and Strong descendant Raymond Brewster Strong III. One of her stories was about Nancy (Anna Smith Strong's nickname) and her magic clothesline. My love of history grew from there," she said.

Four years ago Arceri approached the Three Village Historical Society's President Steve Hintze and the board about conducting walking, biking and kayaking tours while sharing her knowledge of George Washington's Long Island intelligence during the American Revolution.

Today, Arceri runs Tri-Spy Tours in the Three Village area, which follows in the actual footsteps of the Culper Spy Ring. "I wanted to target that 20- to 60-year-old active person," she said. "I have to thank AMC's mini-series 'Turn' because 80 percent of the people who sign up for the tour do so because of that show," she laughs.

It was during one of those tours that Arceri came up with the idea of having a Culper Spy Day. "Visiting places like the Brewster House, which is owned by The Ward Melville Heritage Organization, the grave site of genre artist William Sidney Mount at the Setauket Presbyterian Church cemetery (whose paintings are at The Long Island Museum) and the Country House, which every one of the spies visited," Arceri thought "there has to be a day designated to celebrating all these organizations in the Three Village and surrounding areas; where each of us can give our little piece of the story and that's how Culper Spy Day developed."

After a successful two-year run, the third annual Culper Spy Day will be held on Saturday, Sept. 16 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. offering self-guided tours of 15 locations.

One event you won't want to miss is the display of historic letters at Stony Brook University's Special Collections and University Archives located on the second floor of the Frank Melville Jr. Memorial Library.

Last year more than 60 people came to see two of George Washington's letters during the event. This year, they're hoping for an even bigger turnout with four handwritten letters that illustrate the "history and impact of the Culper Spy Ring," according to head director Kristen Nyitray.

The letters, which were penned by Nathaniel Woodhull, James Jay and Washington, "underscore Setauket's and the Spy Ring's pivotal role in the framing of our country," she said.

The first of Washington's letters, dated Sept. 24, 1779, addresses issues regarding Robert Townsend, whose code name was



Photo by Jenna Lennon

Head of Special Collections and University Archives at Stony Brook University, Kristen Nyitray, with a letter by Nathaniel Woodhull, one of four letters on view during Culper Spy Day

Samuel Culper Jr. It was received just a few days later, as noted on the letter, by Washington's spymaster, Benjamin Tallmadge.

The letter offers methods of gathering intelligence, such as the mention of using "the stain" or the invisible ink believed to be created by James Jay, and the use of code names and numbers. During the war, Washington didn't know the identities of the spies operating within the spy ring, so they communicated with code names and numbers to assure complete secrecy.

At this point in history, the spy ring was "still vetting how best to obtain information without detection," said Nyitray.

Almost a year later, on Sept. 16, 1780, Washington wrote to Tallmadge again, this time very favorable of Culper Jr., offering him public awareness of his actions or compensation for his efforts. The letter states, "I shall be ready to recommend him to the public, if public employ shall be his aim, and if not, that I shall think myself bound to represent his conduct in the light it deserves, and procure him a compensation of another kind."

However, Townsend quite literally took his secret to the grave. The existence of the Culper Spy Ring was not made public until the 1930s when historian Morton Pennypacker acknowledged the similarities between Townsend's handwriting and that of Culper Jr.

Obtaining Washington's letters from Christie's New York was a "collaborative effort" by the university, the Three Village Historical Society, The Ward Melville Heritage Organization and the Raynham Hall Museum.

In Woodhull's March 4, 1776, letter, he provides Major General Philip Schuyler updates in regards to officers, battalions and supplies while Jay's Jan. 9, 1808, letter addresses an unnamed general asking for compensation for his development of a "secret mode of correspondence," presumably the invisible ink Washington and Townsend used to communicate decades prior.

Nyitray has been contacted from people all over the country looking to make an appointment to view the letters. "I receive calls and emails every week about the letters," she

said. With the Culper Spy Ring at the forefront of the popular TV show, AMC's "Turn," it has "brought positive attention and awareness to our region's history" and "taken on a life of its own ... the university provides an opportunity for all to engage in history through the letters, which is a much different experience than reading or watching a television program about it."

Arceri's favorite part of the day is "seeing all these different organizations coming together as a whole. It really is our Revolutionary story," she said. "Everywhere you turn in the Three Villages you are looking at an artifact, and as the historical society believes, the community is our museum and that I would really love to put on the forefront of people's minds."

