

# I

## JOHN WYATT, SPY

By Joe Lee

A barrel maker from Botetourt County is captured in South Carolina, talks his way out of prison and then gets recruited to spy on Loyalists in the New River Valley. Will he be able to prevent a Loyalist attack on the lead mines in Southwest Virginia?



1773

1774

1775

1776

1777

1778

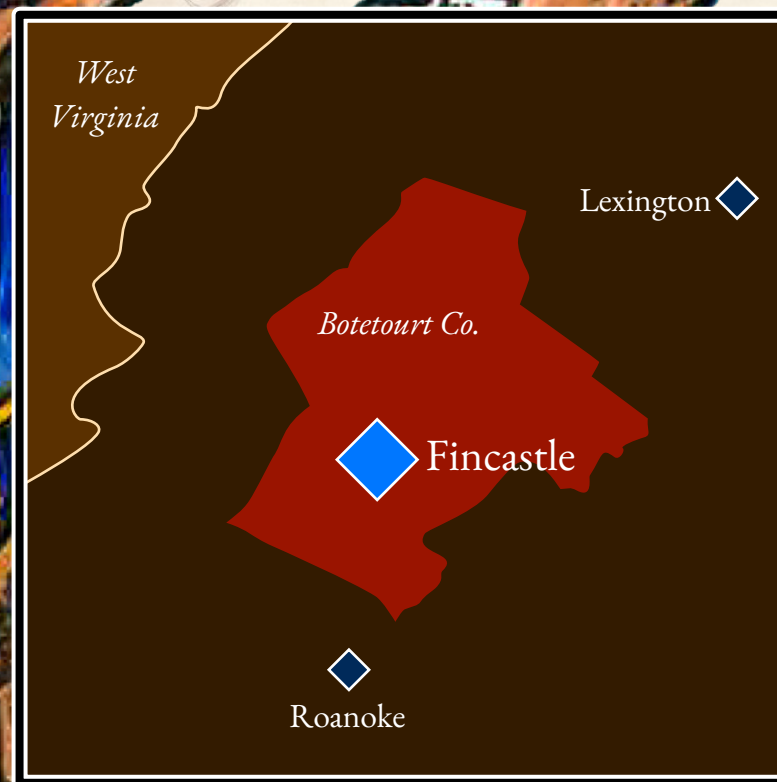
1779

1780

The Battles of  
Lexington and  
Concord

Declaration of  
Independence  
is signed

Battle of  
Monmouth in  
New Jersey





IN 1833, AN OLD GENTLEMAN ENTERED A  
GOVERNMENT OFFICE IN SOUTHERN INDIANA...

YOU OWE ME MONEY  
— A SOLDIER'S PENSION!

