

# *Rights Crossing*

a play by Richard Seltzer

**R**ights Crossing was written for Columbia, Penna., where it was performed Dec. 1-4, 1976, as part of that town's bicentennial celebration. The events of the play take place in Dec. 1777 and center around the Conway conspiracy.

The action focuses on the strategic importance of the ferry crossing that would one day become Columbia; situated between Congress in York and the army at Valley Forge. The fates of the town-to-be and the nation-to-be are interwoven, with local historical figures playing significant roles in a plausible confrontation with Conway and Mifflin.

Conway, plotting to overthrow Washington, tries to seize the ferry. But he underestimates the determination and resourcefulness of old Susannah Wright, the owner of the ferry, and her nephew Sam, the future founder of the town of Columbia.

Conway is a dashing Frenchman who has a way with women. His low estimation of human nature and his willingness to use others to further his own ambitions appear to give him an advantage in the game of power politics with seemingly naive Americans.

Susannah has a philosophy and a power of persuasion of her own. But the fate of the ferry and perhaps of the nation depends on her nephew Sam.

Sam, ambitious himself, is inclined to work his way into the favor of a winner, and Conway looks very much like a winner. At the same time he has fallen for pretty, sharp-tongued Sue Loudon, who has a crush on Conway. He'd like to show off to her and put Conway in his place. But at the same time, he wants the money, position and power that seems to attract women. And Conway can give him that status. Then there's his aunt, Sus-

annah, who forever bosses him about like a boy, but whom he deeply respects. And the other characters, Sam's sister Betsey, her would-be beau Tom Boude the recruiter, Old Jack the ferryboatman, Young Jack, and even Sue Loudon's mother Patience all figure in Sam's decision and the final confrontation at the ferry.

### **CHARACTERS:**

Susannah Wright, age 80

Sam Wright, 25, her nephew

Betsey Wright, Sam's younger sister

Lieutenant Tom Boude, 25, recruiter

Colonel John Loudon, 40-ish, also known as "Young Jack"

Patience Loudon, 40-ish, from Philadelphia

Sue Loudon, her daughter

Old Jack, the ageless ferryman

Thomas Mifflin, 33, major-general, formerly Quartermaster General

Thomas Conway, 44, French, newly promoted Major-General and Inspector General

*SETTING: Wright's Ferry, Pennsylvania, December 1777*

### **ACT ONE**

#### **SCENE ONE**

*(scene by the river; Old Jack with a slate or paper on which he keeps track of the people waiting to cross on the ferry; and Jack Loudon, wearing an officer's shirt over his winter coat, occupied with the contents of a jug)*

*(enter Conway. He speaks perfect English, but with a French accent)*

CONWAY: *(checks his watch)* Is this the town of Wright's Crossing?

OLD JACK: Wright's Ferry it is. A town it isn't.

CONWAY: How so?

OLD JACK: It takes people to make a town. Townsfolk.

CONWAY: But there are many people here.

OLD JACK: Just passersthrough. Waiting for the ferry.

CONWAY: But there must be over two hundred wagons. . .

OLD JACK: Two hundred and twelve wagons. No, two hundred and thirteen. *(marks one more on his slate)* All waiting for the ferry.

CONWAY: And who are you?

OLD JACK: Old Man Jack, they call me. Actually, my name's Charlie. But what good's a name if nobody calls you by it?

CONWAY: *(checks his watch again)* And are you in charge here?

OLD JACK: Talk to Young Jack over there.

CONWAY: Where?

OLD JACK: (*pointing*) The one with the shiny new uniform.

CONWAY: Are you in charge here?

YOUNG JACK: Yes. They made me a colonel in the militia to make it official.

CONWAY: When I passed this way before, everything went smoothly. I believe a Major Eyre was in charge, a friend of mine, a Major Eyre. There were no delays then.

YOUNG JACK: You were lucky. It's not at all uncommon for traffic to back up when the winds get high. Especially now, with Congress meeting in York, and ice forming along the edges. Makes the traffic heavy and the crossing tricky.

CONWAY: Where's Major Eyre?

YOUNG JACK: On the other side, most likely, taking care of things in Wrightsville.

CONWAY: Then I have to deal with you?

YOUNG JACK: Just me and the wind and the river.

CONWAY: Well, why isn't the ferry running?

YOUNG JACK: High winds mostly.

CONWAY: High winds? And how long is that likely to keep up?

YOUNG JACK: That's why it didn't run last week. Then just day before yesterday a couple of the passersby got drunk, tried to cross, and wrecked on the rocks. Damn near got themselves drowned. We salvaged most of the pieces. The ferry's pretty much rebuilt. But we need a blacksmith to shore it all up, and the winds are still high.

CONWAY: Well, where's the blacksmith? Why isn't he at work?

YOUNG JACK: Been recruited.

