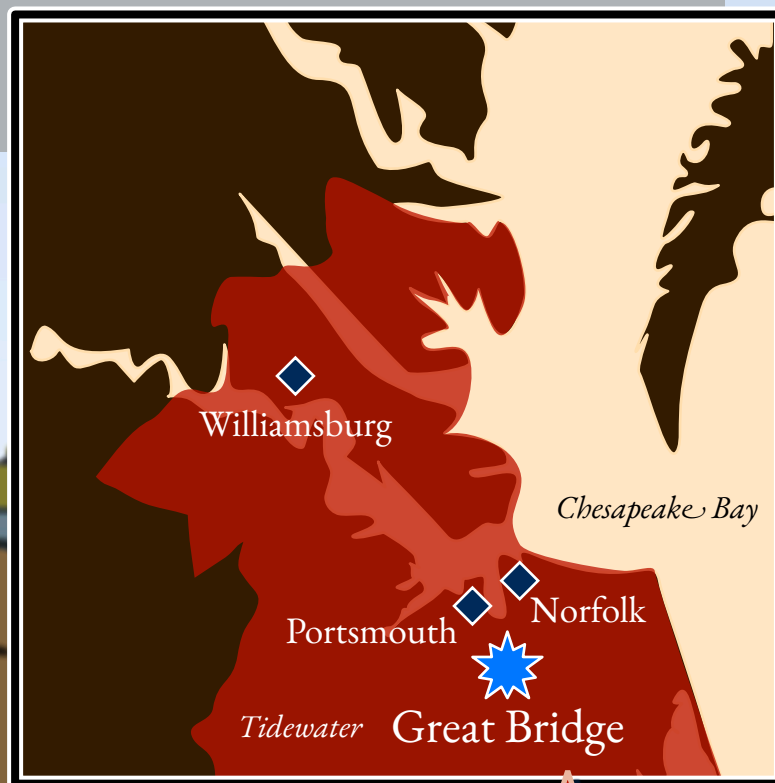
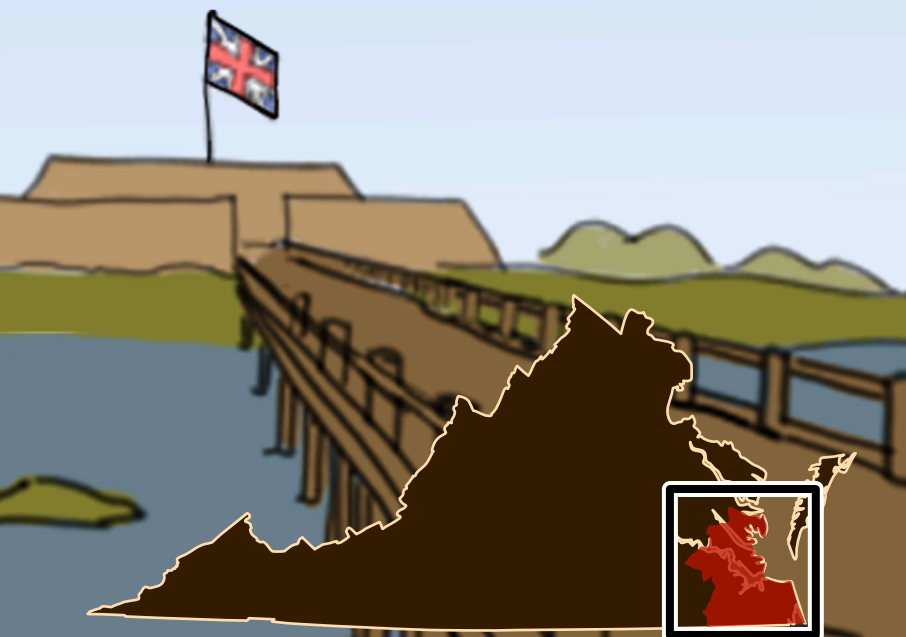


