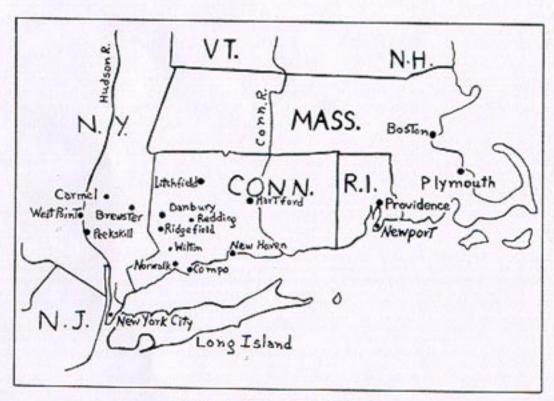
# The Midnight Ride of Sybil Ludington



and The Mystery of the Statue of King George III and His Horse

TRUE BICENTENNIAL STORIES

by MARY ELIZABETH JONES



Map A. Area of the Events

# THE MIDNIGHT RIDE OF SYBIL LUDINGTON

and

# THE MYSTERY OF THE STATUE OF KING GEORGE III AND HIS HORSE

True Bicentennial Stories
9856

by Mary Elizabeth Jones

With photographs by the author and original drawings by fourth graders

> PIMPEWAUG PRESS WILTON, CONNECTICUT

#### Dedicated to MARGARET and CAROLINE

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Grateful acknowledgement is made for the use of the following material:

American Heritage, August, 1958, p. 63. Diagram of King George III statue.

First National Bank, Litchfield, Conn. Painting of casting bullets of King George III statue.

Oscar Brand, Songs of '76, A Folksinger's History of the Revolution (New York, M. Evans, 1972). Musical scores for four songs.

Dr. Gilbert Darlington. Painting by William Walcutt of King George III statue being pulled down.

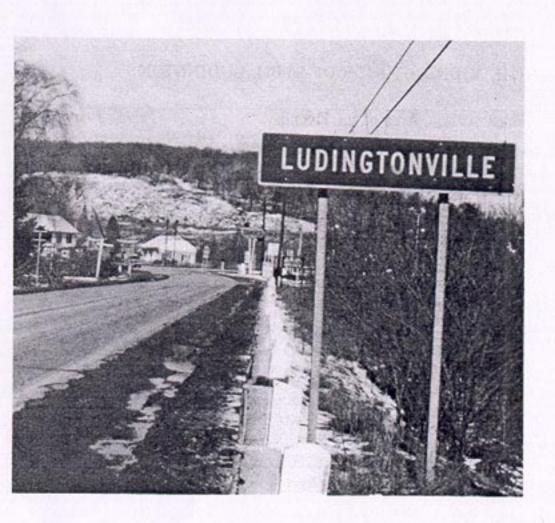
Prentice-Hall, Inc. The Star-Spangled Banana and other Revolutionary Riddles, by Charles Keller and Richard Baker, 1974. Three riddles.

Waterbury-Republican, Waterbury, Conn. Photo of painting of casting bullets.

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# THE MIDNIGHT RIDE OF SYBIL LUDINGTON

## 1 Happy Homecoming

"Father! You're home at last! What is the news? Did you see General Washington this time?"

Before Sybil had finished asking these questions she jumped down from her horse, Star, and ran to Colonel Ludington's outstretched arms. After affectionately embracing Sybil, eldest of his eight children, he reached over to pat his weary horse and take off the saddle bags. Riding on his big mare, he had trotted into the large barnyard only a few seconds before his tomboy daughter had come in from the pasture slopes.

"I'll tell Mother and the others you're here while you take care of Bouncing Bet." Already Sybil was part way to the shed door of the kitchen, carefully choosing her steps over the April mud until she reached the stone-paved entrance path.

As the girl reached the door, she saw her oldest brother, ten-year-old Archie, coming around the corner of the house with Uncle Simeon. They were carrying a basketful of parsnips they had just dug in the garden beside the mill. Running in circles around them, barking eagerly, was the Ludington dog, Ginger. When she saw her master, who was absent from home so much, she rushed up to him with a different kind of yap.

Replica of Colonel Ludington's mill in Ludingtonville, N. Y. The original mill, built in 1776, was destroyed by fire in 1972.



The noisy commotion brought Mrs. Ludington to the door, a toddler clinging to her skirts.

"Henry," she cried with joy.

"Abbie," exclaimed the Colonel, as he hurried to his wife and kissed her and the small child, named for its mother. "You look mighty well and so does little Abigail."

"You seem all right, too, thank the Lord," answered Abigail Ludington. "But you are probably hungry. I'm just starting supper. We must have something special. What would you like? Have you had any maple syrup yet this spring? Aunt Hetty and the children have been boiling down hundreds of gallons of sap."

"That sounds like a mighty sweet homecoming," chuckled her husband, as he kissed her again. "There ought to be thousands of gallons of sap from all the maple trees here on these two hundred and twenty acres. We sure need sugar in the Continental Army."

\* \* \* \* \* \* \*

It was a large, happy family which ate supper around the long table in the spacious Ludington kitchen in Fredericksburg, Dutchess County, New York. The house was located on the principal route from northern Connecticut Colony to the lower Hudson Valley, the road leading from Hartford to New Milford, Connecticut, through Fredericksburg to Fishkill and West Point. Since Colonel Ludington was an important military man who was being given various assignments in the Revolutionary War, his family was accustomed to his frequent absences. But it was always a joyful occasion when he came home for a few days.

Tonight Mrs. Ludington and Aunt Hetty set out every kind of food they could find in celebration of Father's return. It had all been produced on the farm under the supervision of Uncle Simeon with the help of the numerous children. The hot beef stew, thick with vegetables which were kept in the root cellar through the winter, soon warmed Father who had become chilled during the ride in the drizzle of late April. Then Mother passed him corn bread and red kidney beans baked with salt pork and honey in the big brick oven built into the chimney. Next came clabbered milk cheese sprinkled with dried herbs. Sauce made from dried apple slices seasoned with nutmeg was a treat. Finally, fried parsnips were placed on the table with pitchers of golden-brown maple syrup.

"Delicious, delicious," exclaimed the Colonel. "I feel like a new man. Please give me another plateful. We really are a bit short on rations in our camps, but with spring here we're not complaining. When will you start digging dandelion greens, Abbie?"

"Very soon, I hope," Mrs. Ludington answered as she helped little Abbie with her food. "Tart greens will seem good after so much greasy pork all winter, and now lots of sweet syrup."

The children were beginning to get restless and wished their father would soon finish supper, so he could tell them about some of his adventures. While he was eating he never liked to talk or be asked questions.