CONWAY: Recruited?

YOUNG JACK: Yes. Like most everybody else. A recruiter passed through with a fife, a drum, and a barrel of good beer; and next thing we'd lost a blacksmith.

CONWAY: Well, surely there must be other blacksmiths in nearby towns.

YOUNG JACK: Perhaps. Perhaps. You can't tell these days. The recruiters have passed that way, too.

CONWAY: Indeed? And who owns this ferry?

YOUNG JACK: Aunt Susannah.

CONWAY: Your aunt?

YOUNG JACK: Yes, and the aunt of most everyone else in these parts. Susannah Wright. My name's Jack Loudon. Welcome to Wright's Ferry. (*offering to shake hands*)

CONWAY: (*preoccupied; doesn't notice the proffered hand; checks his watch*) This Mrs. Wright — what are her politics?

YOUNG JACK: (*by the time Conway looks back his way, Young Jack's hand is down*) I don't believe I caught your name?

CONWAY: Just another of your passersby, wanting to cross on your ferry, anxious to get on with my business.

YOUNG JACK: Well, her name is *Miss* Wright. Miss Susannah Wright. Never married. And I can't say her politics should be any concern of yours.

Who are you, anyway?

CONWAY: Just a concerned citizen.

YOUNG JACK: Concerned about what, may I ask?

CONWAY: This ferry is a key link in the communications between the army at Valley Forge and Congress in York. It's only natural to wonder whether it's in reliable hands.

YOUNG JACK: Well, let the folks who've been given the job to worry about it, do the worrying about it. Here, stranger, relax yourself a bit. You're probably all caught up in your business. Folks get that way. Forget what it's like to just settle down, be with other folks, swap tales. Here have a swig and find yourself a place to sit.

CONWAY: No, thank you. I have pressing business to attend to.

YOUNG JACK: Well, nobody's going much of anywhere with the wind that way. No where that is but up to the ferry house to fill a jug. (*gets up, starts to go*) Can I get you anything, mister?

CONWAY: (*preoccupied, looks at his watch, apparently doesn't hear Young Jack, who shrugs his shoulders and goes on his way*) (to Old Jack) Where's the local Committee of Security?

OLD JACK: You mean Miss Wright?

CONWAY: No, I mean the Committee. If you don't have a Committee of Security, surely you must have a Committee of Correspondence?

OLD JACK: Yes, Miss Wright, Miss Susannah Wright. She lives in the big house down the road a piece. You can't miss it, general.

CONWAY: (*checks his watch, then looks up abruptly*) Did you say "general"?

OLD JACK: I beg your pardon, sir. I'm getting on in years. I can't see too clearly.

CONWAY: But "general", what made you say "general"?

OLD JACK: What with the capital in York now, we get some most remarkable traffic. Congressmen and generals and. . .

CONWAY: Always generals?

OLD JACK: Well, the French tend to be generals, more likely than not.

CONWAY: (*disconcerted, glances at his watch again*) Well, mind your words, old man. There's no telling who might take offense at talk like that. (*he speaks and looks with an air of command*)

OLD JACK: Certainly, sir. Whatever you say, sir.

(*Conway leaves in the direction of Susannah Wright's house, just as the beat of military drums becomes audible, first from backstage, then from all sides of the stage, drummers begin to appear on stage, together with fifers and perhaps other musicians; at the same time the sound of drums comes from behind the audience, and drummers appear from that direction as well, marching to the stage. A motley group of people, people who had been waiting for the ferry follow the musicians. Perhaps a beer barrel gets rolled on stage and they gather round it. Thomas Boude, the recruiter, takes center stage and addresses the audience.*)

BOUDE: What are you waiting for? It's not the ferry that's broken down. The whole world is broken. You can sit there forever, just watching and

waiting. You can rot in your seats. Or you can get up. Yes, you there in the second row. Take my hand. Join the eighteenth century. *(someone in the second row comes forward, takes his hand, and comes on stage)*

The world's on the move, and if you don't start moving, your wealth will turn to poverty overnight. The past is dead. The snake must shed its skin. Move on to the new life.

First we'll march to the East and fight for independence. Then march to the West to the new lands, thousands of miles of land for the taking. Just think of the opportunity.

Drink up, lads. Drink up now. The winter's cold and the road's long. Drink up and leave behind debts, regrets and ingratitude. Drink up and march with me and make your fortune in this great new nation.

*(Boude signals and the drumbeat starts again. He marches out through the audience followed by the musicians, the passersby, and people planted in the middle of the audience who get up and follow him out)*

*(Sam, who entered with the crowd, starts to follow, but Old Jack grabs his wrist and holds him back)*

OLD JACK: Who are you?

SAM: *(laughs)* Sam Wright.

OLD JACK: That's your name. But who are you?

SAM: Now, what's this nonsense, Jack? What game are you playing? You've known me since the day I was born.

