



**T**HE BALL HIT THE EDGE of one of the broken shingles on the old house, angled off and disappeared among the tall weeds beyond the battered front door.

The boy searched long before he found the ball, and then, in a temper, flung it at the offending house. He stared in disbelief at the emptiness where the glass of the eyebrow window just above the old front door should have been. Strange, that ball went through the glass so quickly, he couldn't even remember hearing the sound of breakage.

The Jacob Purdy House was a very old building. He remembered the sign that had once identified it as "built in 1727, George Washington's Headquarters, 1776 and 1778." But now that sign was missing and the place was empty. In fact he couldn't remember anyone ever living in the house.

Jake studied the door. Should he try to get his ball back? He tested the door. It, too, was very old and not too strong. Perhaps one good push? He flung his slight frame against the door with all his strength, and felt it quiver. With a second assault the door ceased to resist so unexpectedly that he was catapulted into the hallway. Unable to halt his forward motion, the boy stumbled, fell, then struck his head heavily against wide old floor boards.

A gasp escaped him when a voice boomed high above him "What have we here?" And there he lay, flat on his stomach, as he blinked at the largest pair of boots he had ever seen, only inches from his nose!

Slowly, not at all comprehending, his eyes traveled up those shiny boots. A scabbard, containing a gold handled sword, hung against buff colored trousers. A vest of the same color, finished off with a long row of brightly polished brass buttons, ended beneath a fluff of white ruffles. A dark blue coat with buff facings, neatly decorated with more brass buttons, supported gold epaulettes on the shoulders. All of which seemed to stretch upward toward the ceiling to become the covering for one man's six foot two inch frame!