Archie raised the first question. "Father, how old were you when you first became a soldier?"

"Well, Archibald," the Colonel replied, "when I was a young man of seventeen back in Connecticut I joined the Second Connecticut Regiment and saw service in the French and Indian War in the campaign at Lake George. The British general in charge was Governor William Tryon who made me a captain four years ago. Now he is our enemy."

"Father, you were only one year older when you joined than I am now," cried Sybil. "If only I were a boy I'd sign up and help win this war."

"You're helping win it right now, all of you," declared her father. "Taking care of the cattle, sheep, chickens and ducks, raising food and grinding grain at our mill for the Continental Army is of the greatest importance. Starving troops never won a war."

"But there's nothing exciting about milking cows or pulling weeds," protested Sybil. "I want to do something daring and dangerous."

"Maybe you will some day, daughter," comforted her father.
"Now, children, I think I've already told you some stories of
General Israel Putnam, whom we nickname "Old Put."

"Wasn't he the farmer who drove more than a hundred sheep over the roads from Connecticut to Boston when the British closed the port and tried to starve the people?" asked Archie.

"Right," replied his father. "That was in August, 1774. The next April he heard about the Battle of Lexington and Concord while he was plowing on his Pomfret farm. He unhitched one of his plow horses and rode it to Cambridge, Massachusetts without stopping to change his plowing clothes! His soldiers tell how "Old Put," several years ago, crawled into the den of a she-wolf on his farm. The wolf had been killing and eating his sheep and calves. "Old Put" killed the wolf, some say with his bare hands, some say with a gun. Then he dragged out the dead critter. His sons used the wolf skin for a blanket."

"Henry, that's enough to give the children nightmares," declared Mrs. Ludington.

"No, no, we like horrible stories," said little Henry and his brothers. "Tell some more."

"Well, I just heard some very amusing tales about Ethan Allen. You know in May, in '75, two years ago, he and Benedict Arnold, a colonel then, captured Fort Ticonderoga with its eight pieces of artillery and much ammunition."

"Was it Ethan Allen who said 'Surrender in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress' when he pounded on the door of the Fort?" asked Archie again.

"So the story goes. I probably told that to you," answered his father. "Well, after the Ticonderoga affair, Ethan got the notion of trying to capture Canada and making it the fourteenth state. So he and some partriots marched on Montreal in late summer two years ago. The expedition failed. Ethan was captured, put in chains and sent to England as a prisoner, swearing all the way. When the ship landed at Falmouth, England, crowds gathered along the road and on house tops to catch a glimpse of him. They had heard he was a giant, a devil and everything else. After being imprisoned in Pendennis Castle awhile, he was returned a year ago this spring to New York. He is still held there as a prisoner of the British."

"Can't you rescue him and set him free?" asked Henry.

"Not at present," replied Colonel Ludington. "What amuses me is the report that a high British officer has tried to persuade Ethan to go over to the British side. The officer has even promised him much money and a huge grant of land."

"I hope he refused the attractive offer," interrupted Mrs. Ludington.

Her husband smiled and continued, "Ethan said 'absolutely no', and added the comment that the offer reminded him of the Bible I've heard he especially had in mind Colonel Thomas Fitch, Jr., of Norwalk."

"Humph," muttered Uncle Simeon. "He who laughs last, laughs best."

Before all the many stanzas of YANKEE DOODLE had been sung, Rebecca complained, "I'm tired of this one. We sing it every time. Weren't the British smart enough to write anything else?"

"Becky," replied her father, "one of the new songs I brought with me to teach you all is from the Tory press in Halifax."

He reached in his big coat pocket and brought out several soiled sheets of paper on top of which was a little flag. "Children, Abbie," he excitedly exclaimed, "here is a small sample of our new flag which a lady in Philadelphia named Mrs. Betsy Ross made a few months ago at the request of General Washington. Every one of the thirteen colonies is represented twice, by a stripe and by a star—thirteen stripes and thirteen stars."

"You could call it the 'Stars and Stripes'," announced Sybil.

"Well named, daughter," said Mrs. Ludington.

"Yes, indeed, and speaking of Betsy Ross reminds me of a riddle I heard," continued the Colonel. "When General Washington's staff asked Mrs. Ross to hurry making the flag, what did she reply?"

Nobody offered an answer, so Colonel Ludington finished the conundrum. "Just a Minutemen."

"Tell us another joke," begged Sybil. "Maybe I can guess it this time."

"All right. This is easy. What ghost worries old King George III the most? Here's a clue. What's another word for ghost?"

Immediately Archie jumped up and waved his hand. "Spirit. Spirit. Spirit of '76."<sup>2</sup>

Everybody clapped, proud that this riddle could be solved by one of them.

"Here's one more about Betsy Ross," said Mr. Ludington.
"What do people who have forgotten her name sometimes call her?"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Star-Spangled Banana and other Revolutionary Riddles, by Charles Keller and Richard Baker, Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1974.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

No one in the family ventured a guess, so Father finished, going through the motions of taking stitches, "Mrs. Sew-and-Sew."<sup>3</sup>

Now Becky remembered her father's promise of a new song. "What's on the papers?"

"Those are broadsides of new songs I have picked up here and there," the Colonel answered. "Here is the one from Halifax called THE BURROWING YANKEES. It refers to the digging of breastworks in Dorchester Heights by General Washington's troops last year when they successfully drove the Lobsterbacks out of Boston. First I'll read a couple of stanzas.

Ye Yankees who molelike, still throw up the earth, Like them to your follies are blind from your birth. Attempt not to hold British troops at defiance, True Britons, with whom you pretend an alliance.

The time will soon come when your whole Rebel race, Will be drove from the land, nor will dare show your face Here's a health to great GEORGE, may he fully determine, To root out of the earth all such burrowing vermin.

After considerable hard work, the Ludington Larks conquered the Tory words and tune. "Now I know what I'll call the moles in my garden this summer," remarked Aunt Hetty.

"Burrowing Yankees," little Henry said quickly, before Aunt Hetty could finish her sentence.

"Another new one," pleaded Sybil. "One written by Americans."

"All right," replied her father. "See if you can learn this one as easily. We'll sing it to honor daring Ethan Allen. It's called the GREEN MOUNTAINEER, and the music is very quick and lively, hardly time to take a breath."

Ho, all to the borders, Vermonters come down,
With your breeches of deerskin, your jackets of brown
With your red woolen caps and your moccasins, come,
To the gathering summons of trumpet and drum.
Then cheer, cheer, the Green Mountaineer.