OLD JACK: And before that, too. But who are you? A wright's a maker, a doer. Are you going to be a wheelwright, a shipwright, a playwright? What are you going to make or do with your life?

SAM: What do you mean, Jack? You know Aunt Susannah says this ferry will be mine one day. The ferry brings a good income.

OLD JACK: But is that enough, boy? Do you want to turn out like your cousin Jack?

SAM: Now don't go talking against Young Jack. There's no more kind-hearted, generous, loyal. . .

OLD JACK: Fine, the man's got a heart, and you do too, lad. But don't you want to make a name for yourself, Sam?

SAM: My own name's plenty good enough, I suppose.

YOUNG JACK: And do you want it to forever be "Yes, auntie" "No, auntie" or "Yes, sir" and "No, sir" to these passersby?

SAM: You're sounding like Tom the Recruiter now. Sure, I'm restless. Sure I'm sick of forever running about, fetching this and fixing that. It isn't easy with an 80-year-old aunt to take care of, and these passersby always acting important and wanting their way.

OLD JACK: But what are you going to do, Sam?

SAM: Well, I can't very well leave her. She needs me and Betsey.

OLD JACK: To do the fixing and the fetching?

SAM: If need be. Much as I hate it. Much as I hate being dependent on her too. Much as I want to just take off with the next recruiter or adventurer who passes this way. Maybe to the war, maybe to the West. . .

OLD JACK: But you needn't run away, Sam. You needn't be selfish.

There are things to be done right here, lad. Things to help folks.

SAM: Like chopping more firewood?

OLD JACK: Your dad once had a dream.

SAM: What dream was that?

OLD JACK: He was going to build a city. Right here by the ferry, he was going to build a city.

SAM: What stopped him?

OLD JACK: Your aunt Susannah. She liked things the way they were. She didn't want any sudden inrush of strangers. Can't say that I blame her for that. But your dad always wanted to build a city.

SAM: And what would he want with a city?

BETSEY: (*interrupts, running in from offstage*) Sam, Sam, what are you doing? Swapping tales down by the river again? Auntie says you're to get on home right away. Guests are coming. Guests from Philadelphia.

SAM: (*annoyed*) Well, you can tell her. . .

BETSEY: Tell her what? Tell her to tend to the fire herself? Tell her that you're a big boy now, and that you come and go as you please?

SAM: Lay off, Betsey. Will you ever. . .

BETSEY: Tell her that you're twenty-five years old, but you still don't have manner enough to do little things for your dear old aunt, who's done everything for you?

SAM: I said, lay off, Betsey. I'm coming. I'm. . .

BETSEY: In your own good time, I'm sure. And Aunt Susannah will understand, as she always understands. But what will the ladies from Philadelphia think? Especially, the young one? I'm not so sure that she'll understand your little struggle for independence.

SAM: What are you implying?

BETSEY: Well, a pretty girl like that isn't likely to be too patient, isn't likely to have to be patient, isn't likely to be used to being kept waiting.

SAM: Who are these "guests" anyway?

BETSEY: I thought you'd never ask. Patience Loudon and her daughter Sue. They may be some relation to Young Jack. It seems Mr. Loudon died in some sort of accident. Anyway, they left Philadelphia in an awful hurry, left nearly everything behind, and they're headed for York. Patience, Mrs. Loudon seems to think that with Congress in York, they'll be safest there. Well, Aunt Susannah saw them waiting for the ferry and found room for them to stay at the house.

SAM: You mean I'll be sleeping in the stable again?

BETSEY: Of course. What do you expect with all these fine folk stuck here, waiting for the ferry in the middle of December?

SAM: But is there any room left in the stable?

BETSEY: Plenty enough, I expect. The man with the limp headed back to Lancaster this morning, got tired of waiting. And I think Tom Boude recruited a couple of them.

SAM: Well, what's she look like?

BETSEY: Mrs. Loudon. Oh, she's tall....

SAM: No, the daughter, of course.

BETSEY: Well, I'm trying for yourself. Here they come. They must have gotten tired of waiting.

SAM: Who's the man?

BETSEY: I don't know. He was just arriving as I was leaving. But I don't think he has anything to do with Sue Loudon, if that's what you mean.

*(enter Susannah Wright, Patience and Sue Loudon; also Conway)*

SUSANNAH: Ah, Sam, there you are. Idling away your time again when there's work to be done. I sent Betsey out after you over an hour ago. She must have been off chasing after that recruiter fellow of hers.

BETSEY: Well, Sam was too. That's where I found him. He'd been listening to Tom down here.

SUSANNAH: And drinking his beer, too, I suppose. Well, better listening to Tom than to some of these passersby we get these days, full of schemes and wickedness.

PATIENCE: *(somewhat put off to be forgotten, but polite)* Is this the nephew you were talking about Susannah? The hope and pride of the Wright family?