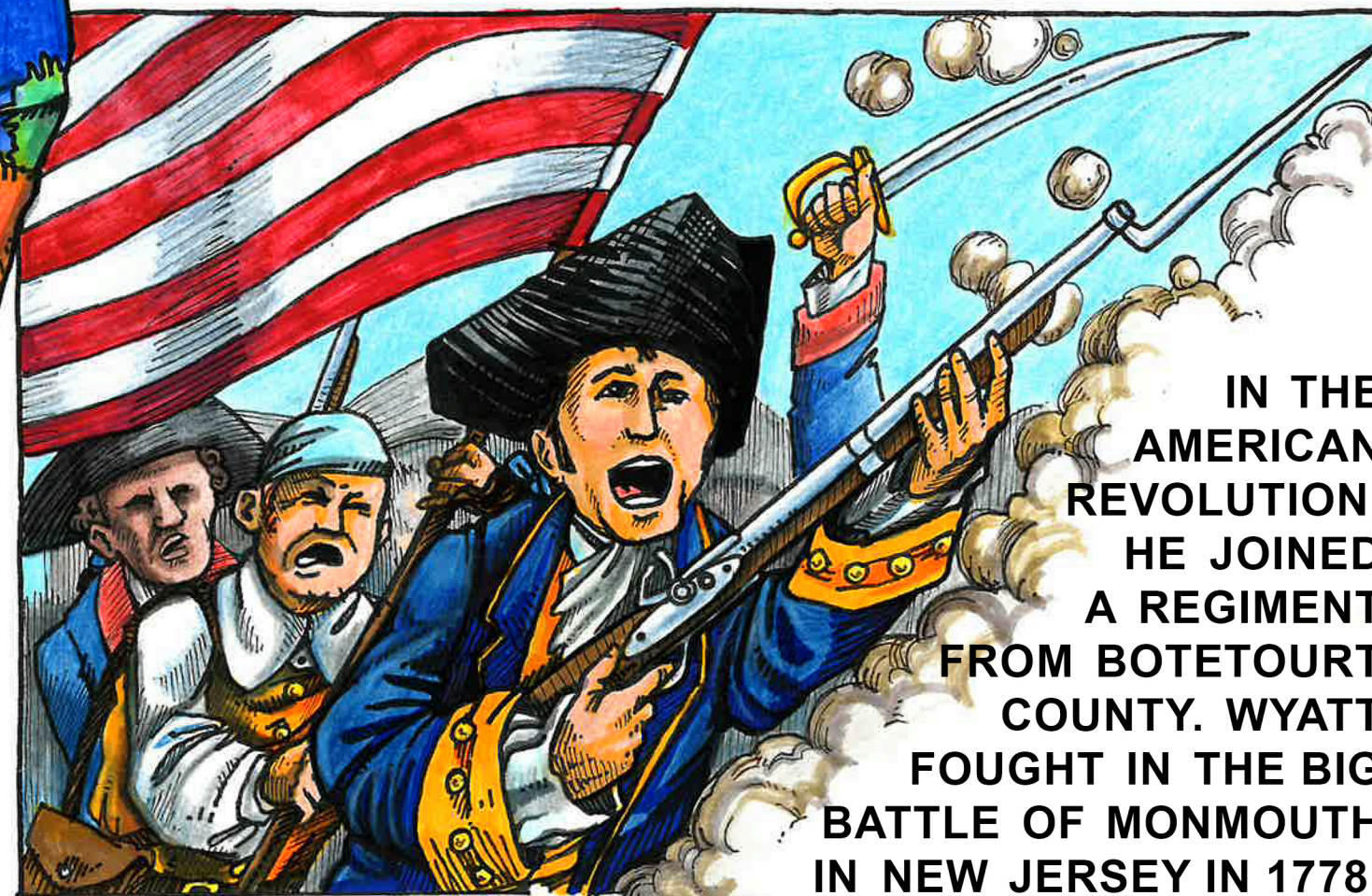
BUT... WE'VE ONLY  
BEEN A STATE SINCE  
1816! HOW...??

A *FEDERAL* PENSION.  
WITHOUT ME, THIS  
OFFICE — THIS STATE  
— WOULDN'T EXIST.



THE MAN WAS  
JOHN WYATT,  
BORN IN  
1748.

ARRIVING IN  
ORANGE  
COUNTY,  
VIRGINIA, HE  
WAS SOON  
INDENTURED  
TO A  
BARREL  
MAKER.



IN THE  
AMERICAN  
REVOLUTION,  
HE JOINED  
A REGIMENT  
FROM BOTETOURT  
COUNTY. WYATT  
FOUGHT IN THE BIG  
BATTLE OF MONMOUTH  
IN NEW JERSEY IN 1778.



HE THEN FOUGHT IN THE  
SIEGE OF CHARLESTOWN,  
SOUTH CAROLINA,  
IN 1780.