The third annual Culper Spy Day has been made possible through the efforts of The Three Village Historical Society, The Long Island Museum, The Ward Melville Heritage Organization, Tri-Spy Tours, Stony Brook University Special Collections, Emma S. Clark Memorial Library, Frank Melville Memorial Park, Three Village Community Trust, Caroline Church of Brookhaven, Setauket Presbyterian Church, Incorporated Village of Port Jefferson (Drowned Meadow Cottage), History Close at Hand, the Country House Restaurant, Times Beacon Record News Media, Raynham Hall, the Smithtown Historical Society, Discover Long Island, Ketcham Inn of the Moriches and Sagtikos Manor in Bay Shore.

Tickets, which are \$25 adults, \$5 children ages 6 to 12, may be purchased in advance at the Three Village Historical Society (TVHS), 93 North Country Road, Setauket, by calling 631-751-3730 or by visiting www.tvhs.org. Veterans and children under the age of 6 are free.

Tickets may be picked up at the TVHS from Sept. 11 to 15. At that time, visitors will receive a bracelet and a copy of the Culper Spy Day map with all event listings and include access to 15 Culper Spy Ring locations. If available, tickets on the day of the event may be purchased at the historical society.



Sketch by Col. John Trumbull

Benjamin Tallmadge, c. 1781, in his dragoon (cavalry) uniform

HISTORY CLOSE AT HAND

BY BEVERLY C. TYLER

What was the situation on Long Island during the Revolutionary War? Why do we know so little about the Setauket-based Culper Spy Ring? Who were they? What did they accomplish? Well! The Setauket spies were just commonplace men and women who grew up in a small farming community on the north shore of Long Island — ordinary people who did extraordinary things. We begin our story with the youngest of the Culper spies.

BENJAMIN TALLMADGE, organizer and leader of the Revolutionary War Setauket Spies, was born in Setauket on Feb. 25, 1754. He was the son of the minister of the Setauket Presbyterian Church. The home where he was born is still standing in Setauket at the end of Runs Road. Tallmadge grew up in Setauket, attended school here with his close friend Abraham Woodhull and, like many residents of Suffolk County, he grew to have a healthy distrust for British authorities in New York. A classmate of Nathan Hale, Tallmadge graduated from Yale in 1773 and, like Hale, taught school for a time in Connecticut.

When the Revolution began, Tallmadge enlisted in the Continental Army and was soon awarded the rank of major. Later, General Washington appointed him head of his secret service and tasked Tallmadge with establishing an espionage network against the British in New York City. To conduct this vital undercover operation on Long Island, Tallmadge chose his boyhood friend Abraham Woodhull. Together they chose other friends and neighbors from Setauket; men and women who could be trusted and who would prove to be so discreet in all their contacts that their identity would not be discovered until the 20th century.

Major Tallmadge, referred to by the code name John Bolton, not only led Washington's secret service but was also in most of the battles involving the Continental Army in the northern states. Among his many exploits was the capture of Fort St. George at Mastic in November 1780. After the war was over, Tallmadge retired from the Army with the rank of colonel. In 1784 he married Mary, eldest daughter of General William Floyd of Mastic — Long Island's signer of the Declaration of Independence. Tallmadge lived in Litchfield, Connecticut, and represented that state in Congress for 16 years. He died in Litchfield in 1835 at the age of 81.

CULPER SPIES continued on page C6



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Margo Arceri: *Your Culper Spy Ring Guide and Historian*


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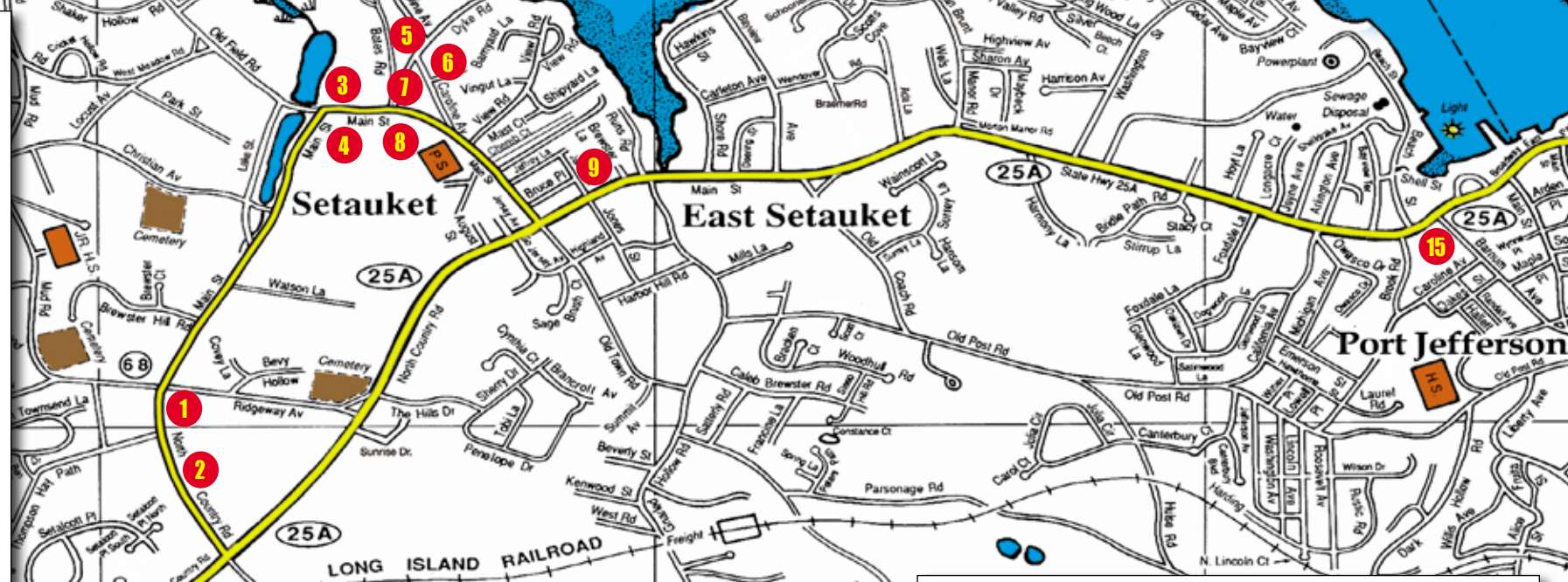