SUSANNAH: Oh, yes, excuse me, Patience. Sam, is Young Jack Loudon about? We have a pair of Loudons here from Philadelphia, perhaps relations of his.

OLD JACK: Young Jack went up to fill his jug. He should be back soon.

SUSANNAH: Well, Mrs. Loudon, Miss Loudon, I'd like you to meet Old Man Jack, the ferryman, and my nephew Samuel Wright. And you, sir, *(addressing Conway)* I don't believe I caught your name.

CONWAY: No matter, madam, I'm just a man on business, important business, anxious that your ferry run and run smoothly.

SUSANNAH: But your name certainly does matter, sir. It's not often that a general comes to the ferry.

CONWAY: Pardon?

SUSANNAH: At least not generals posing as civilians. We've had our share of civilians posing as generals.

CONWAY: Excuse me, madam. But there must be some mistake.

SUSANNAH: No mistake, no mistake at all. We found them out. Two, or was it three of them, Jack? In the last couple months. Claimed they were Général Gates.

CONWAY: General Gates?

SUSANNAH: Yes, of course, the hero of Saratoga. At least one of them was a bit off balance, couldn't make up his mind whether he was Julius Caesar, Frederick the Great, or General Horatio Gates. The others seemed to be in a desperate hurry to get across the river.

CONWAY: Then there has been no sign of the real Gates?

SUSANNAH: No, not yet. But he is expected. After all, they appointed him President of the Board of War. Sooner or later he'll have to take up his duties in York, and the best crossing to York, as you well know, general, is right here at Wright's Ferry.

CONWAY: But, madam, you persist in calling me "general." Admittedly, my accent, as I am but recently arrived...

SUSANNAH: Oh, fiddlesticks. If you won't introduce yourself, I'll introduce you. (*Young Jack enters just in time to hear the introduction*) Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like you to meet Major-General Thomas Conway, formerly a colonel in the army of Louis XVI, recently appointed Inspector General of the American Armies by the Continental Congress. (*curtsies*) (*Patience hesitates, caught off-guard, then curtsies. Sue just smiles.*)

YOUNG JACK: (*snaps to attention, tries to salute with the hand holding the jug, then salutes left-handed*) Begging your pardon, sir. So that's what you were nosing about, doing your inspecting.

SUE: And what do you inspect?

CONWAY: Beauty, wherever I find it, miss.

SUE: And there is such a post in the army?

SUSANNAH: The troops, my dear, our gallant general here inspects the revolutionary troops, Washington's troops, no doubt. He's probably either coming from or going to Valley Forge.

SUE: It must be rather dismal inspecting at Valley Forge. And rather pointless too, I suspect. Everyone knows they're freezing and starving. That's the American Congress for you. Instead of sending supplies, they send out someone to count the corpses.

PATIENCE: Susan! That's enough of that talk. Excuse her, sir. She was engaged to a British officer before hostilities broke out.

SUE: And I'm still engaged to him, mother.

PATIENCE: She finds it difficult to adjust....

SUE: Adjust? Am I supposed to stop loving him just because some self-important fools decide to start a war? He's the same man he was before. And I love him.

PATIENCE: Excuse her, sir, she is young and....

CONWAY: She needs no excuse. Passion never needs excuses.

PATIENCE: And what's your passion?

CONWAY: The lovely ladies of America.

SUSANNAH: And did *they* bring you here?

CONWAY? No, I came to fight for the cause of Liberty, but here I find many other subjects worthy of devotion.

SUSANNAH: Gallant words from a gentleman, but from a general? I should have thought that a general would have concern for nothing and no one but his country and his troops?

CONWAY: But I was born a man, not a general....

SUSANNAH: Yes, a proud, gallant, ambitious man. I can see it from the way you stand there. You have the look of a general.

CONWAY: I take that as a compliment, madam.

SUSANNAH: As you wish, as you wish. And who was it that recruited you for the American cause? Was it Franklin? I used to correspond with Franklin on the matter of silk worms. Did he have any silk worms there with him in Paris?

CONWAY: I'm afraid I wouldn't know, madam. It was Deane, Silas Deane, who approached me.

PATIENCE: Wasn't Deane just recalled by Congress? It was quite a scan-



dal, a month or so ago in Philadelphia....

SUSANNAH: Yes, I seem to remember. It was said that his personal ambition was interfering with his performance of his duties. But whatever his aims, I'm sure he did our fledgling nation a great service by recruiting so gallant an officer as General Conway.

SUE: Are you the General Conway who opposes Washington?

CONWAY: Pardon?

SUSANNAH: Just a rumor, I'm sure.

CONWAY: What rumor, miss?

SUE: That a General Conway has been in correspondence with General Gates, plotting the overthrow of Washington.