6

BILLY FLORA, HERO OF GREAT BRIDGE

By Lamont Wayne

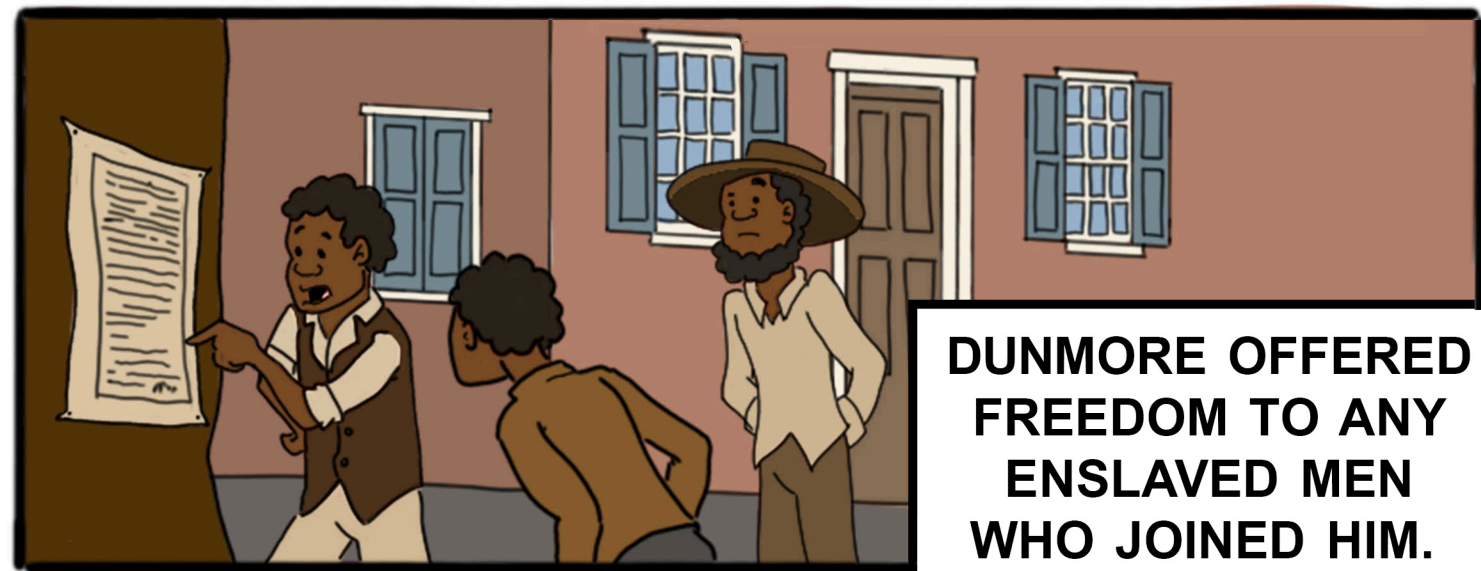
Royal government has disintegrated in Virginia! But Lord Dunmore, the Royal Governor, still hopes to retake control of the colony. He has some of the King's troops in the port city of Norfolk and is gaining volunteers: Black men who have escaped their Virginia masters to fight for their individual freedom. Will Billy Flora join Dunmore, too?





IN 1775, VIRGINIA WAS DIVIDED. SOME STAYED LOYAL TO THE BRITISH KING. OTHERS WANTED INDEPENDENCE.

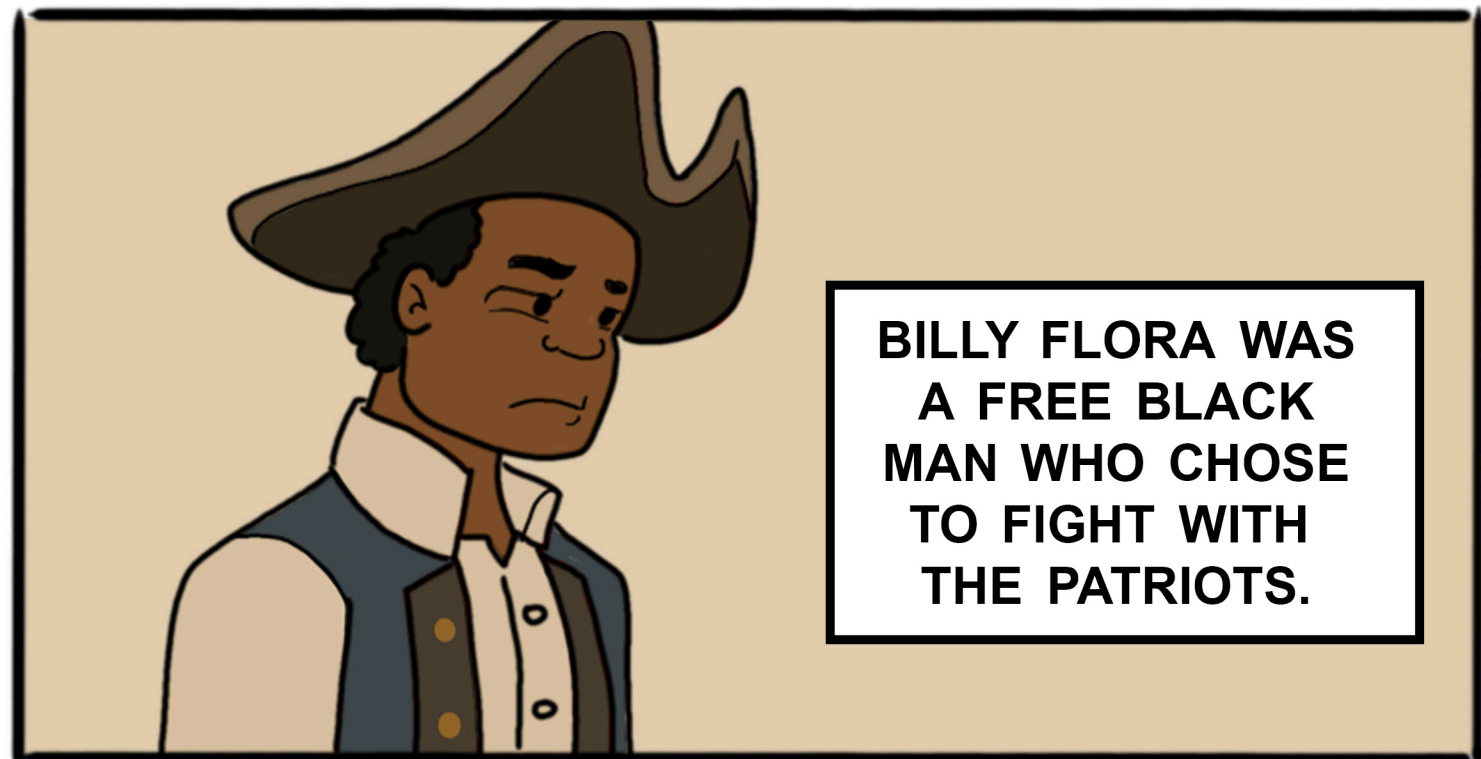
LORD DUNMORE, VIRGINIA'S ROYAL GOVERNOR, GATHERED LOYAL FORCES NEAR NORFOLK.