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The Reboli Center exhibits and Design Shop celebrate the artist Joe Reboli as well as the creative talent that abounds from coast to coast. The Design Shop features artisan crafts, and Shop purchases support the programs of the Center.

Culper Spy Day Map


1. Three Village Historical Society, 93 North Country Road, Setauket
2. Thompson House, 91 North Country Road, Setauket
3. Frank Melville Memorial Park, 1 Old Field Road, Setauket
4. Patriot's Rock Historic Site, Main Street, Setauket (across from post office)
5. Caroline Church of Brookhaven and Cemetery, 1 Dyke Road, Setauket
6. Setauket Presbyterian Church and Cemetery, 5 Caroline Ave., Setauket
7. Setauket Village Green, Main Street, Setauket (across from library)
8. Emma S. Clark Memorial Library, 120 Main St., Setauket
9. Joseph Brewster House, 18 Runs Road & Route 25A, Setauket
10. Country House Restaurant, 1175 North Country Road, Stony Brook
11. Long Island Museum, 1200 Route 25A, Stony Brook
12. Stony Brook Grist Mill, 100 Harbor Road, Stony Brook
13. Stony Brook Walking Tours, 111 Main St., Stony Brook
14. Stony Brook University, 100 Nicolls Road, Stony Brook
15. Drowned Meadow Cottage Museum, corner of West Broadway and Barnum Ave., Port Jefferson



Auxiliary Sites:

- A. Sagtikos Manor, 677 Montauk Highway, Bay Shore
- B. Raynam Hall Museum, 20 West Main St., Oyster Bay
- C. Northport Historical Society, 215 Main St., Northport
- D. Ketcham Inn, 81 Main St., Center Moriches
- E. Manor of St. George, Neighborhood Road, Shirley
- F. William Floyd Estate, 245 Park Drive, Mastic Beach

See page C8




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It was the Loyalist Nehemiah Marks surveillance that alerted British Army Officer, Major General Oliver Delancy in a covert correspondence that Drowned Meadow Patriots, Phillips and Nathaniel Roe were aiding Caleb Brewster with goods and intelligence.



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CULPER SPIES

Continued from page C3

ABRAHAM WOODHULL, a descendant of Richard Woodhull, an early Brookhaven Town leader and magistrate, was born on his family's farm in Setauket, overlooking Little Bay, in 1750. He was a farmer by occupation. Probably because of his elder brother Richard's death at the early age of 32, Abraham inherited the family home (circa 1690) and farm. The land had been in the family since Richard Woodhull came to Setauket, sometime between 1655 and 1657.

From the beginning of the Setauket spies in 1778, Woodhull was in charge of day-to-day operations. His code name was Samuel Culper and the spy operation came to be known as the Culper Ring. Woodhull was referred to as Samuel Culper Sr. after he recruited Robert Townsend, who became known as Culper Jr. Not only did Woodhull direct field activities, but he also risked his life countless times by personally collecting information in New York and on western Long Island.

Woodhull was responsible for evaluating the reports received from all sources, determining what was to go forward to Washington's headquarters and seeing that the dispatches were carried across the Sound by Caleb Brewster. His health was poor, partly caused by stress as he lived in constant fear of discovery.

After the war, Woodhull became the first judge of Suffolk County. He died Jan. 23, 1826, and his grave in the Setauket Presbyterian Church graveyard was marked by the Mayflower Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1936.