CONWAY: Indeed?

SUSANNAH: Malicious rumors. They breed in every tavern. The tales of envious men. They hear of your promotion, your success, and they attribute it to politics rather than merit.

CONWAY: And what could a man like me, newly arrived from France....

SUSANNAH: You seem to underestimate your powers, general, your powers of grace and persuasion. A word here, a favor there. Friends in Congress. Friends on the Board of War. Friends in France. If you were an ambitious man, I'm sure your influence would not be inconsiderable.

CONWAY: But Washington, the estimable General Washington. I would have thought his position was unassailable. When you consider his....

SUE: Glorious victories?

SUSANNAH: Yes, we needn't play cat-and-mouse. Washington lost at Germantown, while Gates won at Saratoga. Washington let the British occupy Philadelphia. And Gates, with his victory, brought hope of a French alliance.

CONWAY: You speak like someone well versed....

SUSANNAH: We have entertained many guests here at the ferry.

CONWAY: And what do you smell in the air?

SUSANNAH: A rat.

CONWAY: Pardon?

SUSANNAH: An American expression. "I smell a rat." That means there's a change of weather in the air.

CONWAY: For the better, I hope?

SUSANNAH: With men like you fighting for the cause, what else could one expect? But Jack. Here we came to see you, and we've all but forgotten you. I'd like you to meet Mrs. Patience Loudon, recently widowed, and her daughter Susan Loudon.

YOUNG JACK: Did you say, "Loudon"?

PATIENCE: (*a bit put off by his drunkenness*) Yes. From Philadelphia.

YOUNG JACK: Oh, yes, Philadelphia. Did you leave before the British....

SUE: No, after. And I couldn't see that there was any reason to leave then. The British were much more civilized and fair in their dealings than the rabble-rousing demagogues....

PATIENCE: Sue, mind your tongue.

SUE: You know as well as I do. They're just out to rob and pillage.

PATIENCE: Not in front of a general, Susan.

SUE; Well, if he doesn't know, he should. They arrested twenty of the finest citizens of Philadelphia, for no other reason than that they were Quakers and wealthy. And they sent them off to exile in Virginia without even the pretense of a trial.

SUSANNAH: Most regrettable. We've all heard of it, I'm sure. We pray the Lord to grant our rulers clear judgement. It would not be well to spill all this blood but to trade one form of tyranny for another.

YOUNG JACK: (to *Patience*) Then you're Quakers? Loudon Quakers from Philadelphia? Your husband and I may have been related.

PATIENCE: Then you're a Friend, as well? I'd have hardly guessed so from your...your speech.

YOUNG JACK: Or I from yours. You have the manner of a city person, without any thees or thous.

PATIENCE: We deal so often with people not of the Society.

YOUNG JACK: And we too, out here on the frontier, so to speak. But then there are Friends and Friends, as Aunt Susannah says; and not all of them would I want to be theeing and thouing with.

PATIENCE: A peculiar notion.

SUSANNAH: We live in a peculiar time.

PATIENCE: I should say. Much as I regret my daughter's outspokenness, I must admit that the treatment we received under the revolutionary government in Philadelphia was most shameful.

SUSANNAH: But it was the British you fled?

SUE: She doesn't know what she's running from.

PATIENCE: And you're always contradicting me in public. With your father dead so suddenly, what else was I to do but go?

SUE: We could have waited for Frank.

PATIENCE: Always headstrong. And always after the fact. Now you're completely convinced you're in love with Frank. But before he left, it was another story, and before Frank, George.

SUE: That was altogether different.

PATIENCE: Well, your precious Frank had no intention of returning to Philadelphia. He had his duty to attend to; he had his orders.

SUE: And what do you expect to find in York?

PATIENCE: Protection. And perhaps some time to think of what we should do next.

SUE: I hope we never get to York.

PATIENCE: Sue!

YOUNG JACK: If the wind keeps up this way, you may well have your wish.

CONWAY: I say, now, is that at all likely? I mean, could this wind keep up long? Even if you find yourselves a blacksmith....

YOUNG JACK: The Lord only knows which way the wind may blow next.

CONWAY: The running of a ferry of this importance cannot be left to chance. Measures must be taken.

YOUNG JACK: What kind of measures?

CONWAY: To secure the ferry, to assure that it remains in reliable hands.

YOUNG JACK: Are you questioning my loyalty to the cause?

CONWAY: Certainly not, sir. But a minor change at this point, slowing or cutting off communications between Congress and the army, could have vastly amplified repercussions in the fate of this nation.

SUSANNAH: How patriotic sounding, general.

SUE: But, as a favor, general, do you think you could perhaps postpone....

CONWAY: It would indeed be a temptation to do anything for you, miss. All the more reason to secure this position, to ensure that personal or local interests do not interfere with traffic.

SUSANNAH: So you intend to seize my ferry?