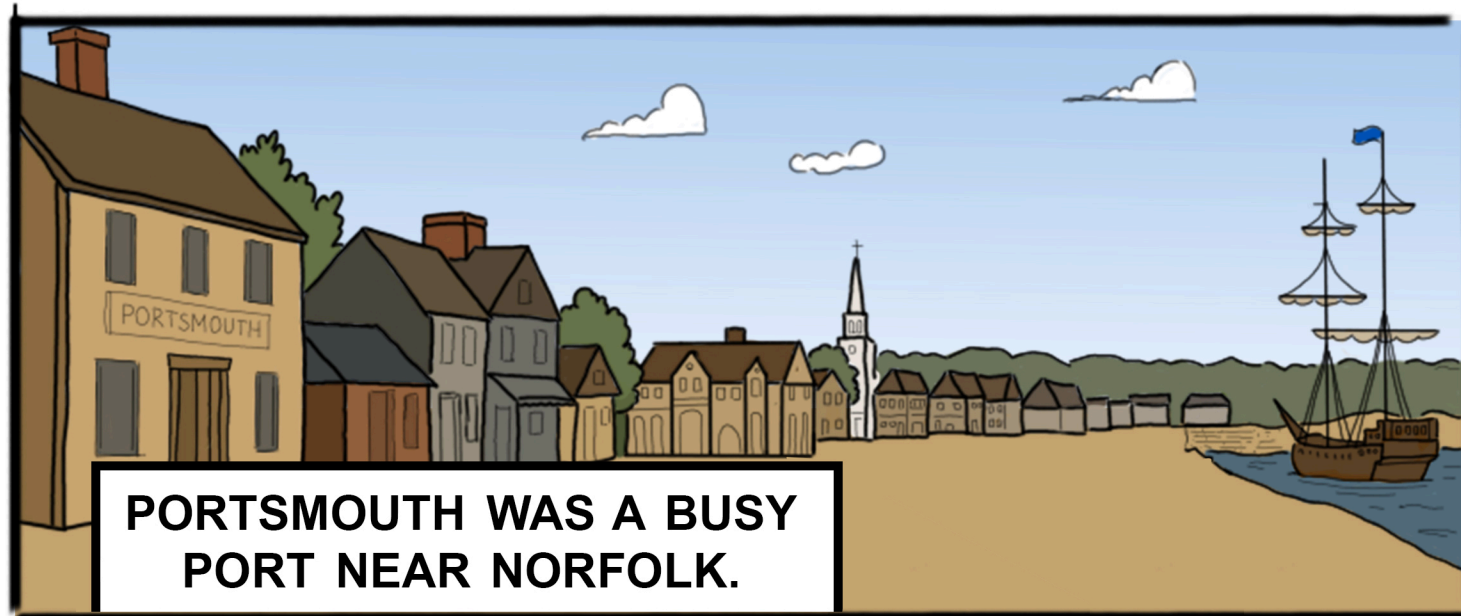
DUNMORE OFFERED FREEDOM TO ANY ENSLAVED MEN WHO JOINED HIM.