Image from Beverly Tyler
Mural by Vance Locke, 1951, depicts Abraham Woodhull, left, bringing secret messages to Caleb Brewster.

CALEB BREWSTER was perhaps the most bold and daring of the spies. He was the only one of the group that the British had definitely identified as a spy. When the Revolutionary War broke out, Brewster enlisted in the local militia.

After the August 1776 battle of Long Island in Brooklyn, Brewster joined the Continental Army with the rank of a lieutenant of artillery. He returned to Setauket in August of 1777 as part of the attacking force from Connecticut that fought in the battle of Setauket. In November 1780 he was one of the officers under Major Benjamin Tallmadge who captured Fort St. George at Mastic. They returned to Connecticut with the entire complement of the fort captured.

In spite of his service designation, one of Brewster's tasks throughout the war was to command a fleet of whaleboats operating from the Connecticut shore against British and Tory shipping on Long Island Sound (known as the Devil's Belt).

CULPER SPIES continued on page C7

CULPER SPY DAY

Let's take a walk through history

Visit Revolutionary War spy locations on Culper Spy Day

BY BEVERLY C. TYLER

It happened in Setauket! A clandestine operation, to provide General Washington with information on the activity of the British on Long Island and in New York City, existed in Setauket during the Revolutionary War. You too can explore the sites that figured in the operation of the Culper Spy Ring, as it was known.

On Saturday, Sept. 16, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., many historic locations in the Three Villages and the surrounding areas dating as far back as 1655 will open their doors to the public and a local restaurant will offer a spy-themed lunch menu as we celebrate the third annual Culper Spy Day — Our Revolutionary Story. Start at whichever location you like and go at your own pace.

Ticket holders will be entitled to admission to the following locations and events:



1. THREE VILLAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 93 North Country Road, Setauket. Located in the circa 1800 Bayles-Swezey house. Here you can purchase tickets for Culper Spy Day and obtain a copy of the story of the Culper Spy Ring. Enjoy the interactive Culper SPIES! and Chicken Hill exhibits, take part in an invisible ink project, view Anna Strong's clothesline and attend a book signing by award-winning adult novelist and nonfiction author Selene Castrovilla.

Learn about local walk, bike and kayak tours from Margo Arceri of Tri-Spy Tours.

The Ladies of Raynham Hall Museum in Oyster Bay will be on hand to discuss the role of Robert Townsend (Culper Jr.), one of George Washington's most important spies during the Revolutionary War, and will be giving out free admission tickets to Raynham Hall Museum, good for Sept. 16 and 17. The Brookhaven Militia will be camped out on the field next door and present drills, musket loading and firing and demonstrations of camp life throughout the day. The gift shop will also be open. 631-751-3730.



2. THOMPSON HOUSE, 91 North Country Road, Setauket. Built in 1709, this five-room saltbox farmhouse was home to five generations of the Thompson family. According to

his diaries, Dr. Samuel Thompson treated members of the Culper Spy Ring, including Abraham Woodhull and Austin Roe. Samuel and his father Jonathan Thompson were members of the Colonial Militia in 1775. After the British occupation of Long Island, Samuel, Jonathan and their families became refugees in Connecticut. Docents will conduct ongoing tours of the home and Dr. Thompson's Healing Garden, a collection of herbal remedies from Native American, African American and Colonial American cultures. 631-751-2244.



3. FRANK MELVILLE MEMORIAL PARK/GRIST MILL, 1 Old Field Road, Setauket. Walk past the post office into the park until you come to the 1937 reproduction of the Setauket Grist Mill. Here you will hear from docents the story of the construction of the park and the history of the grist mills that operated in Setauket from the 1660s until the 1930s grinding the wheat, corn and other grains of Setauket farmers. 631-689-6146.



4. PATRIOTS ROCK HISTORIC SITE, Main Street, Setauket. This glacial erratic boulder is said to be the location of the Battle of Setauket on Aug. 22, 1777. About 150 Patriot soldiers, under General Parsons, crossed Long Island Sound and attacked the fort erected around the Setauket Presbyterian Church. Under the direction of Captain Caleb Brewster, the Patriots mounted a cannon next to the boulder. Loyalist forces under Colonel Richard Hewlett of Queens, successfully defended the fort. Stop here to meet representatives from the Three Village Community Trust who will discuss the importance of Patriot's Rock and its local and environmental history. 631-689-0225.