CONWAY: Not seize, madam, merely administer.

YOUNG JACK: But it's already in the hands of the militia.

CONWAY: Indeed.

YOUNG JACK: I'm a colonel in the militia.

CONWAY: Indeed.

YOUNG JACK: Under orders of Colonel Tracy.

CONWAY: Indeed.

YOUNG JACK: Under orders of Colonel Curtis Grubb, Lieutenant of Lancaster County.

CONWAY: Indeed.

YOUNG JACK: You have no authority over militia.

CONWAY: When the Continental troops arrive, we'll dispute that matter, if necessary. (*checks his watch*)

SUSANNAH: Are you going to let him talk to you like that?

YOUNG JACK: He can *talk* as much as he wants.

SUSANNAH: Well, Sam, are you going to let the so-called general just walk right in and take over the ferry.

SAM: I don't think there's anything I can do. Afterall, he's a general, and he's got troops. What do you expect of me?

SUSANNAH: Better than that.

SUE: So that's all the "pride and honor of the Wright family" can say for himself? If Frank were here, he'd put this rebel general in his place. (*turns away*)

SAM: (*trying to catch Sue's attention*) Well, I can't do much now. There's not much I could do. But one day I'll build a city.

SUE: (*turns back*) A city?

SAM: Yes, a city. (*doesn't know what to say next*) Right here.

SUE: How ambitious.

BETSEY: How silly.

SUSANNAH: That's what I get for letting you hang about with Old Jack.

CONWAY: Who is that old man?

SUSANNAH: Old Jack? He's been around as long as anyone can remember. An incurable dreamer.

CONWAY: Indeed?

SUSANNAH: He believes that men act out of more than self-interest, that they are moved by unselfish ambitions.

CONWAY: Indeed?

SUSANNAH: He plants these romantic notions in young men's minds, and it incapacitates them, makes them unfit for action in the practical world.

CONWAY: But you are above such illusions?

SUSANNAH: As are you, general.

## ACT ONE

### SCENE TWO

*(Betsey and Sue spotlighted alone on stage)*

BETSEY: Now, don't get me wrong, Sue. We don't just sit out here in the woods all the time. We get about quite a bit, visiting relatives and friends. Once we went all the way to Chester. And at least twice a year I get to go to Lancaster. Have you ever been to Lancaster?

SUE: We passed through.

BETSEY: Folks say it's the largest inland city in America. So many people live there they build the houses all together in a row, without any spaces between them. But what's it like to live in Philadelphia?

SUE: It was dreadfully dull till the British came back. Then they started theatricals and dances and entertainments. Thank goodness mother's not too strict a Quaker, or I'd have missed it all.

BETSEY: So you did go about, even without Frank?

SUE: Well, I can't shut myself up in a closet, can I? I'd have died of curiosity.

BETSEY: And what's Frank like?

SUE: Forceful, but considerate. I'm sure he'd make a delightful dancing partner. You'd like him. Everyone, except my mother, likes him. And even she liked him, before this revolution business.

BETSEY: And what do you think of Tom?

SUE: Rather pompous, I'd say. And cold. But then, he is ambitious. And there's no telling how high he'll rise.

BETSEY: Tom? My Tom? I can't say I've ever thought of him that way before. But he does have a way with words, a power of persuasion.

SUE: Your Tom? I didn't know that you were on such close terms with General Conway. In fact, I had the distinct impression that he was... unattached.

BETSEY: Conway? General Conway? I was talking about Tom, my Tom, Thomas Boude, the recruiter. But don't tell him I call him "my Tom." So you're interested in Conway?

SUE: I merely said that I thought he was "unattached" and... "ambitious."

BETSEY: Well, I'd say he's a bit too ambitious.

SAM: *(revealed by spotlight)* And if you'd ask me, I'd say a man's got a right to be ambitious.

SUE: Well, if it isn't the Builder of Cities?

BETSEY: Sneaking around. Listening in on other people's conversations. Don't you go telling Tom, Sam. Promise you won't.

SAM: I'll not go tattling to Tom. I've got more important things to think about than that.

SUE: Such as where to put the main street and the marketplace?

SAM: Actually, I was thinking more of your Conway.

SUE: Not "my" Conway, you can be sure. conway,

SAM: Well, I suppose he's his own man, if you will. He's raised himself to the heights of power.

SUE: Indeed? I'd hardly call the revolutionary rabble the "heights of power."

SAM: Not just here in America, but wherever he's been, he's risen to the top.

SUE: Like froth in beer, if you will.

SAM: Well, how often does an Irishman get to be a colonel in the French army?

SUE: And how many Irishmen do you know that would want to be Frenchmen, much less French officers.

SAM: But his parents moved to France when he was a child. He was raised and educated in France.

SUE: Then what's the merit of it? His parents decided to make him a Frenchman.