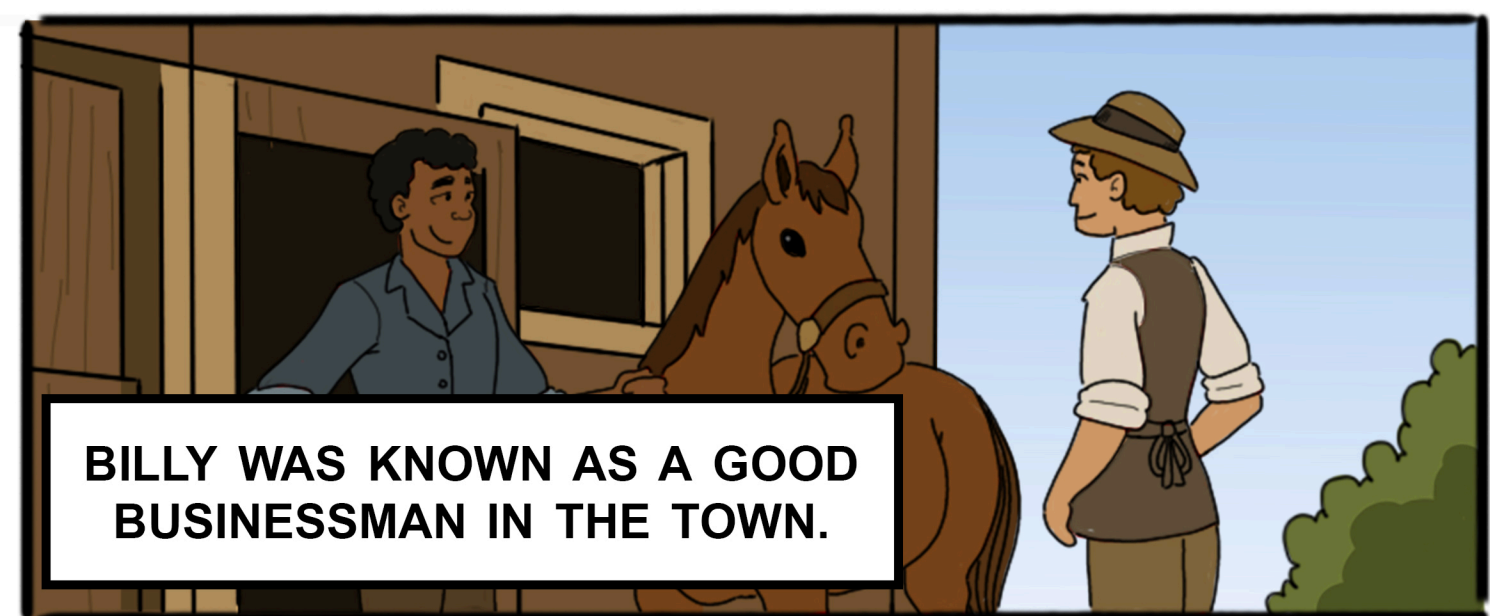
PATRIOT MEN PREPARED TO STOP DUNMORE'S ARMY.



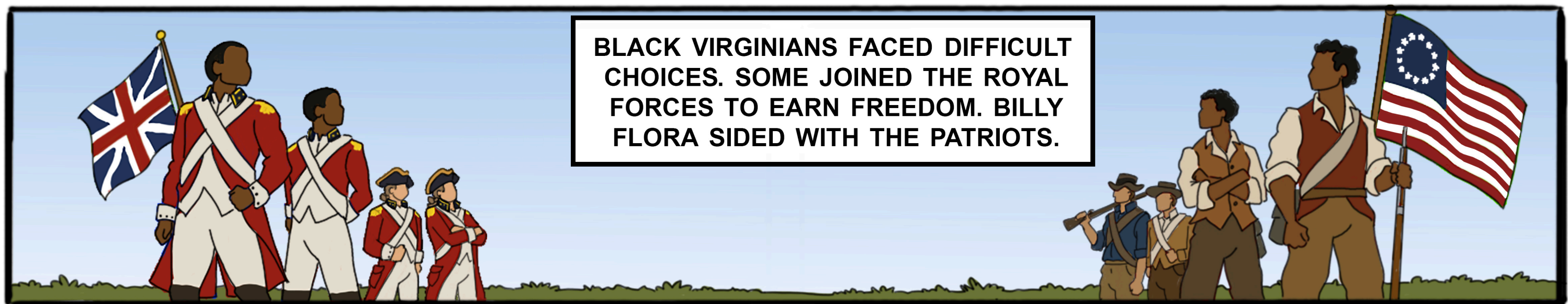
BILLY FLORA WAS A FREE BLACK MAN WHO CHOSE TO FIGHT WITH THE PATRIOTS.



PORTSMOUTH WAS A BUSY
PORT NEAR NORFOLK.



BILLY WAS KNOWN AS A GOOD
BUSINESSMAN IN THE TOWN.



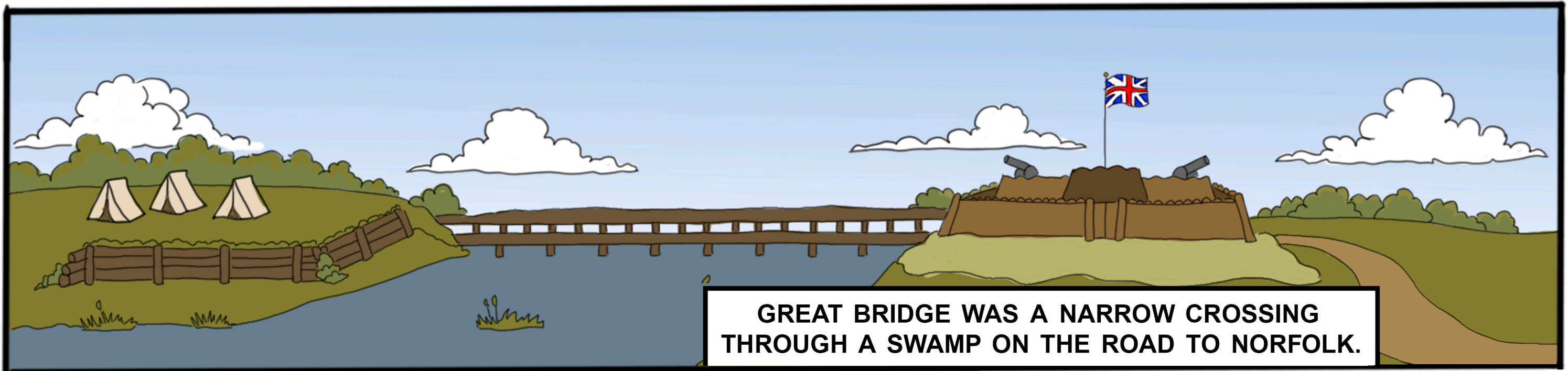
BLACK VIRGINIANS FACED DIFFICULT
CHOICES. SOME JOINED THE ROYAL
FORCES TO EARN FREEDOM. BILLY
FLORA SIDED WITH THE PATRIOTS.