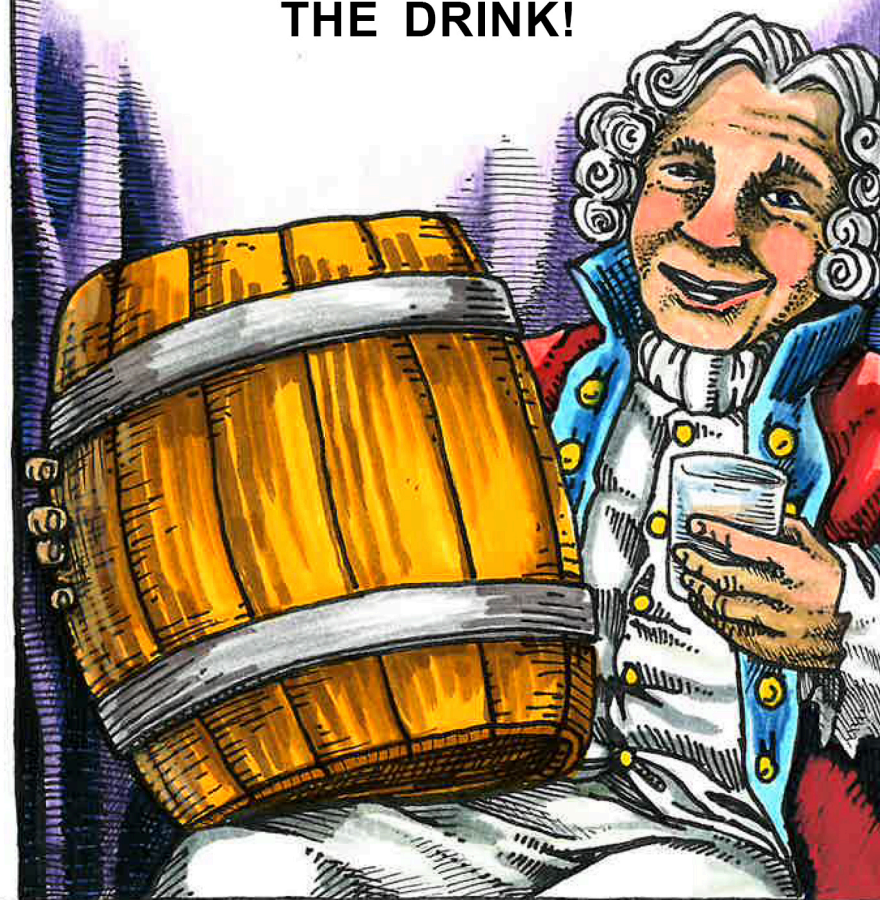


WYATT  
WAS  
CAPTURED  
BY THE  
REDCOATS!

WYATT BEFRIENDED  
A ROYAL OFFICER  
NAMED JOSEPH  
SEALS. WYATT'S  
KNOWLEDGE OF  
BARRELS CAME  
IN HANDY...



SEALS ENJOYED RUM, AND  
SOMEHOW WYATT GOT  
HIM A BARREL OF  
THE DRINK!



WYATT GOT AN  
OPEN GATE AND A  
PASS AS "JOSEPH  
SEALS" FOR SAFE  
PASSAGE.



3 MONTHS  
AND 400 MILES  
LATER: HOME!

LOCAL PATRIOT OFFICERS  
WERE WOWED BY THE SMOOTH-  
TALKING WYATT'S ESCAPE.  
THEY HATCHED A NEW PLAN...