5. CAROLINE CHURCH OF BROOKHAVEN AND CEMETERY, 1 Dyke Road, Setauket. Built in 1729, this timber frame building has maintained its Colonial appearance. Now an Episcopal Church, during the Revolutionary War the Caroline Church was Anglican, and a Colonial extension of the Church of England. During Long Island's more than seven years of occupation, American Loyalists, British officers and soldiers worshiped here. The graveyard contains the remains of seven Patriot soldiers as well as soldiers from World Wars I and II. Enter the church for a guided tour and don't miss the church's History Center

featuring an exhibit on the church and the community in the 1800s on the lower level of the Parish House. 631-941-4245.



CAROLINE CHURCH CARRIAGE SHED

The head of the Culper Spy Ring, Abraham Woodhull, portrayed by historian Beverly C. Tyler, will be stationed at the Caroline Carriage Shed on Dyke Road. Constructed in 1887, this unique structure, the only remaining example of a seven-bay shed built exclusively for horses and carriages, is currently undergoing a stabilization/restoration project, with a matching grant from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation.

The previous building on the site was the 18th-century one-room schoolhouse that was attended by Abraham Woodhull from the age of 6 (1756) to the age of 13 (1763) along with many Setauket spies and spy contacts including Anna Smith Strong, Selah Strong, Caleb Brewster, Austin Roe, Nathaniel Roe, Phillips Roe and Benjamin Tallmadge. Mr. Woodhull will talk about his childhood, his farming and spy activities and will also be glad to answer any questions about his life and times. 631-941-4245.



6. SETAUKET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND CEMETERY, 5 Caroline Ave., Setauket. The previous church (1714-1812) was surrounded by British fortifications during 1777. The fort was under the command of Loyalist Commander Col. Richard Hewlett. The present building dates from 1812. The minister before and during the Revolutionary War was Reverend Benjamin Tallmadge, father of Major Benjamin Tallmadge, soldier, patriot and head of General Washington's secret service. Come into the church sanctuary to hear from docents about this church that served the congregation from the 1660s.

CULPER SPY DAY



The graves of Mary and Abraham Woodhull

Leaving the church, walk to the left, go through the gate into the cemetery, turn left alongside the church and then left behind the church and right to the brick-encased memorial marker that is the grave site of Abraham Woodhull of George Washington's Spy Ring. Docents will give more details about some of the famous people who are the permanent residents of the cemetery, which dates to the founding of Setauket and the Town of Brookhaven in 1655. 631-941-4271.



7. SETAUKET VILLAGE GREEN, Main Street, Setauket. Following the end of the Revolutionary War and the departure of all the British and Loyalist forces from Long Island in 1783, the residents of Setauket held an ox roast on the Setauket Village Green in honor of their native son Benjamin Tallmadge, son of the Setauket Presbyterian Church minister, Benjamin Tallmadge, and General Washington's intelligence chief. Tallmadge was responsible for the design and implementation of the Setauket-based Culper Spy Ring that provided Washington with complete and accurate details on British and Loyalist activities in New York City and on Long Island.

The 3rd New York Regiment of the Brigade of the American Revolution will be on the village green to entertain you with drills, musket loading and firing and demonstrations of camp life throughout the day. 631-751-3730.



8. EMMA S. CLARK MEMORIAL LIBRARY, 120 Main St., Setauket. Circa 1892. The library will present a concert by Linda Russell, Songs of 18th Century America, on the library lawn from 11 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 2 p.m. Bring a folding chair or blanket. There will also be a children's colonial craft program from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., as well as a display case of Revolutionary War soldiers' equipment in the library's lobby. Learn about the library's Culper Spy Ring website and check out related materials at the information tent adjacent to the front entrance. Tickets are not required for library activities. 631-941-4080.



9. JOSEPH BREWSTER HOUSE, 18 Runs Road, corner of Route 25A, Setauket. Circa 1655, it is considered to be the oldest house in the Town of Brookhaven. During the Revolutionary War, the house was owned by Joseph Brewster, first cousin of Culper Spy Caleb Brewster and neighbor of the ring's founder, Benjamin Tallmadge. In order to preserve his home and property from confiscation, Joseph Brewster operated a tavern out of the home, hosting the occupying British forces. Docents will lead tours of the house throughout the day while 18th-century cook and living historian Diane Fish will be serving up some tasty and authentic treats from America's past on the front lawn. 631-751-2244.



10. COUNTRY HOUSE RESTAURANT, 1175 N. Country Road, Stony Brook. Built in 1710, the restaurant is one of the most historic buildings on Long Island. It was historically used as a stagecoach drop-off and a town meeting place. On Culper Spy Day the restaurant will serve up a special spy-themed menu from noon to 4 p.m. Adult meals will range from \$12 to \$17. Children's meals, which includes a soft drink, are \$10.95. Kids can decode a secret spy code and win a free dessert (everyone's a winner). Call 631-751-3332 for reservations.

