***"Daring Dicey"***

**Laodicea "Dicey" Langston  
May 14, 1766 - May 23, 1837**

**Daughter of Solomon Langston, Sr. and Sarah Ann Bennett**

**Married Thomas Springfield, Jr. in 1783.**

Dicey Langston is a recognized heroine of the Revolutionary War. When she was young, she learned a lot from her brothers and played her part in their boyish games. She became a bold rider and an expert shot. She was medium height, dark-eyed, proud, and high-spirited. She was also considered graceful and attractive.

Her father, a supporter of the American Revolution against the British, was a Whig. He was a ready participant in the struggle even though his active role was limited by his age and infirmities. He was generous with his money and influence. Dicey's two brothers had taken part in the conflict from the beginning. To save the family from difficulties, they did not live at home and visited only in secret. Through it all, they managed to maintain communication with Dicey who had become an outspoken patriot along with her brothers.

Dicey found it easy to learn what was going on in the area. Some of her neighbors and relatives were Royalists who were American supporters of the British during the Revolution. They were also called Tories. Knowing them made it easy for her to learn of the movements and plans of the enemy. She relayed information to her brother who was with a small band of Whigs camped a few miles away. The Tories began to question how such information was getting to the rebels and soon turned their suspicions toward Solomon Langston and his high-spirited daughter.

Some of the Tories visited Solomon and told that he would be held personally responsible for Dicey's actions if any more information leaked to the Whigs. Solomon realized that his family’s safety was at stake, and he warned Dicey of the danger her actions created for them. For a while, Dicey obeyed her father's command.

A few weeks later, she accidentally heard about some plans of the Bloody Scouts, a band of Tory outlaws, led by Bill Cunningham. They were known for their ruthless cruelty in plundering families who sympathized with the rebel cause. The Bloody Scouts were planning to attack Little Eden settlement where her brother and his group were hiding. She knew that the Tories were incensed with her brother and that he and his group would be killed if captured. She knew that she had to warn her brother regardless of her father's orders. Her actions had to be secret to prevent retribution from her Tory neighbors and relatives. The least suspicion of her family being involved would anger the Bloody Scouts who were looking for any excuse to harass the Langston family and plunder their property.

Dicey had no one to send. She had no contacts that she could trust. It was evident that only she could deliver the warning. She would have to go alone after dark and on foot.

She started out late at night after the family and servants had all gone to bed. Making her way through woods, across marshes and creeks, she finally reached a rain-swollen stream called the Tyger. The only way to cross was to wade through the deep rushing waters. She struggled toward the center of the stream where the current was very strong and the waters reached her shoulders. Suddenly, she fell. She regained her footing but had lost her bearings, became 'turned around' as she later reported it. However, she plunged and struggled onward toward the bank although she was not certain that it was the correct side of the stream. Falling and regaining her footing only to fall again, she finally dragged herself out on the bank and lay half drowned and soaked, until she regained her strength. Finally, she continued her trek. The path she found seemed to be on the correct side of the stream after all and she was soon with her brother and his men.

Dicey quickly reported the coming attack and urged that all the settlers of Little Eden be warned. The Patriot group had just returned from a long excursion, exhausted, wet, and hungry. Some of the men complained of being weak from hunger. Dicey, who was also tired, wet, and hungry, ordered them to build a fire and get some cornmeal or flour. They pulled some boards from the roof of their crude shelter and a started a fire. Dicey rapidly made a hoecake and baked it in the embers. When it was cooked, she broke it into pieces and put them into the men's shot pouches so they could eat as they ran to warn the settlers. When the Bloody Scouts descended upon the settlement, they found no one. That morning, a fresh and dainty Miss Dicey sat with her family at their breakfast table. It was weeks before any of them learned of her twenty-mile trip through the woods, creeks, and marshes in the middle of night.

The Bloody Scouts’ fruitless raid on the Little Eden settlement only added to their enmity toward the few patriots in the Laurens District. Although they could not connect the Langston family to the warning that must have been delivered, their hate and suspicion of Solomon Langston grew resulting in their marking him for a victim. Following an attack of Whigs that included one of Solomon's sons, the Bloody Scouts decided that the old man must die. The soldiers went to his house to kill him and plunder his belongings. Solomon, physically unable to escape or try to hide, was too proud to beg for mercy. He stood up to them, denying that he had anything to do with the struggle.