Come down with your rifle, let gray wolf and fox Howl on in the shadow of primitive rocks, Let bear feed securely from pigpen and stall, Here's two-legged game for your powder and ball. Then cheer, cheer, the Green Mountaineer.

Now the younger children began to nod and fall asleep. "One more, and it's off to bed," said Mother. "Maybe we should end with a slow, lullaby kind of song."

"I have just the thing," offered the Colonel. "It commemorates brave Nathan Hale of Connecticut who came to such a sad end last year, and is named HALE IN THE BUSH.

The breezes went steadily through the tall pines,
A-saying, "Oh, hush," a-saying, "Oh, hush,"
As stilly stole by a bold legion of horse;
For Hale in the bush, for Hale in the bush.

He warily trod on the dry rustling leaves,
As he pass'd through the wood, as he passed through the wood;
And silently gained his rude launch on the shore,
As she played with the flood, as she played with the flood.

### 3 "Muster at Ludington's"

After Mrs. Ludington, assisted by Sybil and Rebecca, had put the six younger children to bed, she started downstairs to talk with her husband. She knew there were serious topics about the war he could not mention when the children were present.

"Can't I come down, too?" pleaded Sybil. "I'm almost as old as Father when he joined the Connecticut regiment."

"Well, all right," consented Mother, "if he doesn't think you should listen he can say so."

In the kitchen Colonel Ludington greeted them, as he drank a mug of hot buttered rum.

"Abbie, and Sybil, too, I'm glad to have a chance to discuss a few things with you. First, has anyone seen any skinners in this area, stealing cattle or supplies for the British? The Redcoats have foraged and plundered Westchester so much, it's picked clean. I fear it will be Dutchess County next."

"No," answered Abbie, as she began to knit a stocking, "not on our land, but I've heard there've been skinners and cowboys in Mahopac. Uncle Simeon doesn't let our cattle out of his sight when he puts them in the nearby pasture. Henry, how is the war really going? When will it be over? It's two years since Lexington and Concord."

"I know," replied the Colonel. "We're hoping this spring and summer will bring us further advances. General Washington did very well at Trenton and Princeton in early winter. Probably the British are not only hoping but planning strategies right now. You know of their raid on Peekskill last month in which large quantities of our military stores were destroyed and many sheep and cattle carried off."

"Yes. Oh, Henry, you must have felt so discouraged after trying hard all winter to find food for Washington's troops."

The Colonel rose from the table and put another oak log on the kitchen hearth fire. He was silent for awhile after returning to his bench at the table. A situation worried him greatly, but he decided not to mention it to Abbie or Sybil, for there was nothing they could do about it. They would only become anxious. He knew that Danbury had become an important storage center for military supplies and provisions for the Continental Army. Yet, since last December, General Washington had been ordering as many militia units as possible from Connecticut and Massachusetts into his New Jersey area. Now western Connecticut was open to attack.

Colonel Ludington was also worried about the whereabouts of his best spy, Enoch Crosby. Enoch's home was in the nearby village of Carmel. Thus far Enoch had been lucky in his narrow escapes while gathering information about British troop activities. Would this luck always hold?

Enoch Crosby grave monument in Carmel, N. Y. Crosby, a wellknown Revolutionary spy, was the inspiration for the character "Harvey Birch" in the novel THE SPY by James Fenimore Cooper.



"Well, I guess it's bedtime," said the Colonel, yawning.

Suddenly hoof beats were heard approaching the house. Ginger began to bark wildly. Loud pounding on the door brought the Colonel to his feet. "Who's there?" he called, holding high the large candlestick.

"Message from Colonel Huntington. Danbury's burning. All militia units are called out."

As Colonel Ludington opened the door, a wet, exhausted man staggered in and collapsed on a bench near the fire. Abbie poured him a drink of hot rum. When he had recovered enough to talk he said, "General Tryon and two thousand troops came up from Compo Beach on Long Island Sound. They are burning all supply stores in Danbury. Look out and see the red sky! Only one hundred and fifty men in the Danbury militia. All nearby regiments are requested to come to their aid."

Compo Beach plaque on Route 1, Westport, Conn.



The messenger stopped and began to breathe hard. "I'm done in and so is my horse. We can go no farther."

Colonel Ludington's mind began to work quickly. Then he said, "I'm sure all the men in my regiment are at their homes in the various villages this wet night. They must be alerted to come here to muster. We should leave at daybreak. I need to remain here for drilling and preparing to march. Our messenger here has done all he is able to."

Sybil became wide awake and excited. "Father, I can spread the alarm, riding on Star," she exclaimed.

"Sybil, you don't know what you're offering to do. Have you ever ridden Star for twenty five or thirty miles?"

"I'm sure we've gone fifteen miles. We can do more if we have to. We've been exercising every day since mid-winter, sometimes twice a day. Please, Father. Who else is there to go?"

Colonel Ludington thought a minute. Indeed, who else was there to go on such sudden notice? Archie was too young, Uncle Simeon too old.

"All right, Daughter. I hope Mother is willing."

"I suppose so, but do be careful, Syb," answered Mother, putting her arm around the girl's shoulders. "Yes, Syb, I believe you and Star can do it. You have to, to help win the War." Mother kissed her.

"Put on warm clothes and boots while I fetch Star," advised the Colonel.

Sybil was ready outside the door when her father appeared in the yard leading Star. The horse was prancing with excitement. He seemed to realize something unusual was taking place.

"I put one of my saddles on Star, but for a halter I think it is best to use the same hempen rope you always do when you ride him."

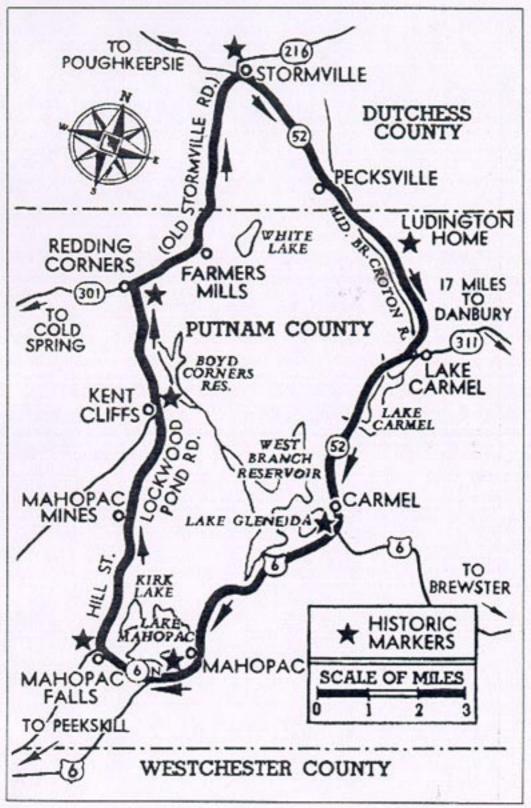
Her father helped Sybil mount and put a stick in her hand. "Just in case you run into trouble and need to urge Star to go his fastest. Also, Syb, it will save time if you do not dismount when you go to people's doors. Instead, rap hard on the door with the stick. Then shout, 'The British are burning Danbury. Muster at Ludington's.' Now listen to my orders for your route." (See Map B. on page 12.)