BILLY JOINED
THE PATRIOT
MILITA UNIT.



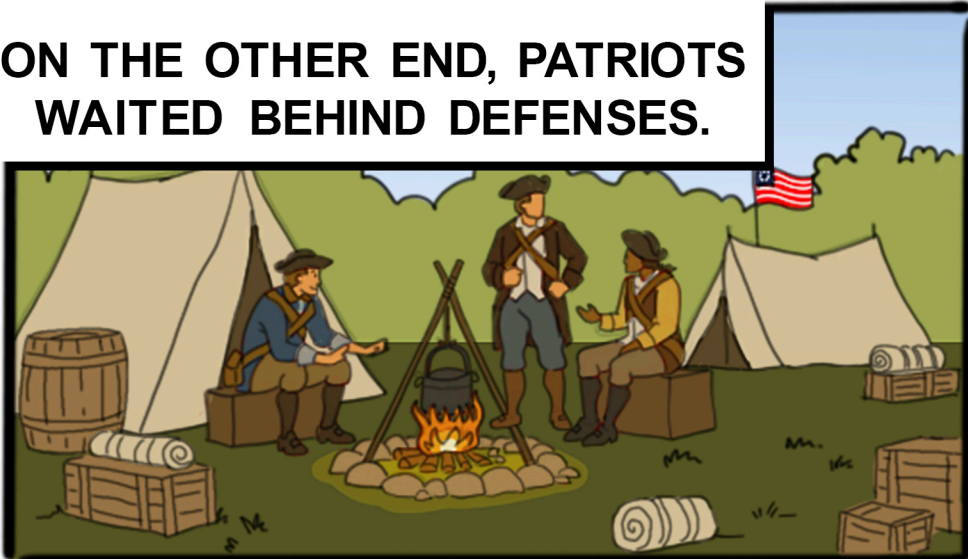
HE WAS ASSIGNED
TO GUARD THE
GREAT BRIDGE.



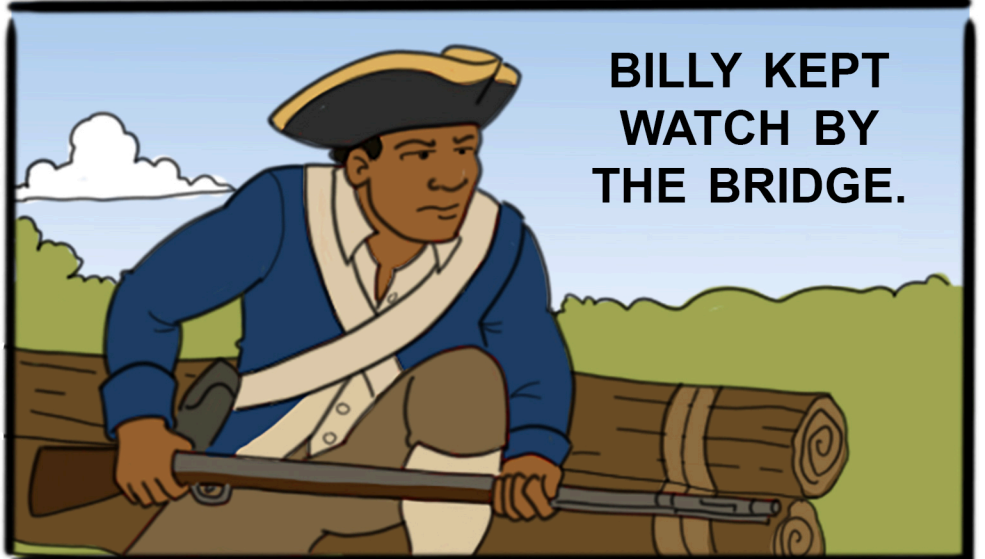
GREAT BRIDGE WAS A NARROW CROSSING
THROUGH A SWAMP ON THE ROAD TO NORFOLK.



THE LOYALISTS HELD
FORT MURRAY ON ONE
SIDE OF THE BRIDGE.