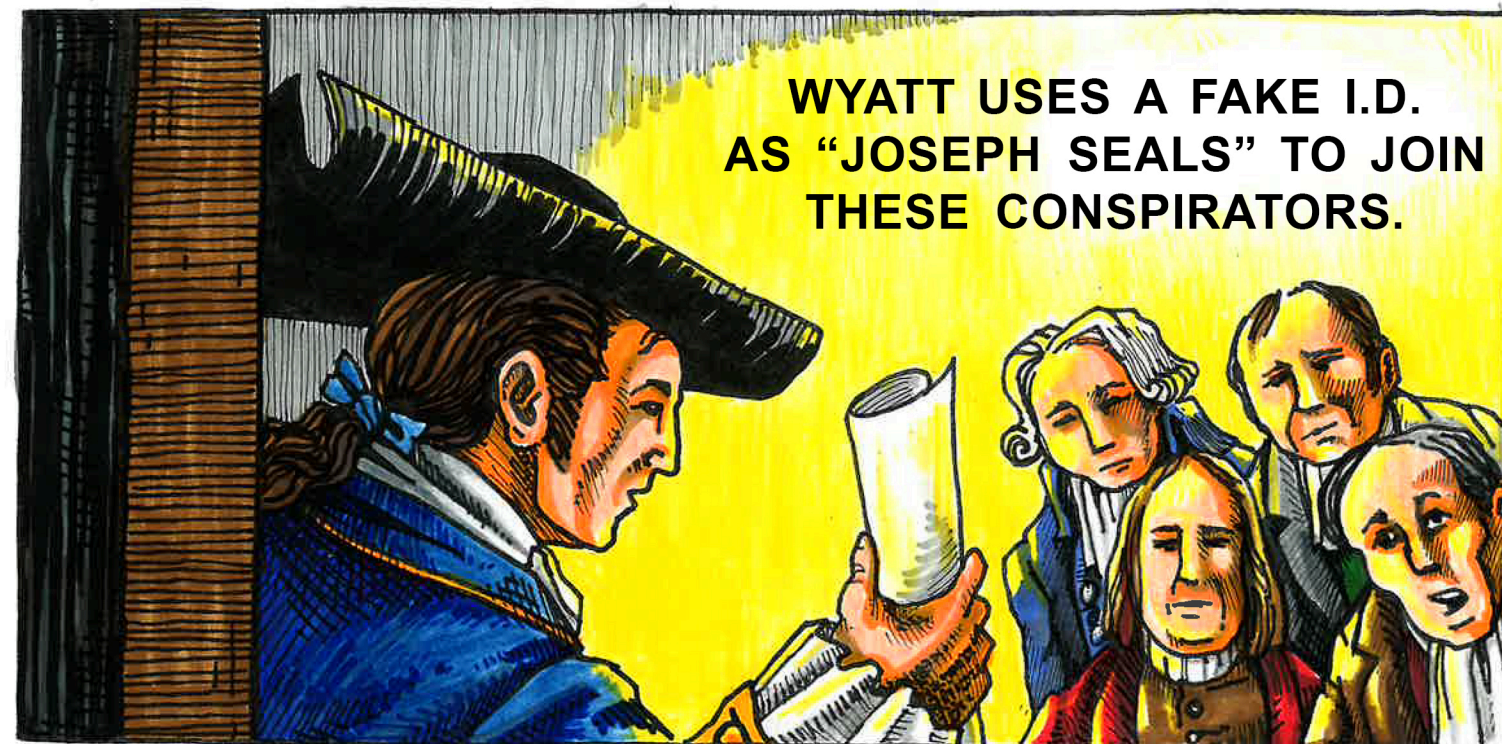




WEST OF THE BLUE RIDGE, LOYALISTS WERE PLOTTING TO CAPTURE LOCAL LEAD MINES THAT PROVIDED AMMUNITION FOR THE PATRIOT SOLDIERS.



WYATT USES A FAKE I.D. AS "JOSEPH SEALS" TO JOIN THESE CONSPIRATORS.



IF WE TAKE CONTROL OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA, WE CAN SEND THE AMMO TO THE KING'S MEN!



THEN WE RAID THE ALBEMARLE PRISON CAMP AND FREE THE HESSIAN MEN THERE TO FIGHT AGAIN!



**GOD SAVE THE KING!**



WYATT THOUGHT FAST...

GIVE ME NAMES OF ALL THE LOYALISTS. I WILL TAKE THE LIST TO THE KING'S ARMY SO THEY KNOW WHO TO *TRUST*. I'LL COME BACK WITH SOME REDCOATS TO HELP US – SO *DON'T* MOVE UNTIL I RETURN!