Star had become very excited and eager to be off. It was difficult even for Sybil's father to hold the horse back while he finished his instructions.

"So, that's all, Syb. Slow down once in a while to rest Star. Keep up your courage. General Washington shall hear of this. Mother and I are very proud of our eldest child."

The Colonel let go of Star's halter and gave him a gentle pat. At once the big bay gelding broke into a gallop. He flew past the mill and onto the trail south to Horse Pound Road and Carmel Village. Even in the darkness he was able to find his way. Many times in daylight Sybil had ridden him over this rough path.

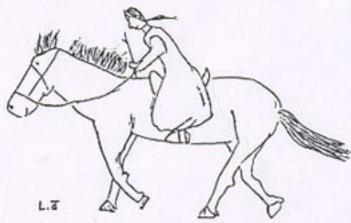
After more than half an hour's riding Sybil and Star reached Carmel. There were only four houses, situated beside Shaw's



Map B. Route of Sybil Ludington's Ride

This was the circuitous route of Sybil Ludington's ride to arouse militiamen in Putnam County, N.Y., to march to burning Danbury.

Pond. Knocking on each door with her stick, Sybil shouted her message, "The British are burning Danbury. Muster at Ludington's." She also pointed to the east, screaming, "See the red sky."

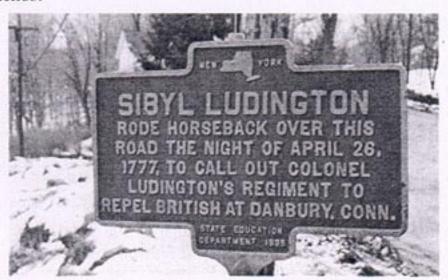


Galloping southwest along the shore of the pond, Sybil was presently at Mahopac. Then on to Red Mills where she passed the large deserted house of Colonel Roger Morris, a Tory who had fled to New York City. "Muster at Ludington's," she shouted at each dwelling until she was hoarse. Barking watch dogs helped awaken people. It was satisfying to her to see lights appear in all the houses as soon as she had aroused the inhabitants. Sometimes a man, sometimes a woman, still wearing a nightcap, came to the door or opened a window.



Now came the loneliest, most difficult part of the journey—the road north to Kent Cliffs and Mead Corners. Thick forests surrounded her and the road went up and down long, steep hills. She had to let Star walk. Cowboys or skinners might jump out and attack her at any time. She wished it were a clear, moonlit night.

Then she realized she was probably safer in this wet drizzle, for the cowboys would be more likely to stay in their camps. Dependable Star always found the way, over loose stones and fallen branches.



When the horse and rider reached the Hasbrouck house, they were exhausted and covered with mud. Sybil wanted very much to accept Mrs. Hasbrouck's invitation to stop for a hot drink, but she knew she was more than halfway home. It would be hard to get started again if she stopped now.

So Sybil urged Star on. Just two more villages to the east— Stormville and Pecksville, then home. This would complete the rough rectangle she and Star had traveled. By now it seemed more like one hundred miles than twenty. She was numb with cold and fatigue. She felt as if she were caught in a nightmare. But, she told herself, we are putting distance behind us and getting nearer to home all the time. When Star and Sybil reached Stormville they saw lights in the houses. Colonel Ludington had already sent a messenger north to this village.

It was well past midnight when Sybil rode into the Ludington farmyard. Both the girl and her horse were completely exhausted and caked with mud. Members of the regiment were arriving by horse and on foot. Sybil was too tired to notice the great commotion and orders being shouted, or hear people praising her. She fell into somebody's arms, and drank a hot drink which was put to her lips. Then she felt herself being carried to the house and her clothes changed. Her hands and face were bathed, and she was put into a bed. Immediately she was sound asleep.

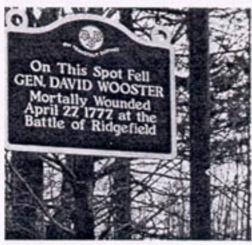
#### 4 After the Battle

It was noon of the next day, Monday, April 28, when Sybil awoke. She was still tired and she ached throughout her body, but pangs of hunger kept her from sleeping any longer. The house was so quiet she guessed it must be mealtime. She got up, dressed and went downstairs where she found the family eating, as she expected.

"Is Father home? Are the British still in Danbury?"

"Oh Syb, there was a big battle in Ridgefield yesterday. General Wooster was hit with a ball, maybe dead," exclaimed Archie.

"No, Father hasn't come home yet," replied Abbie. "He and his militia were in the Battle of Ridgefield. The British left Danbury in a hurry very early yesterday morning. They did not return to their ships at Compo Beach the way they had come, through Redding. Instead they went through Ridgefield and Wilton. At the beginning of the battle General Wooster was so severely injured in the back he is paralyzed. Joshua Myrick stopped by, coming home from the battle. Father asked him to tell us he has gone to visit General Wooster at Nehemiah Dibble's house in Danbury. He hopes to be home tomorrow, after he has checked the damage done to our military supplies there."



Roadside marker commemorating the fall of General Wooster, Ridgefield, Conn.

Monument of General Wooster in Wooster Cemetery, Danbury, Conn.



Sybil had filled her bowl with hot cornmeal porridge on which she poured milk from a big silver pitcher, and maple syrup from a smaller one.

"What else did Joshua say?" Sybil asked. "Who won the battle at Ridgefield?"

"We did," shouted Archie, little Henry, and Derick in unison. Four-year-old Tertullus clapped his small hands.

"Joshua didn't have time to stay," explained Abbie. "He said, 'The Colonel will give you details when he comes.'"