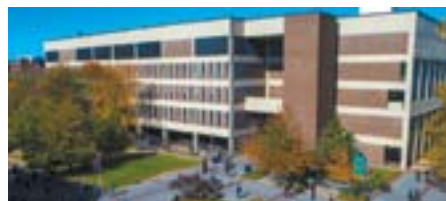


11. LONG ISLAND MUSEUM, 1200 Route 25A, Stony Brook. The museum's vast collection of art and historic artifacts features more than 200 horse-drawn vehicles including two owned by Revolutionary War hero Peter Gansevoort, grandfather of author Herman Melville. Tour the museum's galleries as well as the outbuildings and gardens and view Revolutionary War artifacts in the Visitors Center. Blacksmithing demonstrations will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and a special lecture by John G. Staudt, adjunct assistant professor of history at Hofstra University, titled "The Terrible Force of War: Eastern Long Island in the American Revolution," will be at 2 p.m. in the Carriage Museum's Gillespie Room. 631-751-0066.



12. STONY BROOK GRIST MILL, 100 Harbor Road, Stony Brook. Long Island's most completely equipped and working mill, the Stony Brook Grist Mill, circa 1751, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. During the Revolutionary War, occupying British forces confiscated much of the grain to provision their own troops. A miller will be on hand to demonstrate the workings of the mill from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 631-689-3238.

13. STONY BROOK VILLAGE WALKING TOURS, 111 Main St., Stony Brook. Costumed docents will guide visitors on a walking tour of historic Main Street. Points of interest will include the Stony Brook Village Center, The Jazz Loft, The Three Village Inn and the Hercules Pavillion. Tours will depart from in front of the Stony Brook Post Office at 1:30 and 2:30 p.m. 631-751-2244.



14. STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY, Frank Melville Jr. Memorial Library, 2nd floor, Room E-2320, 100 Nicolls Road, Stony Brook. SBU's Special Collections will hold an Open House from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. View two original Culper Spy Ring letters authored and signed by George Washington in 1779 and 1780, a 1776 letter written by General Nathaniel Woodhull to Major General Philip Schuyler and a letter by James Jay, the inventor of an invisible ink used by Washington. 631-632-7119.



15. DROWNED MEADOW COTTAGE MUSEUM, corner of West Broadway and Barnum Avenue, Port Jefferson. The Revolutionary War era Roe House, now known as the Drowned Meadow House, was originally constructed circa 1755; and Phillips Roe, a member of the Culper Spy Ring along with his brothers Nathaniel and Austin, was known to have lived there. Exhibition on view will be Patriots Stand as portrayed by Currier and Ives, and costumed docents will lead tours of the house throughout the day. 631-473-4724.

CULPER SPIES

Continued from page C6

This, together with his knowledge of the Long Island shoreline, his work as a mate on sailing ships and his boyhood association with Benjamin Tallmadge, made him an ideal choice to carry intelligence back and forth across the Sound.

It was Caleb Brewster who most likely gave Benjamin Tallmadge the idea to use Setauket as a center for intelligence operations. Beginning in 1777, Brewster gathered information on the activities of British and Loyalist units on Long Island from his friends, relatives and other contacts and gave the mostly verbal information to his boyhood friend Tallmadge.

Once Tallmadge formalized the activities of the Culper Spy Ring, Brewster took his whaleboat crews to Setauket and neighboring coves to bring messages back to Fairfield, Connecticut, for Major Benjamin Tallmadge to deliver to General Washington. Brewster also made numerous trips with his whaleboat crews into Long Island Sound to attack British and Loyalist ships. This activity also provided opportunities for gathering intelligence for General Washington.



Photo from Bev Tyler

Anna Smith Strong and her magic clothesline as portrayed by Donna Smith

ANNA SMITH STRONG, the great-granddaughter of Setauket's lord of the manor, Colonel William (Tangier) Smith, was a strong and ardent Patriot. She devised, according to a folklore story first detailed by Morton Pennypacker in his book "George Washington's Spies," a wash line signal system to identify for Abraham Woodhull the whereabouts of Caleb Brewster's whaleboat, so that Woodhull could find him and pass along the messages meant for General Washington.

As detailed by Pennypacker and embellished by Strong family historian Kate Strong in her "True Tales," to avoid detection by the British it was necessary for Brewster to hide his boat in six different places, each identified by a number. "Nancy" Strong, as she was known by friends and neighbors, hung her laundry from the line in a code formation to direct Woodhull to the correct location. A black petticoat was the signal that Brewster was nearby, and the number of handkerchiefs scattered among the other garments on the line indicated the meeting place. Using the most ordinary of personal items and improvising on the most ordinary of personal tasks, Anna made an extraordinary contribution to the cause of freedom.

