

THE CULPER RING

For generations, history books have taught us that Nathan Hale was America's first spy during the Revolutionary War, which is why his statue stands outside CIA headquarters. But, as AMC's **TURN: Washington's Spies** reveals, there was actually a wide network of spies providing General George Washington with secret intelligence throughout the war. Unlike the eloquent Hale, however, these spies were never caught, so their identities have remained largely unknown and rarely acknowledged in history books.

DISCOVERY

Here is some background on Washington's espionage operation and the members of the Culper Ring featured in AMC's **TURN: Washington's Spies**. Research the following individuals and their approach to espionage.



Abraham Woodhull – A young farmer from Setauket, Long Island, who concealed his identity with the name Samuel Culper, Woodhull ran the group's daily business. He frequently traveled between New York and Long Island in order to collect information. In **TURN**, Woodhull finds himself conflicted by his loyalty to his father, a Tory, and his dedication to the Patriot cause.



Benjamin Tallmadge – A childhood friend of Woodhull and an officer in the 2nd Continental Light Dragoons, Tallmadge assembled a small group of men and women whom he knew he could trust. Tallmadge went by the code name John Bolton and served as the point of contact between the spy ring and General Washington.



Caleb Brewster – A Patriot courier and childhood friend of Woodhull's, Brewster often carried reports from Long Island to Connecticut. A whaleboat captain by the age of 19, Brewster was well-traveled and not afraid of danger.



Anna Strong – A childhood friend of the spy ring's three men, Anna was engaged to marry Woodhull until their fathers found themselves on opposite sides of the war and broke the engagement. Anna eventually marries Selah Strong but remains sympathetic to the Patriot cause.

The Culper Ring was a group of childhood friends who were dedicated to the Patriot cause and able to collect and disseminate intelligence that ultimately helped the Patriots win the war. The majority of intelligence collected by the group was about the movements of British troops and their plans for New York and the surrounding area. Perhaps their most notable accomplishment was the interception of treasonous correspondence between Britain's intelligence officer John Andre and Major General Benedict Arnold of General George Washington's army.

DISCUSSION

Based on the information you have gathered, analyze and debate the following topics.

- Discuss the modern descendants of Washington's spies — the CIA and NSA. Do these groups continue the work of Hale and the Culper Ring or have they taken intelligence gathering in a different direction? Cite your opinion and several reasons why, including specific support for your argument.
- Examine recent cases of intelligence gathering and disseminating such as Robert Hanssen, Edward Snowden, and North Korea.
- Analyze the ethics of spying. Is it ever okay to spy? If so, under what circumstances?
- What kinds of moral conflicts might someone who is engaged in information gathering experience?
- Who should have access to intelligence gathered by spies? How and in what circumstances should it be used?
- How does the Constitution relate to spying? How are spies protected? How are targets protected? Is it ever acceptable to suspend Constitutional rights, particularly when national security is at stake?

Next, research the history of U.S. intelligence gathering at <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2007-featured-story-archive/overview-of-american-intelligence.html> and learn more about Washington as a "spymaster" at <http://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/the-revolutionary-war/george-washington-spymaster/george-washington-spymaster/>.

TURN
WASHINGTON'S SPIES

2-HOUR PREMIERE EVENT
MONDAY **APRIL 13** 9/8C **amc**