\* \* \* \* \* \* \*

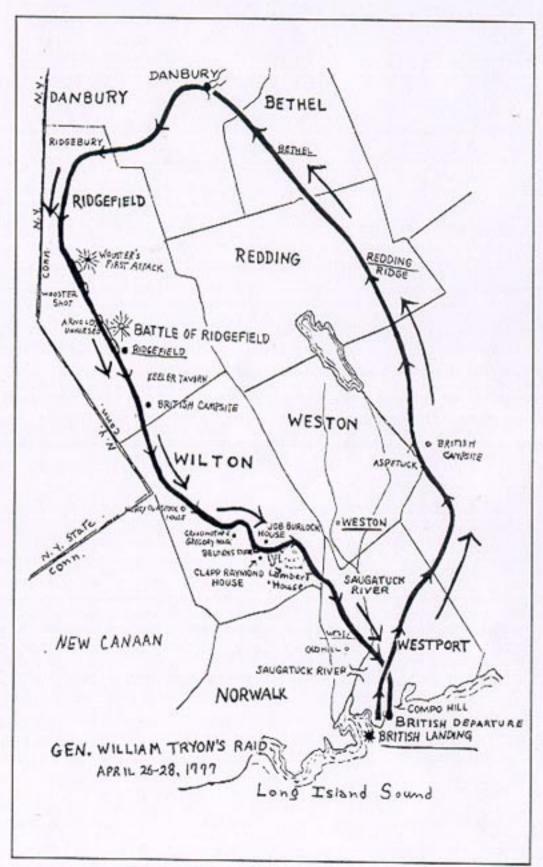
It was early afternoon, two days later, when Colonel Ludington arrived home. His horse was walking at a moderate pace because the weather had turned very warm. Everybody was outdoors. The boys were playing "war" around the barn. Sybil, Rebecca and Mary were helping their mother get ready to make soap.

Ginger gave the Colonel her usual welcome-home barks. Abbie and the girls hurried to meet him. Then Aunt Hetty, Uncle Simeon and the four boys joined the group. All were eager to hear what had happened since the Colonel and his militia had left them three days before.

After the usual affectionate greetings were exchanged Colonel Ludington said, "I can see you are enjoying the fine weather. As soon as I wash up and Abbie fetches me some food, I'll tell you about the battle right here in the yard. Just make yourselves comfortable."

The mud in the yard had dried up. Old straw had been scattered over it so that the dirt would not be carried into the house. Along the side of the house pieces of large tree trunks were placed to serve as stools.

When the Colonel had finished eating and everyone was settled, he began his report. First he thanked Sybil for her courageous ride Saturday night. "The men in my militia were mighty pleased that Sybil spread the alarm. It meant that we arrived in Ridgefield in time to join the forces of General Wooster and General Benedict Arnold."

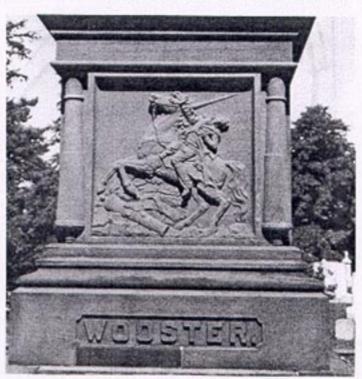


Map C. Route of General Tryon's Raid

"How is General Wooster?" asked Abbie.

"In very bad condition," replied her husband. "Dr. Isaac Foster does not hold out much hope. His spirit of daring and courage has inspired us all. I shall never forget his appeal to his men when the British started artillery fire on them. 'Come on, my boys, never mind such random shots! Follow me!' Then a ball hit him."

Scene on the Wooster monument depicting the General's fall in the Battle of Ridgefield.



After a short silence Sybil inquired, "How many people were killed in Danbury? How much damage did the British do?"

"Four or five men were killed by the British. One of them, perhaps the first to die, was a Negro slave named Ned who belonged to Samuel Smith of Redding. No Redcoats lost their lives."

"As regards destruction of property and military supplies, General Tryon's men caused us much loss. Fortunately, Dr. Foster had sent most of his medical supplies to New Milford before the British arrived. However, some of the materials burned included 3000 barrels of pork and beef, 1000 barrels of flour, 1000 barrels of rice, 100 barrels of sugar and molasses, 1000 tents, 400 axes, 5000 pairs of shoes and stockings."

"A little discouraging," muttered Uncle Simeon. "But there are more where these came from."

"Not altogether, I'm afraid," answered the Colonel. "As for

buildings, about twenty dwelling houses, with a number of barns, stores and other buildings were burned. Some barns were filled with grain. I learned while in Danbury that the population there is about 2500, with maybe 400 houses.

"How long did the British stay in Danbury?" asked Rebecca.

"Maybe sixteen hours, from Saturday afternoon 'til Sunday morning when they began to leave about 8 o'clock. Learning that Wooster, Arnold and Silliman with about 500 men were in Bethel, General Tryon decided to return to his ships by way of Ridgefield. That is where my regiment joined the other Patriots."

"What happened after General Wooster was knocked down and carried off?" asked Archie.

"Some amazing things happened," replied his father. "General Arnold with 500 men erected a barricade of logs, carts, and rocks across Main Street. About noon the British approached and discharged their artillery. Soon they were close enough for musket shooting. General Arnold had his horse shot right from under him. Nine bullets were found in his horse's skin afterward. Yet not one bullet hit Arnold. As he was struggling to get off his fallen horse, a Redcoat rushed up with a fixed bayonet and shouted, 'Surrender! You are my prisoner!' Arnold replied, 'Not yet,' and shot the enemy dead."

"Just like a story from the Bible. The Lord certainly delivered him," Aunt Hetty said softly.

"Maybe," agreed the Colonel. "Only, he and his men, being outnumbered and outflanked by the British, had to retreat to the Saugatuck River.

"What happened next?" called out Derick.

"Well, as the British marched through Ridgefield they shot off many a cannonball. The inhabitants will be finding these balls for many a day to come. Timothy Keeler's tavern was hit by at least two balls. The British started to set fire to the tavern, but a Tory whose house was beside it persuaded them not to burn it. Because of the direction of the wind, the Tory's house probably would have burned, too."

"When Keeler returned to his tavern the Tory neighbor said to him, 'You can thank me that your house is not destroyed.' Keeler talked right back, 'No, Sir, I will not thank a Tory for anything. I would rather thank the Lord for the north wind.'"



Keeler Tavern, Ridgefield, Conn. 1733

"Did the Redcoats burn anything in Ridgefield?" inquired Archie.

"About six houses in all," answered Colonel Ludington. "Also Isaac Keeler's grist mill and saw mill. Many horses and much cattle were taken as well as provisions."

"One Ridgefield housewife, alone with her children in her home, was afraid her house would be burned. Hoping the British would think her a Tory, she waved a red petticoat as they marched by. They left the house unharmed."

"Well, as you can see, I heard all kinds of stories and received many reports while I stayed in Danbury after the battle in Ridgefield."

"Did the Redcoats march the rest of the night?" asked little Henry.