Anna Strong lived on Strong's Neck with her six children throughout the war. Her husband, Selah Strong, was confined in a New York prison in January, 1778, for "Surreptitious correspondence with the enemy."

CULPER SPIES continued on page C8

Auxiliary Revolutionary War and Culper Spy Ring sites to visit

A. SAGTIKOS MANOR, 677 Montauk Highway, Bay Shore. Setauket's Jonathan Thompson purchased the house and 700 acres for his youngest son Isaac in 1758 for 1,200 British pounds. Isaac married Mary Gardiner from East Hampton in 1772 and the couple immediately more than doubled the size of the original house by adding nine new rooms.

Judge Isaac Thompson was a prominent member of Islip Town government before and after the American Revolution and later a member of the New York State Assembly. Isaac is also believed to have been a spy for General Washington, working through members of the Culper Spy Ring. The estate served as headquarters for the British Army on Long Island for a brief time during the Revolutionary War. President George Washington stayed there during his tour of Long Island in 1790.

The manor is open through September on Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 3:30 p.m. (last tour begins at 3:30 p.m.). Call 631-854-0939 or visit www.sagtikosmanor.org for fees and more information.

B. RAYNHAM HALL MUSEUM, 20 West Main St., Oyster Bay. Home of George Washington's intelligence operative, Robert Townsend (code name Samuel Culper Jr.) who spent the war in New York City (Manhattan). Purchased by Robert's father Samuel around 1740, this home tells the story of the Townsend family during the Revolutionary War. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. For admission fees and other information, call 516-922-6808 or visit www.raynhamhallmuseum.org.

C. NORTHPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 215 Main St., Northport. Second Lieutenant Henry Scudder, a resident of a large farm near Crab Meadow, was captured by the British after the Battle of Long Island in August of 1776. He was paroled in a prisoner exchange and fled to Connecticut rather than take an oath of allegiance to the British Crown. From Connecticut, he planned and led numerous raids on Long Island, becoming a courageous and elusive spy for the Continental Army.

Scudder often penetrated enemy lines, sending back important information on troop movements. During one spying mission on British held Fort Slongo, Scudder and Bryant Skidmore drew a plan of the fort and sent it to General Washington. Utilizing the map, 100 American raiders rowed across the Sound and launched a successful attack on the fort in 1781. Only one American was wounded, Sgt. Elijah Churchill, who became the first recipient of the Purple Heart. Hours are Tuesdays through Sundays from 1 to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call 631-757-9859 or visit www.northporthistorical.org.

D. KETCHAM INN, 81 Main St., Center Moriches. The historic Terrill-Havens-Terry-Ketcham Inn during the Revolutionary War was the home and tavern of Benjamin Havens, a spy for the Culper Spy Ring, who



SPECIAL THANKS TO THE CULPER SPY DAY COMMITTEE FOR ALL THEIR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION.

married Abigail Strong of Setauket, sister of Selah Strong. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison lodged here in 1791 while on a trip to visit Gen. William Floyd of Mastic. The beautifully restored Ketcham Inn is open for tours by appointment only. \$15 per person. For additional information, call 631-878-1855 or visit www.ketchaminn.org.

E. MANOR OF ST. GEORGE (FORT ST. GEORGE), Neighborhood Road, Shirley. This was the south shore home of William "Tanger" Smith who purchased the land from Native Americans in 1691. Smith's north shore home on Little Neck (now Strong's Neck) was called St. George's Manor to differentiate it from his other home. Culper spy Anna Smith Strong is a direct descendant of William Smith.

During the Revolutionary War the British erected Fort St. George on the site. The fort was a depository of stores, dry goods, groceries and arms to supply British forces in Suffolk County. In November, 1780 Benjamin Tallmadge and a detachment of dismounted dragoons attacked, captured and burned the fort and the British ships in the harbor loaded with stores, without the loss of a man. On the way back to the north shore they burned the British supply of winter forage in Coram, thus ending British rule and influence in that part of Long Island.

Visiting hours for the manor are Thursday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. through Oct. 30. Free admission. For more information, call 631-281-5034.

F. WILLIAM FLOYD ESTATE, 245 Park Drive, Mastic Beach. 250 years of history are preserved at the William Floyd Estate. The estate contains the ancestral house, grounds and cemetery of the William Floyd family. William Floyd, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was born in the house in 1734. In colonial times, the Floyds ran a huge plantation; later, the family turned to business and politics, and the lands were used for outdoor recreational pursuits like hunting and fishing.

Guided tours of the Old Mastic House are offered every half hour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays through Sundays and holidays from Memorial Day to Veterans Day. Call 631-399-2030 or visit www.nps.gov/fiis/planyourvisit/williamfloydestate.htm for more information.

