

*How
Our
Freedom
Was
Won*
Through Young Eyes



Patricia J. Cunningham

*Cover photo:
Morgan's Rifle Corps
Jockey Hollow, NJ
75th anniversary celebration
Morristown National Historical Park —
our country's first*

Although this is a novel, the Revolutionary War events are all true: it all could have happened.

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by
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HOW OUR FREEDOM WAS WON **Through Young Eyes**



Jessica woke up hungry, thinking of food for the first time in several days. *I'm hungry! I'm really hungry!* she thought. *And I feel well. I finally feel well!*

She reached for her wrap and sprang out of bed, only to have to sit back down. Her legs still felt a bit weak. She got up more cautiously this time and made her way to the door.

“Papa! I’m better, Papa!” she called out happily. “I feel better!”

Ob, Jessa! I’m so glad!

“Papa? Why are you whispering? Where are you, Papa?”

There was no answer. The house was very quiet.

“WHERE IS EVERYONE?” she called out.

She made her way downstairs. Something didn’t feel right. There was a draft. The door was wide open! Grandmamma and Grandpapa were standing there — just staring down the road. When she got to the door, she saw a

horse and rider galloping away.

She slowly remembered what had happened earlier that afternoon. The doctor had come to check on them. She had seen him just before she fell asleep. That must be the doctor leaving now. Something was most definitely wrong!

“This is without a doubt the worst day of my life!” she heard Grandpapa say.

“What?” Grandmamma’s voice sounded like it was coming from somewhere far away.

“I said ... Oh, Becca!” Grandpapa pulled Grandmamma into his arms.

They hugged quietly and long. Jessica stood very still and watched them. She was getting scared.

“Now, what?” Grandmamma finally asked. “How can we do this? The children!”

Grandpapa shook his head slowly. “I don’t know, Becca. I just don’t know.”

“Was it like this in the War? When you lost your friends? Is this how terrible it felt?”

“Like this? No! No, it wasn’t like this. It was bad, but it wasn’t like this. Nothing has ever been as bad as this!”

Silence fell upon them again. They continued to look down the road, as if the answers were there. Now Jessica felt *very* scared!

“Why did *he* die when *I* lived through it?”

Died? wondered Jessica. *Who died?*

“It should have been *me* — not Alan.”

Alan? ... Papa?

Grandpapa continued, "This is all wrong! Why did this happen? This is not supposed to happen. Your son is supposed to ..." He stopped in mid-sentence as a warm whisper settled around his ear.

*You can do it, Papa! You're a strong man.
You can do this.*

"I don't know if I can," he answered, too much in shock over the loss of his son to be surprised at hearing his voice.

"Your son is supposed to I don't know if I can? That doesn't make sense, Rob," Grandmamma looked at Grandpapa. You look like you've seen a ghost. Are you all right?"

"I ummm ... Jessica!"

Jessica stood in front of her grandparents with her hands on her hips. She looked up at each of them and exclaimed bewilderedly, "Papa can't be dead: I just talked to him."

Chapter One
Chores Before Leaving
July 3, 1826 – Early Morning



“JESSICA, JONATHON!” Grandmamma called. “It’s time to get up: today’s our big day! Are you two awake?”

Jessica was awake; she hopped out of bed eagerly. There was much to do before they could leave. “I’m awake, Grandmamma. I think Jonathon is too.”

“I AM! I AM AWAKE!” Jonathon jumped out of bed. “Jessie, tell me again. Where are we going? What are we going to do there? How much fun will it be?”

“We’re going to Apple Valley! We’re going to a celebration! There will be lots of people there, and children, too. It will be lots and lots of fun! We’re going to sleep there two nights!”

“Where’s Apple Valley?”

“Well, I don’t really know. I know we’re going to ride in the wagon for a long time.”

Jessica poured water into the basin and washed her face.

After a quick brush at her long wavy, thick, brown hair, she pulled on her dress.

“I’ve used up the last of the water, Jonathon. You better hurry and get some more.”

“You know I will, Jessie. Why do you always have to tell me what to do?”

Jonathon pulled on his trousers and shirt and quickly tied his long, light brown hair at his neck. He hurried downstairs with a, “Good Morning, Grandmamma! I’ll get the water.”