SAM: But you miss the point.

SUE: And what's the point?

SAM: He arrived in America just last spring, and you see already he's been promoted to major-general and made Inspector General of the armies.

SUE: And what does that prove?

SAM: Well, I can't help but think that here I am, born and raised in Pennsylvania; and I've done nothing at all to merit such honor, honor that he won in a few short months.

SUE: Well, what makes you think that he earned it? He probably has friends in high places.

SAM: On the contrary, it's said that Washington is his sworn enemy.

SUE: There are other men in high places. And from what I heard in Philadelphia, it's probably to a man's advantage to be on the outs with Washington. His days are numbered.

SAM: Are you speaking of some British plot?

SUE: British plot, indeed? No, I'm speaking of the Continental Congress — John Adams and Benjamin Rush and the rest of them. I'm speaking of the army, the generals — Gates and Mifflin, for example. Even before the British took Philadelphia, Washington was in disfavor. Everyone was talking about who would replace him.

SAM: We've heard that talk too. But Aunt Susannah doesn't put much stock in it.

SUE: And I suppose your Aunt Susannah knows everything?

SAM: No, not everything.

SUE: I should think not. Afterall, she doesn't believe in building cities.

BETSEY: Nor does Sam, when it comes right down to it. That's a new notion that just popped into his head and will probably pop out again just as quick. He never sticks to anything.

SAM: And what do you mean by that?

BETSEY: Well, just think of all the times you've sworn you wouldn't stay here another day, that you'd run off and make your fortune. You were going to the West, to the City, to sea or to Europe. It just depended on what passerby had last put the bug in your ear.

SAM: And what about you, dear sister Bess?

BETSEY: Sure. I want to get away too; but I don't go around swearing about it.

SUE: This must be a delightful place, with everyone wanting to run away from it.

SAM: Well, it is really. There's fish in the river, and game in the woods. And the ground's fertile. A man couldn't ask for much more in the way of land. It's just that we get so many passersby with tales of faroff places and adventures. Of course a body gets restless and curious.

BETSEY: Why don't you take her up in the cliffs, the Chickasalunga cliffs, and show her the view of the river. Isn't that where you take all the girls who catch your eye?

SUE: Just passersby, as well, I suppose? And each time you swear that you're going to run off with them? *(she and Betsey laugh)*

SAM: Laugh if you will, but you'll see. This Conway's a man of real substance and merit. If he has friends in high places — all the better. He's risen fast, and he'll rise still higher.

SUE: And you intend to rise with him?

SAM: A man could do worse.

SUE: Now that you mention it, a woman could as well.

## ACT ONE

### SCENE THREE

ACT ONE

SCENE THREE

*(Conway and Old Jack spotlighted)*

OLD JACK: And what brings you this way, sir? Anything I can do to help?

CONWAY: Surely, you know already.

OLD JACK: Beg your pardon, sir?

CONWAY: You and Aunt... Miss Wright seem to see quite a bit that doesn't meet the eyes of others.

OLD JACK: Well, when you get old like us and your eyes start to fail, you learn to compensate for what you can't see by what you can guess.

CONWAY: Indeed?

OLD JACK: And at a time like this, when people often aren't what they appear, if you don't know how they appear you've maybe got a better chance of knowing who they are.

*(those lights go out, other spotlights go on revealing Sam and Tom Boude on another part of the stage)*

**TOM:** It's high time you joined, Sam. Just look at this list, look at the fine men who have already signed up. Your cousin John Wright, your cousin Chris Taylor, Robert Barber, James Ewing, Charles Lockard, Nicholas Hogendobler. Everybody who's anybody in these parts has signed up.

**SAM:** Well, maybe I'm nobody.

**TOM:** Look, Sam. I know very well you're sick of being penned up here in the middle of nowhere, playing nursemaid to an old maid aunt. Put that discontent to good use. We need men like you.

**SAM:** I just may, Tom.

**TOM:** Then sign right here. Do it now and I'll be able to get you into the best outfit, no ordinary infantry....

**SAM:** No, indeed.

**TOM:** No?

**SAM:** No. I'm not about to join the regular army. But I just might put my restlessness to work.

**TOM:** What do you mean?

**SAM:** There's more than one cause to fight for.

**TOM:** More than one Revolution?

**SAM:** No. But more's at stake than independence from England. Men are vying for position and power, the men who will rule this land when the fighting stops. Conway is one of those men. He's waiting for troops now, troops loyal to **his** cause.

*(switch back to Conway and Old Jack)*

**CONWAY:** *(checks his watch)* Have you perchance some notion of what became of my troops?

**OLD JACK:** Can't say that I have. What uniform do they wear?

**CONWAY:** Continental.

**OLD JACK:** And how would I tell them from other troops?

**CONWAY:** Well, have you seen any troops pass this way?

**OLD JACK:** No, not many, not lately, not since the Virginians crossed over on their way to Valley Forge. At least, not many in uniform.