"No," replied his father. "The British made camp Sunday night south of Ridgefield Village on the road to Wilton. Then they were up at dawn and started the eighteen-mile march back to their ships on the Sound. They went past Drum Hill in Wilton, turned left onto Mill Road and crossed the West Branch of the Norwalk River, upstream from the Norwalk bridge. Tryon's spies had learned there were Wilton patriots waiting to attack them at that bridge. They stopped for breakfast half a mile north of Clapp

Raymond's tavern. That's the place where several pieces of King George's statue disappeared last July on its way to Litchfield to be melted into bullets. Do you remember my telling you about that mysterious affair?"

"Oh, yes," sang the children in unison.

"When the soldiers came to the tavern they found fifty or more hogshead of rum, a number of tents, and some arms and cartridges."

"What did they do with them?" asked Archie.



Drum Hill plaque, Wilton, Conn.

"Destroyed them, and set fire to the next house. But a neighbor woman, a Tory, put out the fire," answered the Colonel. "While in Wilton they demanded and received much food from the housewives. There were still almost two thousand of the Redcoats. I expect a few Tories in the town were pleased to see them! From Wilton they marched to the Saugatuck River. There, about noon, they met General Arnold and several hundred, maybe a thousand, Patriots from all over Connecticut. But Arnold and his men were unable to stop them.

"Wasn't there any more fighting?" asked Derick.

"Yes, indeed. On Compo Hill there was the bloodiest battle of the whole raid as the Redcoats neared their ships. Another horse was shot from under Arnold, and a bullet went through his coat collar."

"Did we win?" asked Archie.

"Well, there were many losses on both sides, but more on the British. Yet General Tryon and all except perhaps three hundred of his two thousand men got away."

"Henry, was this whole invasion of Connecticut by General Tryon a success or a defeat for the British?" inquired Abbie.

The Colonel did not answer for a moment. Then he replied, "In the long run, I believe we have won. We must admit that at Minuteman Statue, Compo Beach, Westport, Conn.



Danbury the British did succeed in destroying important supplies for our Army. That is what they intended to do, and they did it."

"You mean my long night ride really didn't do any good?" queried Sybil, almost in tears.

"No, I certainly do not mean that, Syb," said her father firmly. "I have told you that your ride enabled my militia and me to get into Connecticut all the quicker and fight at Ridgefield. Tryon's invasion and raid have roused most of the population of the entire Connecticut Colony as well as York Colony. I was much encouraged to find at Ridgefield Patriots from Wallingford, New Haven, Stratford, Litchfield, Goshen, New Milford, Stamford, and Westchester County as well as our own Dutchess County."

"I think all Colonists will work together and make sacrifices now as never before, in the cause of freedom. We shall become much stronger and more united."

"Can't we do more to help?" begged the children.

"That you shall," replied their father. "Then, there will be another very important gain for us, I think, resulting from General Tryon's Connecticut escapade. There is in Europe a powerful nation which may come to our aid with men and supplies."

The children clapped and shouted, "Hurrah!"

"That nation has been an enemy of the British for hundreds of years," continued the Colonel. "When our Continental Army and the militia in each Colony get stronger and better trained and win an important battle, that foreign nation, France, will decide to join us against a common enemy. That is my hope and belief." The four Ludington boys could sit still no longer. With whoops and cheers they ran to their battlefield near the barn.

### 5 Renewed Hopes

Now a chill had come into the late April sunshine. The shadows of the trees along the stone wall were like dark fingers reaching farther and farther onto the muster field across the road.

"Sybil, have you been riding Star since your long midnight ride?" asked her father.

"No. I've been too sore to ride."

Colonel Ludington laughed. "I can believe that. But Star will get stiff. How about slowly riding her up to the top of the pasture? It will do you both good."

"And I'll go in and start supper," announced Abbie.

"Oh, wait a little longer," urged her husband. "It's so pleasing just to sit with you."

After the children had left, Colonel Ludington said to his wife in a low voice, "Have you heard any reports about William Heron of Redding? As you know, we thought he was on the side of the Patriots, but General Tryon and his officers took their noon meal at Heron's house, on their way to destroy supplies in Danbury. Now I feel suspicious. Hmm."

Sybil was glad to get up and walk to the barnyard. Her head had begun to feel almost dizzy, as she listened to the long account of her father's battle experiences and Tryon's retreat. She could hardly understand what he meant when he said the brave stands the Patriots had made were very important "in the long run."



William Heron gravestone, Redding Ridge, Conn. Heron was a double agent.

As Star carried her up, up the slope behind the house to her favorite lookout at the top, Sybil felt better. Now a hope, even a certainty, that the war would end soon in victory surged through her.

"Whoa, Star, brave boy. Rest a bit." Sybil patted the horse's neck. It was good to be riding again, but she must not press Star too much. All over the slope and down in the fields new grass was appearing. The green blades, like tiny swords, had pushed up through the dead dry stubble.

Everything had changed so much since Saturday. Tender little leaves on the trees and bushes were unfolding. The air smelled especially fresh and sweet. Now the birds were singing as sunset time neared. Loud, shrill peepers along the mill brook and swamp joined the chorus.

Sybil thought of some Bible verses the schoolmaster had read which she had learned by heart, hoping to please him.

"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth;

The time of the singing of birds is come."

Spring had always been Sybil's favorite season, with everything starting to grow again. She thought the New Year should begin in April, not January!

Sybil looked down on the mill and the house. Light from the candles was showing through the windows. It had been a good day. Father had again returned safely from battle. She prayed he always would.

Suddenly Sybil felt so happy she half expected she would burst! She, Sybil Ludington, had done something special to help win the war. Father had said she was as brave as a soldier. She believed there would be other things she could do to aid the new nation which Father said was being born. This summer she would raise more food, grind more grain, than ever before. Since she had succeeded in her midnight mission, more dangerous work would be given her, perhaps by General Washington himself! Oh, it was exciting to be alive at this moment in history!

"Syb-il, Syb-il," came a shout far below. "Sup-per, sup-per."
Then she heard the flurry of a drum. Star thrust his ears forward.
Sybil laughed, "Archie practicing to be a drummer boy and also calling us home. Home, Star, home."

#### Historical Notes

Sybil Ludington and her eleven brothers and sisters were real people. (The last four children, Anne, Frederick, Sophia, and Lewis, were born after 1777, so have no part in this story.) They grew up on a farm in a sparsely populated region called Fredericksburg in what was then southern Dutchess County, York Colony. Today that small community is called Ludingtonville and is in present-day Putnam County, New York.

The historical events described, such as Tryon's raid on Danbury, actually happened. Other incidents were believed by many people to have happened, such as the encounter of Israel Putnam with a great wolf on his eastern Connecticut farm.