Grandmamma opened her mouth to say “good morning,” but Jonathon had already stormed out into the yard. She looked up to see Jessica descending at a more normal speed.

“Good Morning, Jessica! Isn’t it a lovely day? Will you please fetch me some eggs? I’ve used up the last of them in the muffins: I need more to make breakfast.”

Jessica hadn’t seen Grandmamma look this cheerful in a long time — not since before her papa died. Oh, this was going to be a grand adventure!

Then she heard it again — that whisper — the one she’d been hearing for several months — since her papa died.



Go hug her, Jessa, and tell her you love her.

It felt so good to be called Jessa. Only her papa had called her that. She did as requested, surprising her

grandmamma. “What was that for?” Grandmamma asked, but she hugged back and said, “I love you, too, Jessica.”

On the way to the chicken coop, Jessica passed Grandpapa leading Daisy and Clover to the wagon. He, too, looked exceptionally happy.

“Good morning, Grandpapa! Oh, look at Daisy and Clover! They’re prancing like they know it’s a special day, too.”

“Good morning, Jessie-Bessie. Oh, they know all right! Isn’t it a beautiful morning?”

“Oh, yes!” she replied happily, but then suddenly realized something was wrong!

Her sunny mood evaporated. Where was Bitsey? Her pet lamb usually came to say good morning to her by now. She looked around and called out, “Good morning, Bitsey! Where are you?”

Still no lamb. She’d have to look for her later; Grandmamma needed eggs. When Jessica reached the chicken coop, she greeted her hens, “Good morning, girls!”

Her favorite had no egg this morning. “That’s all right, Henrietta. I love you anyway.”

She collected the eggs and carefully placed them in her basket. “I’ll be right back, girls,” she assured her hens and returned to the house.

“Here are your eggs, Grandmamma. Should I finish with my girls now, or do you need help?”

“Lunch is ready to be packed except the muffins.

They're still cooling; we'll add them later. You can put the rest in the basket for me so I can start breakfast."

"Did you see Bitsey this morning, Grandmamma? She usually comes running to me as soon as I walk out the door."

"No, Jessica. I didn't. You can go look for her as soon as you finish packing the lunch. She'll probably be waiting for you at the henhouse."

Bitsey wasn't waiting at the henhouse, and she wasn't in any of her usual spots. Finally, Jessica spotted her up against the side of the barn, lying still. That wasn't like her pet.

"Oh, Bitsey!" Jessica exclaimed and ran to her. She crouched next to the lamb and stroked her head and neck.

"Oh, poor, poor Bitsey," she crooned. With obvious difficulty, Bitsey lifted her head and looked at her mistress.

"Is something wrong with Bitsey?" Grandpapa appeared and stooped to investigate. "What's the matter, little lamb? Not feeling so well today?"

He gently reached for Bitsey's head and looked into her eyes.

"Is she going to be all right, Grandpapa?"

"I don't know for sure, Jessie-Bessie, but it doesn't look serious to me. I expect she'll be fine when we get back."

Grandpapa's right, Jessa, the whisper assured her. Bitsey will be fine.

“Oh, I can’t leave her when she’s sick. I’ll just have to stay home.” She wanted to believe the whisper, but she just didn’t feel good about the way her lamb looked.

“Now, Jessica, you’ve been looking forward to this trip for so long. We all have.”

“I know, but look at poor Bitsey!” Jessica wailed.

Jonathon showed up a few minutes later. “What’s the matter with Bitsey?”

“Oh, Jonathon! Look at her. Something’s wrong! I think I should stay home with her.”

“I’ll stay home with you, Jessie. I can help you take care of her. Oh, look! Here’s Elizabeth.”

Elizabeth was Jonathon and Jessica’s older cousin. She lived on the farm next to them.

“Well, you sure don’t look like you’re about to be off on a grand adventure. You look downright sad!”

“Oh, Elizabeth. Look at Bitsey! She’s sick! I don’t want to leave her!”

Elizabeth bent down and put her arms around Bitsey’s neck. “I’ll take care of her, Jessie. You know I will. You’ll only be gone for three days. She loves me, too, you know!”

Elizabeth’s right, Jessa. She’ll take good care of Bitsey!

This time Jessica decided to believe.