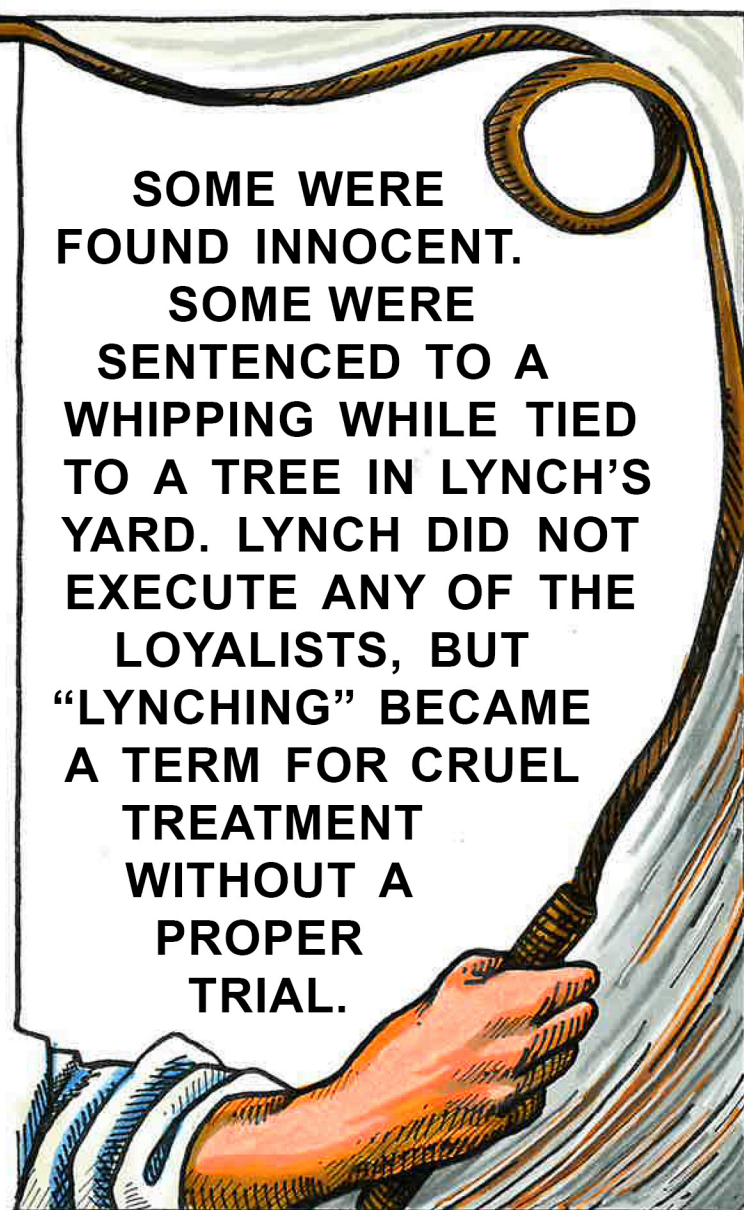
WYATT RACED TO  
COLONEL WM.  
PRESTON...

PRESTON NABBED  
THE PLOTTING  
LOYALISTS AND  
CALLED FOR  
REINFORCEMENTS  
TO GUARD THE  
LEAD MINES.  
BUT NO ONE  
KNEW WHAT  
TO DO WITH  
THE 75 TORIES  
WHO HAD BEEN  
TAKEN INTO  
CUSTODY FOR  
THEIR PLOT.



16 OF THE LOYALISTS  
WERE CHARGED WITH  
TREASON. COLONEL  
CHARLES LYNCH DID  
NOT WANT VALUABLE  
SOLDIERS TO GUARD  
THEM IN JAILS, SO HE  
DECIDED TO TRY THE  
LOYALISTS *HIMSELF*.

SOME WERE  
FOUND INNOCENT.  
SOME WERE  
SENTENCED TO A  
WHIPPING WHILE TIED  
TO A TREE IN LYNCH'S  
YARD. LYNCH DID NOT  
EXECUTE ANY OF THE  
LOYALISTS, BUT  
"LYNCHING" BECAME  
A TERM FOR CRUEL  
TREATMENT  
WITHOUT A  
PROPER  
TRIAL.



WITH THIS CONSPIRACY  
DEFEATED, THE LOCAL  
MILITIAS WERE FREE  
TO MARCH TO FIGHT  
IN THE BATTLE  
OF KING'S  
MOUNTAIN!



WYATT SIGNS UP FOR  
THE REGULAR  
AMERICAN ARMY  
AGAIN.