Records show that Sybil's father, Colonel Henry Ludington, was born in Branford, Connecticut near New Haven in 1738, being the third child of William Ludington III and Mary Knowles. William Ludington III had a brother, Elisha, born in 1716, who left Connecticut and settled in the present town of Fishkill, New York, several years before the Revolution. The youngest of Elisha Ludington's five children was Abigail, who married Sybil's father, Henry, when she was only fifteen. Thus, Sybil's parents were first cousins.

As is stated in the story, Henry Ludington began his military career at the age of sixteen or seventeen when he enlisted with a Connecticut regiment and fought alongside the British in the French and Indian War. Exciting adventures which he experienced are recorded by historians, as well as his activities during and following the Revolution. He was a fascinating man.

Henry Ludington leased more than 200 acres in Fredericksburg about 1762, and built a sawmill and a grist mill, as well as a house and barns.

At the battle of White Plains, General Washington made Colonel Ludington his aide-de-camp and afterward complimented him for his assistance. Washington stopped at Colonel Ludington's home several times, once in company with Count Rochambeau, the French military leader in North America.

Sybil Ludington, seven years after her midnight ride, married Edward Ogden, a lawyer, of Catskill, New York. They had four sons and two daughters. One of the sons, Major Edmund A. Ogden, born in Catskill in 1810, became a distinguished national

military figure in the mid-1800's. He was in charge of the expansion program of Fort Riley, Kansas in 1855 when an epidemic of cholera broke out on the Post. Major Ogden was one of the first victims of the epidemic. A monument to his honor was erected in the Post Cemetery in 1877 and may be seen today on Kansas Highway 18. Also, the modern town of Ogden, Kansas, close to Fort Riley, was named for Major Ogden.

Sybil died in 1839, aged seventy seven. She was buried in the family plot in the graveyard of the Presbyterian Church in Pat-

terson, New York, on Route 311.

Not only Sybil's son, Major Edmund A. Ogden, but other descendants of Colonel Henry and Abigail Ludington have made notable contributions to our nation. Sybil's brother, Frederick, who kept a store in Ludingtonville, had three sons, Harrison, James, and Nelson, who went to the mid-west as young men with their uncle, Lewis, the youngest of the Colonel's twelve children. They all became prominent



Sybil Ludington gravestone, Patterson, New York

businessmen involved in lumber enterprises. Harrison was elected the twelfth governor of Wisconsin, serving from 1876-78. He already had been very active in promoting the development of Milwaukee, serving as its alderman and then its mayor from 1872 to 1875.

James Ludington went from Wisconsin to Michigan where he carried on a lumber business. The present day town of Ludington, Michigan, at the mouth of the Pere Marquette River in Mason County, was named for him.

Nelson Ludington became a businessman and banker, serving as president of the Fifth National Bank of Chicago.

The Philadelphia publisher-philanthropist Charles Henry Ludington was the grandson of Lewis, Sybil's youngest brother. He gave beautiful public library buildings to Ardmore and Bryn Mawr, and built the Children's Section of the Saranac Lake Free Library. Sybil Ludington and her heroic deeds have not been forgotten. The New York State Education Department, in 1935, set up a series of roadside markers along the twenty-five-mile route Sybil is believed to have taken on her midnight ride. A few of these signs still remain. (See illustration on page 14.)

On June 3, 1961, a one and one-third life-size bronze statue of Sybil, stick in hand, riding Star in full flight, was dedicated in Carmel, New York. The statue is located on the Green at the intersection of Routes 6 and 52. In the background is beautiful Lake Gleneida, called Shaw's Pond in Sybil's day. She galloped along this pond on her midnight ride. The famous sculptress, Anna Hyatt Huntington, created this statue of Sybil.



Reprinted from postcard by PENDOR NATUR COLOR, Box 25, Posel Erver, N.Y. 1996).

A near life-size replica of the Sybil Ludington statue stands in the courtyard of the new Danbury Public Library. There is also an eighteen-inch reproduction in the Headquarters of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington, D.C.

On March 25, 1975, an eight-cent United States postage stamp was issued which commemorated Sybil Ludington's ride on the night of April 26, 1777.

So, Sybil Ludington has been immortalized in statues and on roadside markers and postage stamps. Her descendants and the descendants of her brothers and sisters have spread over a considerable part of the United States. Like the generations of other families in this nation, their lives and deeds are bright threads in the great tapestry that is America. "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."

# Liberty Tree



# The Burrowing Yankees



New music and edited text @1972 by Oscar Brand

# The Green Mountaineer



## Hale in the Bush



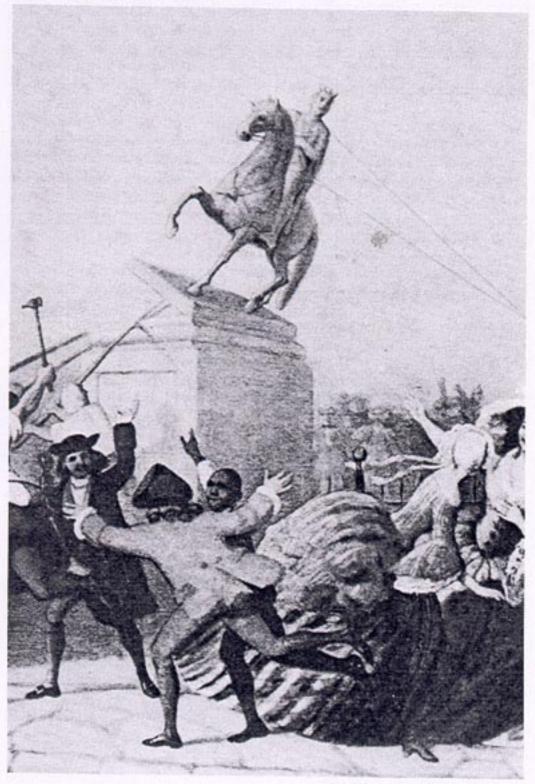
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Painting by William Walcutt

## THE MYSTERY OF THE STATUE OF KING GEORGE III AND HIS HORSE

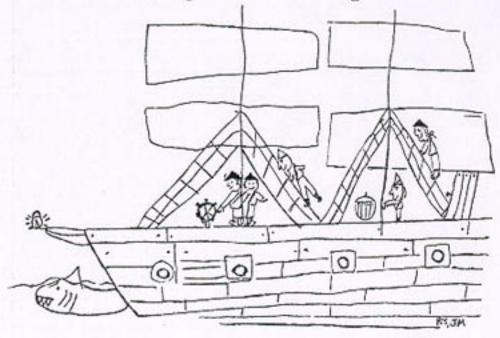
On July 9, 1776, a copy of the five-day-old Declaration of Independence arrived in New York City, brought by courier on horseback from Philadelphia. After the document was read aloud to the citizens of the city, there was great rejoicing and noisy celebrating by the Patriots.