Chapter Ten
Loyalist Or Patriot?
July 3, 1826 – Evening



Jessica stared into the blazing bonfire. Her thoughts darted about. She ran her fingers lazily through her new puppy's fur. He was actually hers *and* Jonathon's. That was all right: she understood that one was enough. This one was the best one, anyway. He was just so adorable!

She really didn't think this was a very good way to start a celebration. Talking to Emily, her new friend, would be so much more interesting. She loved Emily's dress. What did she use to dye it such a beautiful blue? Maybe she could find out tomorrow.

Grandmamma and Grandpapa were so excited about tonight. She'd try to listen to some of this whatever-it-was.

Some of the talk fleetingly caught her attention. What were they saying about taxation without representation? She had no idea what that was.

This was such fun staying up late!

Loyalist? Patriot?

Oooh, there were lightning bugs dancing around the apple orchard. Now *that* would be a fun place to be right now!

Tea Parties?

Boston Massacre?

Everyone seemed to be talking at once.

“The king was not being fair to us,” one man said.

“We fought for Great Britain in the French and Indian War!” another man exclaimed.

“Our representatives tried to tell the king we wouldn’t stand for it, but he just didn’t listen. Why, even Ben Franklin went to England to try to explain how we felt!” This was Grandpapa.

“We didn’t want soldiers living in our homes!” A woman added.

“And those taxes!”

“Taxes on sugar, taxes on our papers, taxes on tea. Remember how we drank our own brews? We came up with some pretty good ones.”

“We were Americans even then! We knew how to show Great Britain how we felt. Those tea parties were something. We even had one here in New Jersey!” This woman looked quite proud!

Jessica couldn’t be quiet any longer. She jumped up, still cradling her puppy. “*What* tea parties? How did that show anybody that *who* were Americans. I thought we were

all Americans! What is this taxation without *what*? And what are Loyalists and Patriots?”

Grandmamma and Grandpapa turned toward Jessica in amazement. Grandpapa whispered to Grandmamma, “Is that our Jessica? I didn’t think she cared about any of this.”

Go, Jessa! You’re doing great!

It was quiet for a minute, and then Mr. Clark stood up. “Those are some good questions, Jessica. I think we can answer them. First, why don’t you and your puppy settle down and get comfortable? You children are scattered all around. All of you come sit right in front of me. That way I can hear your questions better.”

Jessica looked at her grandparents who smiled and nodded at her. Holding her puppy with one hand, she grabbed Jonathon’s hand with the other. They settled in front of Mr. Clark who stood next to the fire with the apple orchard at his back. “Good,” he said. “Well, now — we also have Ann, Emily, and Jeremiah. You three please come sit with Jessica and Jonathon. Did you all meet?”

They all nodded. Then Jessica said, “Well, no. I know Ann and Emily, but not — I think you said Jeremiah.”

“Yes,” Jeremiah smiled at her. “That’s me. Hi, Jessica.”

“I guess we got you pretty confused,” Mr. Clark confessed. “We were all talking at once. You must have questions. Who would like to go first — Jessica?”

“No, that’s all right. Let someone else go first.”

Ann said, “All right. I’ll start. You had tea parties?”

What does that have to do with a war?”

“King George wanted us to pay taxes on tea. We didn’t think that was fair. To avoid the taxes, we stopped drinking tea. A few Americans took it a step further. One night a group boarded a ship in Boston. They found the containers of tea and threw them overboard. Other groups did the same thing in several other places. They burned the tea in Greenwich, New Jersey. Nobody was ever going to pay taxes on *that* tea!”

“That’s some way to party!” Jeremiah laughed. “Is tea the only thing the king taxed?”

“No. First it was sugar, then a year later, our important papers, and then glass, paper, and tea. That French and Indian War had cost a lot of money, and they wanted us to pay for it. We didn’t think it was fair that we were taxed without any say. That’s what we called ‘taxation without representation.’”

“Is that different from now?” Jeremiah asked.

“Yes — very different. Today, people who *represent* us decide our taxes. That means we choose (or elect) people to go to Washington. These are our representatives. They work with representatives from the rest of the country. They all work together to do what they think is best for all of us. Do you all understand?”

The children all nodded thoughtfully.

“Jessica, didn’t you ask about Loyalists and Patriots?”

“Yes, I guess I did.”