ON THE OTHER END, PATRIOTS
WAITED BEHIND DEFENSES.



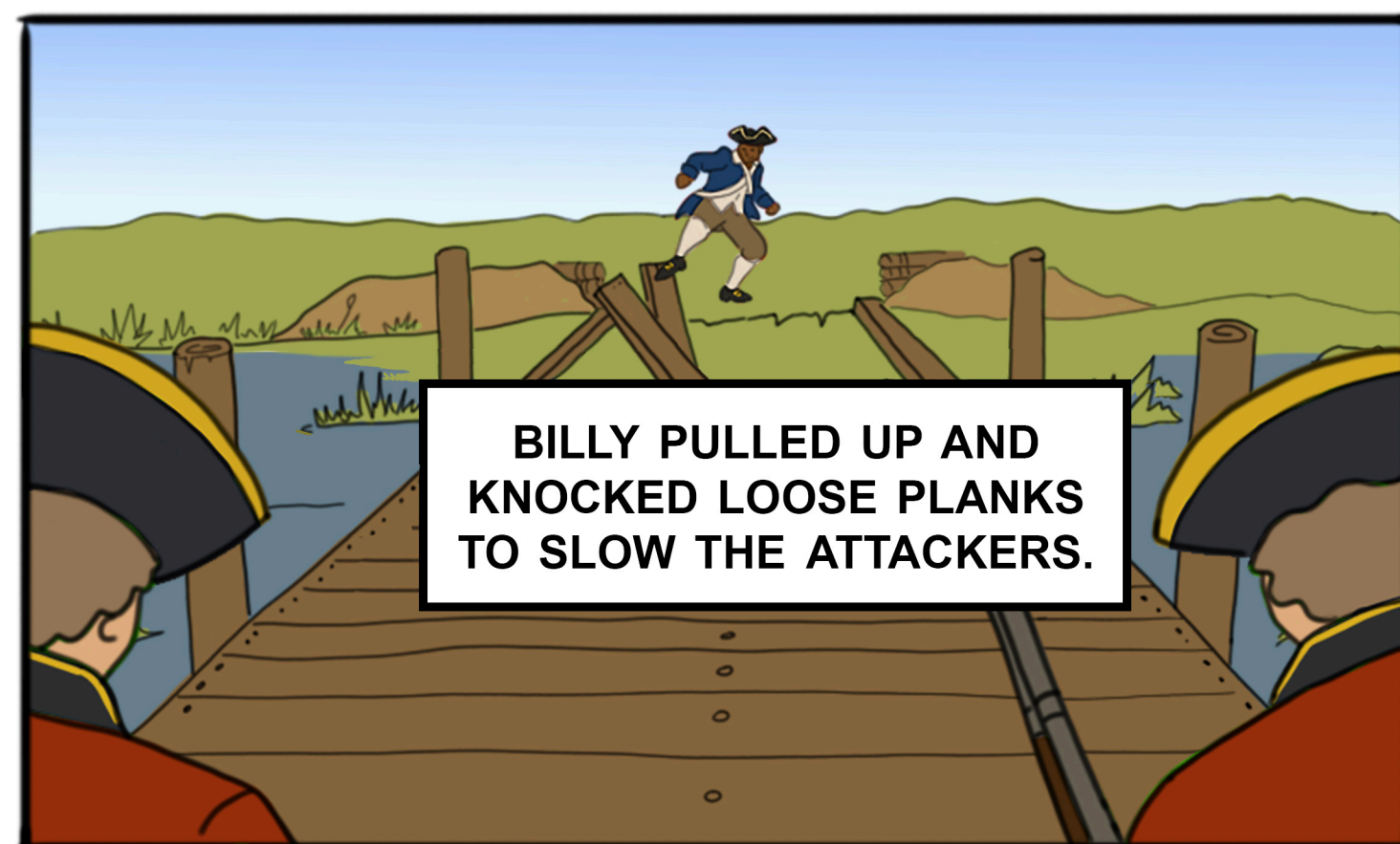
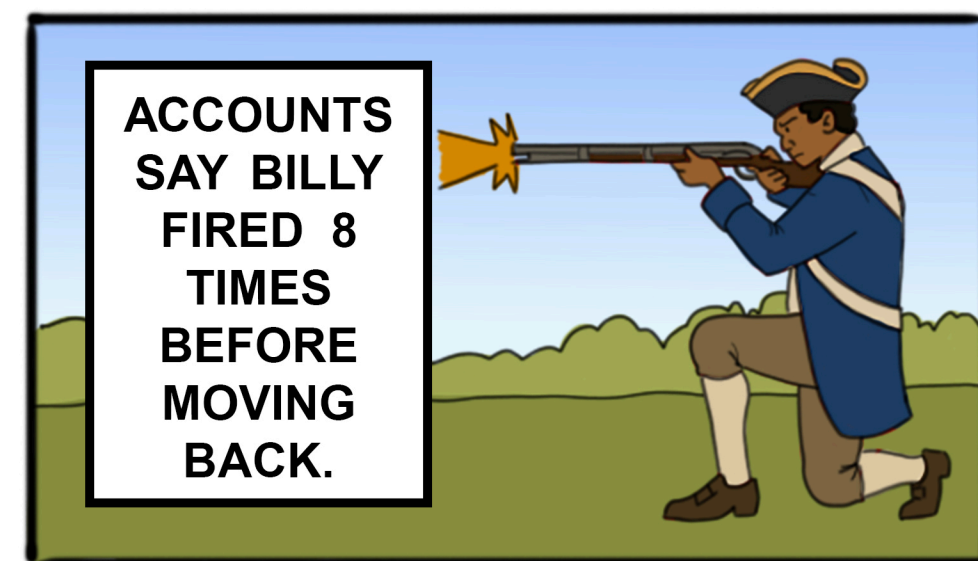