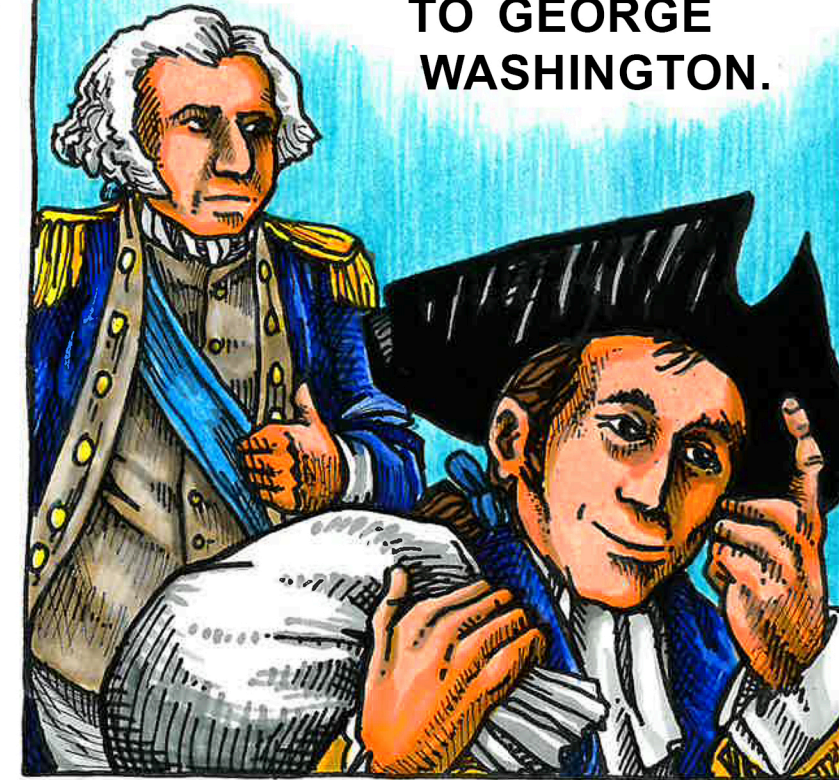
LOYALISTS THAT WYATT  
CAUGHT WERE MADE  
TO PAY HIM FOR  
SERVING!



HE GOT A TRANSFER TO  
YORKTOWN'S FIGHT,  
AWAY FROM HIS  
LOCAL POLITICS.



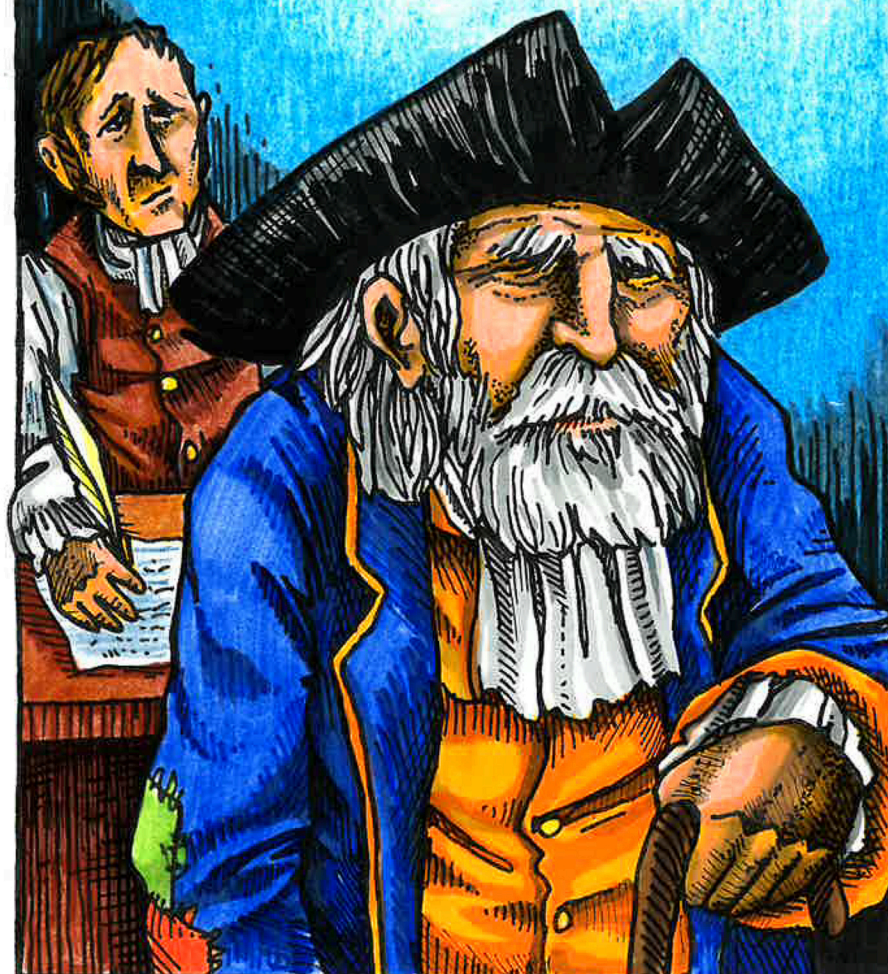
BUT HIS 2-MONTH ENLISTMENT  
EXPIRED BEFORE GENERAL  
CORNWALLIS SURRENDERED  
TO GEORGE  
WASHINGTON.