“Well, now! In the beginning, we *all* wanted to work things out with Great Britain. We were *all* loyal to King George. I guess that means we were all Loyalists before the Revolution started. As time went by, many of us changed. We realized that Great Britain was never going to treat us the way we wanted. We gradually became Patriots. We wanted to fight for our Independence. We wanted to be our own country.”

“That sounds right to me.” Jessica nodded seriously. “Didn’t everybody agree?”

“It’s easy now to see that we were right; it wasn’t easy then, though! There were both Loyalists and Patriots right here in Apple Valley. Even members of the same families sometimes didn’t agree. Ben Franklin was a Patriot; his son, William, was a Loyalist. Oh, it was a hard time to be living in America!”

“I guess I better ask a question, too,” Emily whispered to Jessica.

“Ask about the Boston Massacre,” Jessica suggested.

Mr. Clark heard that and smiled. “Emily, did I hear you ask about the Boston Massacre?”

“Um ... yes!” Emily nodded vigorously. “Please tell us about this Boston Massacre. I don’t even know what a massacre is!”

“A massacre is the unfair killing of a lot of people. In the Boston Massacre, British soldiers killed American colonists. The way the story came to us, it was all the fault

of the British. British soldiers shot Americans for no reason. Well, now — you can imagine how that made us feel. After the War, we heard there was more to that story. At the time, though, we really believed there were no grounds for the British to shoot Americans.”

“Wow! No wonder you wanted to fight!” Jeremiah exclaimed.

The rest of the children nodded and murmured their agreement.

Mr. Clark continued, “Things just kept getting worse and worse. Finally we all knew war was coming. We had to decide which side we were on. Were we a Loyalist or a Patriot?”

Mr. Clark looked slowly from one child to the next. “Well, now — those of you who would have chosen to be a Patriot, stand up.”

All five children jumped to their feet. The puppy barked enthusiastically.

“I thought so!” Mr. Clark nodded and smiled at them. “You would have been good Patriots, too!”

Jessica looked around to be sure nobody was watching her, and then tentatively addressed her papa softly, “How am I doing, Papa?”

 ***Wonderful, Jessa! Just wonderful!*** 

“And now I know why you called the puppy ‘Patriot,’” Jessica added, this time in a strong, confident voice.

Mr. Clark smiled again and explained, “The farmer

who gave him to your grandpapa called him that. He liked the name, so he kept it. Now — I think we better get started on our War stories.”

Chapter Twelve

The War In The North

May 1775 - December 1776



“It’s just so frustrating!” Frank exclaimed. “Why isn’t anybody doing anything? It’s been weeks!”

“It will be December before the New Jersey regiment leaves!” Frank’s brother, James, was not happy either.

The four friends were at the Streamside Inn. John and Richard remained quiet: they’d had this conversation many times. There was nothing to add that hadn’t been already said over and over again. A traveler settled next to them without being noticed. A second traveler arrived and demanded attention. “What’s a fellow got to do to get a drink around here?”

“Oh, I’m sorry.” Richard stood to serve them. “My father’s taking a well-deserved night off. I’m filling in for him. I’m Richard and these are my friends, James, Frank, and John.”

“I’m Rob,” the traveler said and turned to the other guest.

“I’m Henry.”

“I overheard you talking about joining the regiment,” Rob

said. *"I'm looking to do that, too."*

"Are you old enough?" Richard asked.

"I'm sixteen. Sure I'm old enough!"

"Nothing much seems to be happening about that," James complained. *"We're just about ready to head north by ourselves!"*

"Why not?" Rob remarked.

"Why not what?" James asked.

"I'm serious," Rob assured them. *"We could do that. If all of us ride up to Massachusetts together, the Army will surely take us."*

Rob studied each of them as their initial surprise turned to thoughtful consideration, and then approval.

"Hey, Rob — I like you! That is a good idea!"

"Why didn't we think of that?"

"My wife won't be happy, but I'll come with you, too," Henry said.

"Well, now — I also have an unhappy wife! She says she understands, but she is certainly not happy," Richard sympathized.

They made plans to leave in a week's time. Rob and Henry returned home to make their arrangements.

One week later, on the scheduled day of departure, Rob approached Apple Valley. He halted his horse just after the lines of the town came into view. "Whoa, Lightning! Let's stop for a minute."