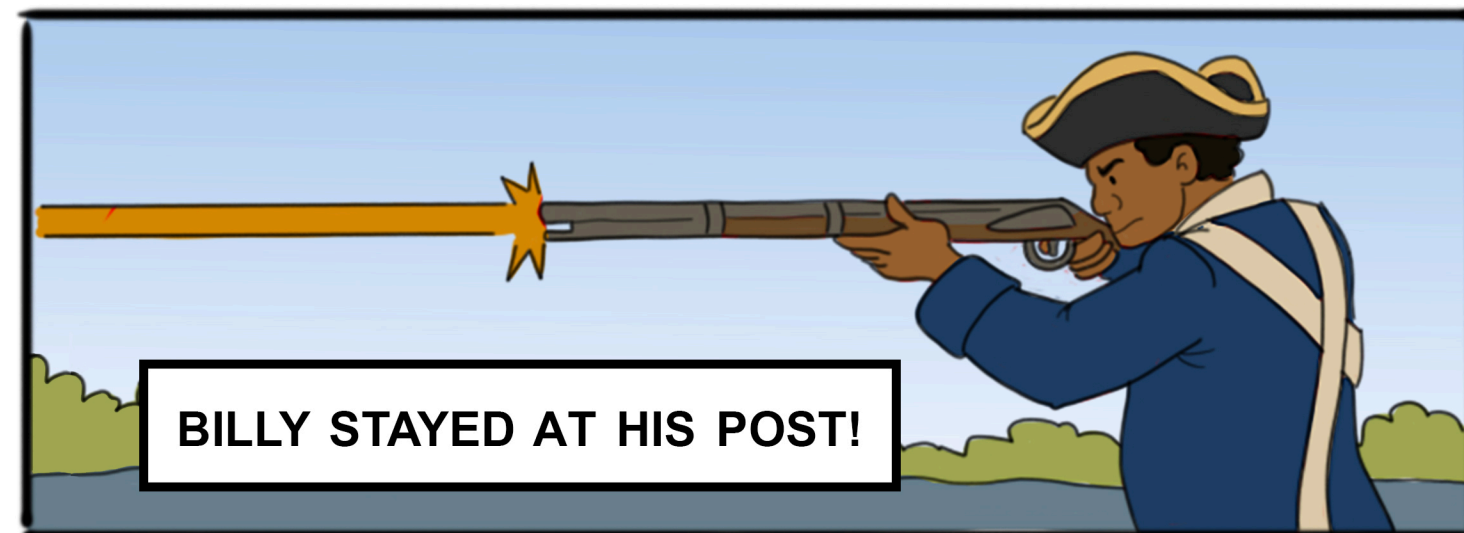
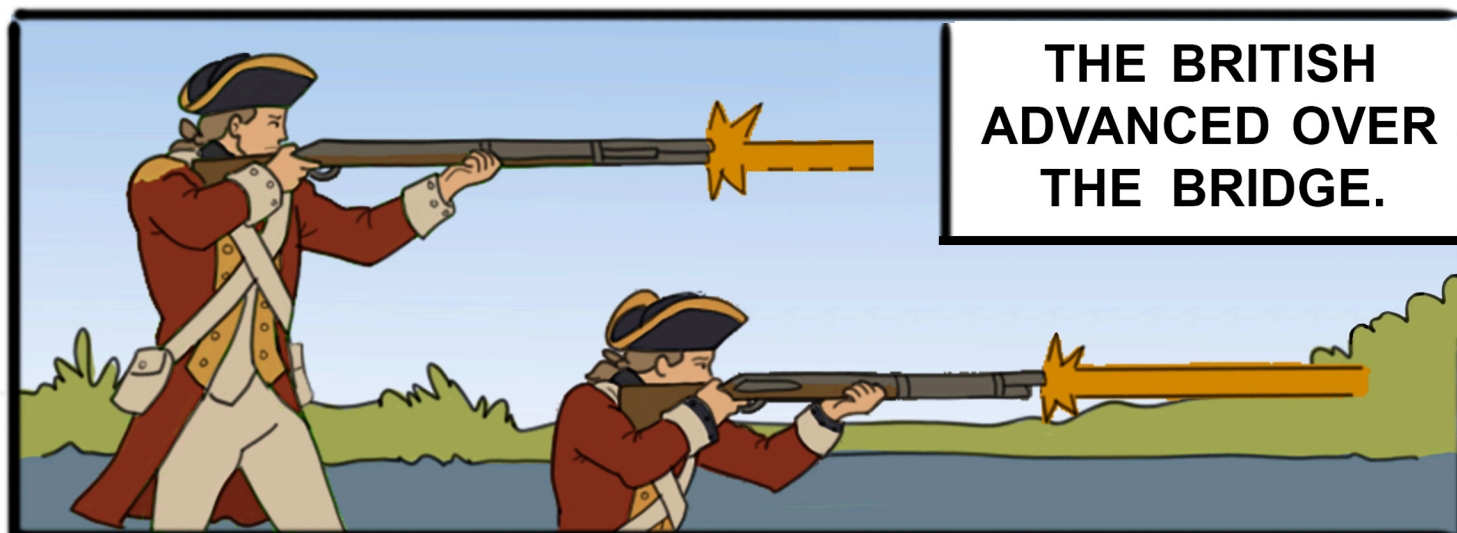
BILLY KEPT
WATCH BY
THE BRIDGE.