He was declared a liar by the leader who pointed his pistol at Solomon's chest. Dicey sprang between her father and the angry Tory who told her to get out of the way or he would put a bullet through her heart. Almost blind with terror, she shouted that her father was an old man, and she stood between her father and the gunman. Another of the Bloody Scouts must have marveled at the fearless devotion of the girl as he intervened and Solomon was spared.

At another time, she was riding a fleet young horse home from a Whig settlement when she was met by a company of loyalists. They demanded that she tell them what was happening among the rebels. She claimed to know nothing hoping to bring their meeting to an end. The leader had been an outlaw before the conflict but the British had given him their protection for taking up arms against his rebel neighbors. He drew his pistol as he told her that she did know and that she would tell or be shot. She refused. Again, she was ordered and, again, she refused. The outlaw would have shot her had not one of his men hit the pistol causing it to fire into the air. As the men squabbled, Dicey, still mounted on her horse, made a speedy escape.

Her brother, James, once left a rifle in her care with the understanding that he would send a man for it who would give a countersign. Later a group of men, headed by a young man called the Patriot Leader, came to the house, and said that James had sent them for the gun. They purposely acted suspicious to rile the spunky young patriotic girl. Dicey got the gun but suddenly remembered to ask for the countersign. She was told that it was too late since both the gun and she were in their possession. She spun around and aimed the gun at the Patriot Leader. As she turned, she said, “Oh, we are? Then come and get us.”

She was so deadly serious that the young man lost no time in giving her the countersign. His companions laughed long and loud at backfiring prank that he had played on Dicey. (Tradition reports that the young man was Tom Springfield who returned to marry her following the war.)

At another time, a party of Whigs stopped at Solomon's house for refreshments and in their conversation revealed that they were on their way to take the horses of a Tory neighbor. Dicey knew the Tory to be a peaceable citizen and a good neighbor so she decided to set out to save his horses. She slipped out and went to the Tory neighbor's home where she delivered the alert. As she was leaving, she was chagrined to overhear the neighbor sending a messenger to a nearby band of Tories to capture the unsuspecting Whigs at the Langston house. Dicey hurried home in time to warn the Whigs in time for them to make their escape.

She married Tom Springfield following the war, had a large prosperous family, and lived a long life. In later years, she was known to boast that she had thirty-two sons and grandsons able to vote or fight for liberty. Her obituary reports that she had twenty-two children. She died in 1837 and was buried in the family cemetery behind their log cabin located just north of Traveler's Rest in Greenville County, South Carolina.

Information source: Charles C. Chaney <http://www.ccchaney.com/paternal/dicey.htm>

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DIRECTIONS: Answer the following questions about the story “Daring Dicey.” **You must answer each question in complete sentences.** Refer to the story if you need to.

1. What is Dicey’s real name? (This should be her first name along with her last name.)

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2. Why do you think her family and friends called her **“Dicey”** instead of her full name?

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3. Do you believe that Dicey was heroic after reading about her life? Write your answer on the lines. Then use your highlighter and highlight three examples from the story to support your opinion.

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4. Would you have taken the risks that Dicey took to help her friends and family? Explain why or why not. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. Why do you believe our school, Langston Charter Middle School, is named after Dicey Langston?

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6. Is this story **fiction or nonfiction**? How do you know?

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7. What do you think the **author’s purpose** was for writing the story about Dicey?

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1. imperious – prideful; arrogant
2. ardent – passionate or enthusiastic
3. Whig – supporter of the Revolution against the British
4. Tory (Tories) – American supporter of the British during the Revolution
5. incense – enraged; angry
6. retribution – punishment
7. inflame – to make an emotion stronger, like anger or jealousy
8. hoecake – cornbread
9. enmity – hostility or ill will between enemies
10. sortie – attack on an enemy
11. countersign – secret password or sign
12. rile – to make someone angry
13. chagrin – anger because someone let you down