The Sons of Liberty immediately thought of the statue of King George III, made of lead, covered with gold leaf, which had been standing for six years in Bowling Green, near the Battery, at the tip of Manhattan. It had been made in England by the famous British sculptor, Joseph Wilton.

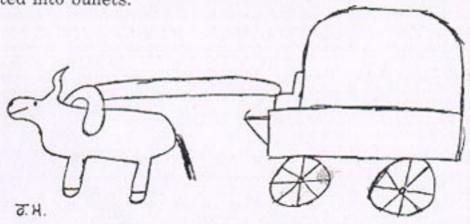
"Let's pull down old George and melt him into bullets to shoot back at his soldiers," shouted a leader of the Patriots.

"Hurrah," answered the crowd.

Ropes were thrown around various parts of the 4,000 pound statue and the cheering throng pulled. Down came the King and his horse with a heavy thud. Then men cut off the King's head and hacked up the rest of the statue so that the pieces could be put aboard a ship for Norwalk, Connecticut. During the night Tories stole the head and arranged to send it to England.



In Norwalk, the sad-looking remains of the once proud statue were placed on oxcarts in charge of Henry Chichester who was to take the caravan sixty miles north to Litchfield, an important supply depot for the Continental Army, where the lead would be melted into bullets



The first overnight stop was in Wilton. Chichester came to the Lambert Tavern, but decided it was not the place to stop with chopped-up King George because Lambert was a Tory.



Lambert House, Wilton, Conn. 1724

So Chichester drove his oxen a quarter mile farther up the Danbury Road to Clapp Raymond's Tavern (now called Fitch House). Raymond was an enthusiastic Patriot, a captain in the colonial militia. The next morning when Chichester got his carts together he realized several pieces of the statue were missing. There were several Tory families in Wilton living near Raymond's Tavern. Had they stolen parts of the statue?



Clapp Raymond Tavern (Fitch House), Wilton, Conn. 1732

One of these Tories was Job Burlock, who lived scarcely an eighth of a mile north from the Tavern. In 1940 Burlock's house became the home of the late philanthropist, Charles A. Dana, who named it "Tory Hole."



Job Burlock House ("Tory Hole"), Wilton, Conn. 1760

When Chichester and his caravan of carts entered Litchfield, he turned down South Street to the beautiful Tapping Reeve House where the first law school in the United States was established. Across the street from the Reeve House was the Oliver Wolcott, Sr. House where the pieces of the statue were melted down into 40,088 bullets by Mistress Wolcott and neighborhood women. The men were away at war.



Tapping Reeve House, Litchfield, Conn. 1773

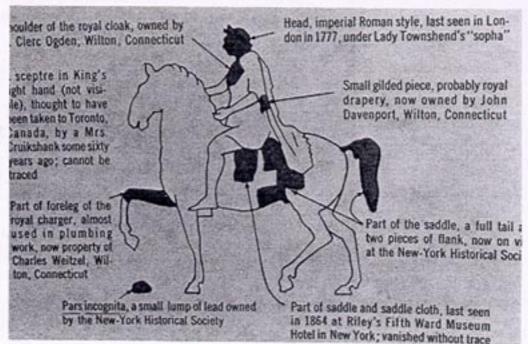


Oliver Wolcott, Sr. House, Litchfield, Conn. 1753



Painting of ladies casting bullets beside the Wolcott House, done by James Calvert Smith. It hangs in the First National Bank of Litchfield.

But a 4,000-pound statue should have produced almost twice that many bullets. What happened to the other 1900 pounds of King George and his horse? Had Wilton Tories stolen and hidden the pieces?

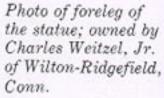


The shaded sections of the illustration indicate the parts of the statue which have turned up during the past 200 years. Except for the King's head, which was seen once by an American visitor to London in 1777, all the pieces have been found in Wilton, the first in 1832 across the road from the Raymond Tavern, in a swamp which was being drained.

In 1871 on the Coley place, where Old Danbury Road joins the present Danbury Road, four large chunks of the statue totaling two hundred pounds were found while a garden was being spaded. They included the horse's tail, part of his flank, and part of the saddle. They can be seen today at the New York Historical Society which bought them in 1878 for \$100.00.

A twenty-pound piece of the statue, identified as part of the King's cloak, is in the Connecticut State Library in Hartford. It was the gift of M. Cleric Ogden of Wilton.

A hefty twenty-five-pound piece of the horse's foreleg belongs to Charles Weitzel, Jr. of Wilton-Ridgefield. It was given to him by the late Sherwood Chichester, a great grandson of Henry Chichester, who had charge of the oxcarts. The Lamberts found it in their house one hundred and fifty years after it disappeared.





In October, 1972, an amateur treasure hunter with electronic gear discovered a twenty-pound portion of the statue in another swamp across the road from the former Clapp Raymond Tavern.

The mystery still remains, however, as to the whereabouts of more than 1400 pounds of King George II and his horse. Perhaps you or someone you know will find another piece of the King George statue.

But remember . . . the Continental Army made use of 2,100 pounds of the statue on Revolutionary battlefields.



#### - THE END -

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# About the Author

Mary Elizabeth Jones, an elementary school librarian in Wilton, Connecticut, became interested in Sybil Ludington, Tryon's Raid on Danbury, and the statue of King George III when she was taking a course in Connecticut History at the University of Bridgeport under Dr. Christopher Collier. With her camera for a companion, she retraced the routes of General Tryon, Sybil, and the pieces of King George.

Miss Jones says, "It was exciting and exhilarating to keep discovering statues, highway markers, graves, etc. pertaining to important Revolutionary events which had taken place on the very ground on which I was standing. Especially impressive were various old houses which had sheltered or looked out on the people I was studying. I wrote a few pages about these Revolutionary activities which had happened right in our town or in nearby villages for my students and was pleased with their enthusiastic response. Young stamp collectors had wondered who Sybil Ludington was. With fourth graders participating, we developed a slide-tape show for PTA night, complete with children's drawings. I'm still turning up additional information about these events and people of 200 years ago."

A graduate of Colby College and Simmons College School of Library Science, Miss Jones has written numerous articles, mostly on books and authors, which have appeared in various periodicals in the United States and Australia. Her first story, a description of a visit to the Grand Canyon, illustrated with a picture she had taken, was published in a children's magazine when she was eleven years old.



Sybil Ludington & Youthful Heroine