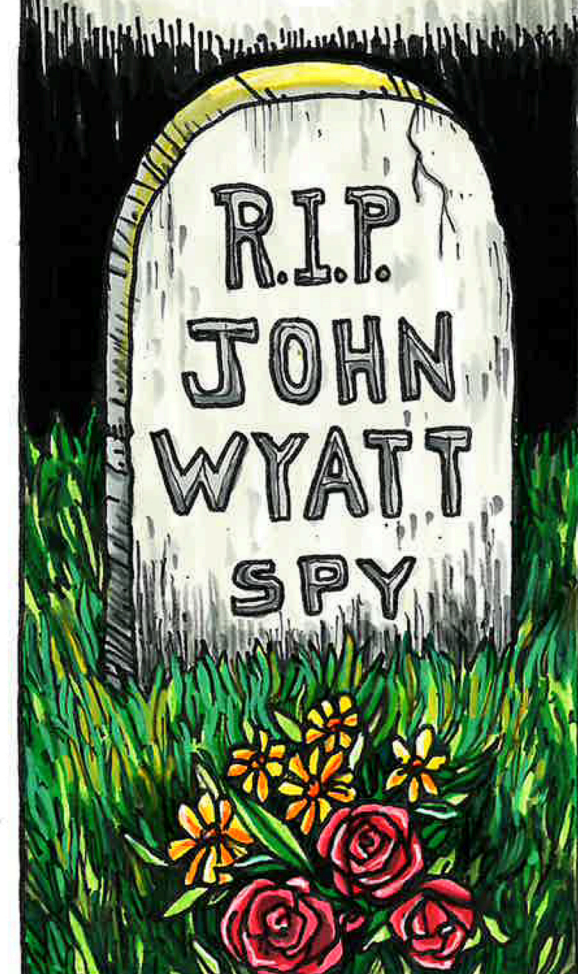
WITH WAR OVER, NEW  
ADVENTURES AWAITED!  
WYATT MOVED WEST TO  
KENTUCKY, THEN ON TO  
INDIANA.



WOULD JOHN WYATT,  
FORGOTTEN SPY OF  
THE REVOLUTION,  
GET A PENSION?



NO. HE DIED AT AGE  
85, TWO MONTHS  
AFTER FILING HIS  
CLAIM.





# STUDY GUIDE IS JOHN WYATT, SPY

## Questions to Consider

1. What was the most important point of this chapter?
2. Where are Charleston, South Carolina, and Montgomery County and Botetourt County in relation to your home?
3. What risks did John Wyatt take in becoming a spy?
4. Why would some Virginians have chosen to support the king?
5. Why were barrels so important in those days?

## Learn More

-  [“A barrel maker from Botetourt County became a spy who uncovered 'a most horrid conspiracy' among Virginia loyalists,” by Dwayne Yancey, Cardinal News](#)
-  [“At Chiswell's mines, a mixed crew of unwilling hands dug lead ore for a Patriot victory,” by Randy Walker, Cardinal News](#)
-  [“Montgomery County was a hotbed of anti-patriot fervor during the Revolution,” by Ralph Berrier, Cardinal News](#)
-  [“Podcast about a Virginia spy,” by Dutchie Jessee of Cardinal News, with Michael Hudson of Historic Smithfield estate in Montgomery County](#)