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On the cover:

From left, Abraham Woodhull (Beverly C. Tyler) receives a secret spy code from Major Benjamin Tallmadge (Art Billadello) at the front door of the Country House in Stony Brook. Photo by Heidi Sutton

CULPER SPIES

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She got permission to bring him food, which evidently saved his life, and she obtained his release by appealing to her Tory relatives. He was still in danger and spent the rest of the war in Connecticut.

While British officers luxuriated in the Manor House (no longer standing — a 19th-century manor replaced it), Anna lived in a small cottage across the bay from Woodhull's farm, staying there to also protect her family's rights to the estate. A good friend of Caleb Brewster, as a member of the Culper Spy Ring in Setauket, she was a vital link between the Continental Army officer Caleb Brewster and Abraham Woodhull, the Patriot spy posing as a Loyalist.

In one letter during the spying operation Brewster noted that he was "up behind the Strongs." In a letter written to British Intelligence Chief Oliver Delancy in February 1781, British spy William Heron wrote, "Private dispatches are frequently sent from your city to the Chieftain [Washington] here by some traitors. They come by the Way of Setaket [sic], where a certain Brewster receives them at, or near, a Certain woman's." The certain woman was almost certainly Anna Smith Strong.

After the war Anna and Selah were reunited and Selah led Washington's carriage and party to the Roe Tavern in April of 1790 when the then President Washington made his tour of Long Island. Anna died in 1812 and Selah in 1815. They are buried in the Smith-Strong family graveyard along Cemetery Road on Strong's Neck.



Image from Bev Tyler

Vance Locke mural, 1951, of Austin Roe riding from the Brooklyn Ferry with spy messages

AUSTIN ROE ran a tavern in East Setauket where food and drink were served and where travelers could stay overnight on their way to or from the south or east end of Long Island. The original location of the tavern (it was moved in 1936) was along what is now Route 25A, just west of the south end of Bayview Avenue. The site is marked by a state road sign that details a few of the most important facts about Austin Roe and the tavern. Captain Austin Roe used his position as a tavern owner to justify his trips to New York City (Manhattan).

While in New York, Roe gathered supplies he needed for the tavern and expensive materials and goods for Anna Strong. These trips provided the cover he needed to obtain the spy messages he carried to Abraham Woodhull in Setauket that had to be relayed to General Washington.

Born in 1748, Austin Roe was 29 years old when he first agreed to be a part of the Setauket spies. He made the 110-mile round trip at least once a week.

The road was heavily traveled by British and Tory troops and by highwaymen (thieves and robbers). Captain Roe would receive information (usually directly from Robert Townsend). The messages were written in code or invisible ink.

Roe would ride back to Setauket and pass the information to Woodhull, who would secretly meet Brewster. The intelligence would then go across the Sound to Fairfield and then to General Washington. Captain Austin Roe made numerous trips to New York and was never discovered. He moved to Patchogue in 1798 where he founded Roe's Hotel. He died there in 1830 at the age of 81.

The present location of the Roe Tavern, where on April 22, 1790, President George Washington enjoyed the hospitality of Austin Roe and spent the night, is off Old Post Road. The house is private and not open to the public.



Image courtesy of LIM

Robert Townsend decodes a spy message from George Washington in 'Culper Spy' by Mort Künstler.

ROBERT TOWNSEND (code name Samuel Culper Jr.) coordinated the efforts of the spy network in New York. We will probably never know all the spies who contributed information on British movements, but we do know that Townsend was the principal contact in New York between most of 1779 and 1781.

During portions of that time Abraham Woodhull (Samuel Culper Sr.) took over from Townsend, as he had done before recruiting Townsend. The Culper Spy Ring supplied General Washington with vital information concerning British troop movements, fortifications and intentions in New York and the surrounding area during the perilous war years from 1778 to 1783.

The sensational intelligence transmitted by the spies led to the capture of Major John Andre (he was hung as a spy on orders of General Washington) and the discovery of Benedict Arnold's plot to turn over West Point to the British. The spy ring also supplied Washington with information that enabled him to prevent the British from attacking the French Army as they arrived in Newport, Rhode Island, in July 1780, and possibly also destroying the French fleet that transported them to Newport.

One of the most important contributions of the Culper Spy Ring was to provide General Washington with accurate and detailed intelligence. In many instances, Washington was able to check the veracity of information received from other sources by comparing it with intelligence received from the Culper Spy Ring.

There were many other Patriot spies reporting to General Washington, some known and many still unknown. They all risked their lives, soldiers and civilians alike, to provide vital intelligence that allowed General Washington and the Continental Army to defeat the greatest army in the world and to "turn the world upside down."