DEC. 9, 1775: THE ROYAL FORCE BEGINS CROSSING!



THEY'RE
HERE!!



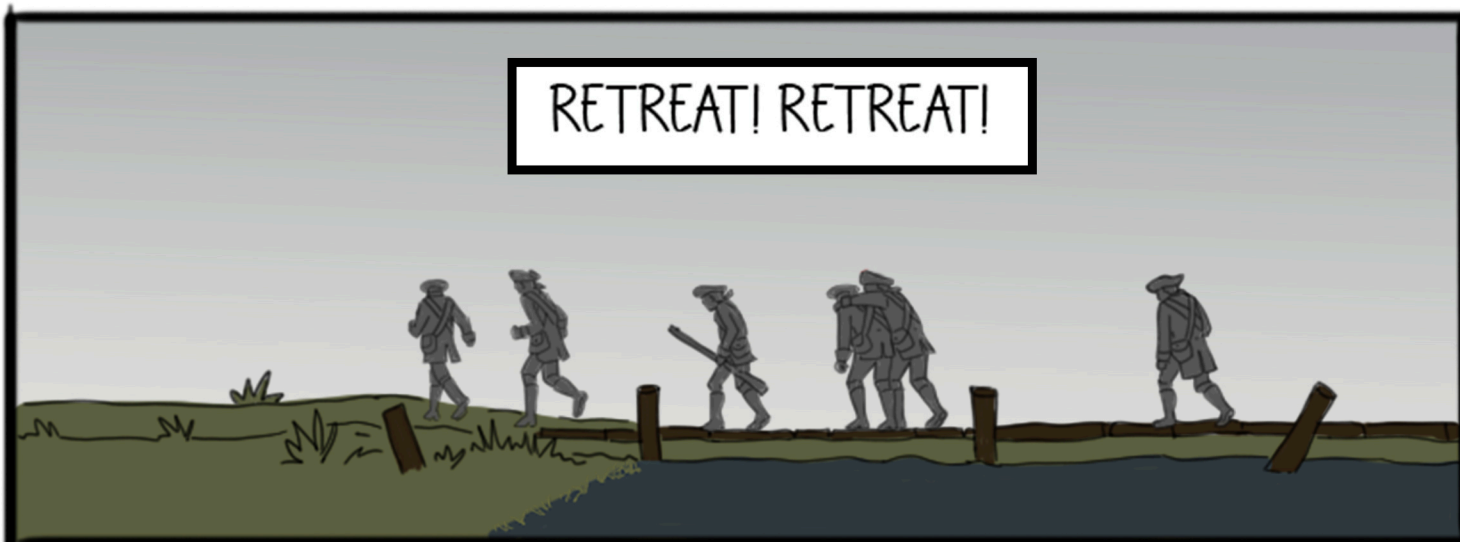
**BILLY HELD THE
ATTACKERS OFF
LONG ENOUGH
FOR PATRIOT
FORCES TO
GET INTO GOOD
POSITIONS.**



THE BATTLE BEGAN TO TURN!



RETREAT! RETREAT!



**DUNMORE'S MEN
RETURNED TO
NORFOLK.**



**BILLY FLORA'S
COURAGE HELPED
THE PATRIOTS WIN,
BUT VIRGINIA'S
FUTURE WAS STILL
UNCERTAIN...**



Questions to Consider

1. What was the most important point of this chapter?
2. Where did the Battle of Great Bridge take place in relation to where you live?
3. Why was the Battle of Great Bridge important?
4. Write a few sentences, as if you are Billy Flora, about why you did what you did in the battle.
5. The Battle of Great Bridge took place near a lot of swamps and marshes. What are the different regions of Virginia geographically and how do they differ?

Learn More



“The hero of Great Bridge was a sentry who took on an entire British platoon. He was also a free Black man,” by Leah Small, *Cardinal News*



“Podcast on Billy Flora, who held off the British advance at Great Bridge,” by Dutchie Jessee of *Cardinal News*, with Harvey Bakari, *Black history curator at the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation*.