**CONWAY:** Pardon?

**OLD JACK:** Well, even now there's a dozen or so deserters waiting to cross with the ferry. Parttime soldiers who just want to get home and do some hunting so the wife and kids won't starve. They've probably every intention of returning in the spring when the crops have been planted. And that farmer with the wagon loads of flour, so anxious to get his goods to market in York — of course York is where the money is, not Valley Forge; but chances are he's just a Tory spy. And those four men playing cards over there. Two of them are militia and two of them are Hessian prisoners, though I'd be hard put to say which was which. They've come a long way, all the way from Saratoga, headed for the prison camp at Stoney Brook, over by York. By spring all four of them will probably be plowing ground hereabouts. Farm laborers bring a high price these days, even prisoners. And in no time at all those Hessians will just be Pennsylvania Dutchmen.

And then there's the dozen or so men that you spoke to, general.

*(switch back to Sam and Tom)*

TOM: From what I hear, he's been doing a better job of recruiting than I have. Leastwise, among the passersby. And now you, Sam.

*(spotlight Conway, startling Tom)*

CONWAY: And what about you, Tom?

TOM: Excuse me, sir?

CONWAY: You're a man of talents and a great power of persuasion. I hear you're the finest recruiter in seven counties.

TOM: Folks exaggerate.

CONWAY: Well, it does you credit that they think so highly of you.

TOM: Thank you, sir.

CONWAY: It's a pity to see such talent go to waste.

TOM: You mean, sir, that you don't believe in the cause?

CONWAY: Of course I believe the American colonies should be independent of England. Of course I believe in the rights of man. But men are ambitious, Tom. And the individual's got rights, too, Tom. Not just society. Look to your rights, Tom; that's what I say. Look to your personal rights.

TOM: But how, sir?

CONWAY: You take orders from generals. Well, I'm a general, and let me tell you we're an ambitious, self-serving lot. We're no different from other men. No different from you. So look to your rights, Tom, don't expect your generals to look to them for you.

TOM: Like Washington, for instance?

CONWAY: Indeed, you catch my drift. Do you know the man?

TOM: Not personally, sir.

CONWAY: Then if he wins, he's hardly likely to remember all this fine service you've been giving him. And if he loses, you'll be the enemy of whoever wins. Look to the future, Tom. Use your talent in ways to advance your future.

TOM: *(suspicious)* And how would that be, sir?

CONWAY: Must I spell it out for you? Attach yourself to a man who can appreciate your abilities. Work not just for a cause, but for yourself as well. It's still premature to say what jobs may need to be done, but there are men on the Board of War who do appreciate talent.

TOM: You mean, General Gates, sir?

CONWAY: Yes, and General Mifflin as well. They'll be passing through this way soon. And it would be to your advantage to be of service to them as they pass through.

TOM: *(relieved)* Certainly, sir. There's no harm in being helpful to a general.



# ACT ONE

## SCENE FOUR

(livingroom at Susannah Wright's house; Susannah, Betsey and Sue)

SUSANNAH: Sam! Sam! He's never about when I need him. Betsey, run fetch some more fire wood, will you? This cold's getting to my arthritis. And if you see that useless brother of yours, send him on in. There's chores to be done. Better that he do his chores than that he talk with passersby. He's had enough of general-talk. (exit Betsey)

SUE: You're rather harsh on Sam, don't you think?

SUSANNAH: Well, someone's got to care enough to be harsh.

SUE: I have to admit that I admire you, Miss Wright. It amazes me how you can be so decisive, knowing with surety that this is right and this is wrong.

SUSANNAH: Bossy, you mean? Yes, I'm bossy. That's what happens to a headstrong young girl when she gets old — she gets bossy. I know what you're thinking, "I hope I don't turn out that way." But don't worry your head about it. It's a heap better than sitting off quiet in a corner like a pile of bones.

SUE: Mother says that you were one of the original settlers of this area, some fifty years ago.

SUSANNAH: Fifty-one, to be exact. My father and Sam Blunston and Robert Barber and I. Of course, my brothers and sisters came along later, but they were younger, and ever since my mother died I had somewhat taken her place. And father treated me like an equal, giving me a share of the land when it was first divided.

SUE: From what I hear, you were more than an equal: everyone depended on you.

SUSANNAH: Well, when the others all died off, back in the '40's, someone had to take charge. (laughs) I guess I've had plenty of practice being bossy. From the very beginning, it seemed like everything depended on me, even though I was just doing my share: there was just so much to be done. Not just the clearing and the building, but staying friendly with the Indians, and, later, protecting them.

SUE: Are there any left?

SUSANNAH: Maybe a few who headed west, but none here, none at all, despite all our efforts. And we did try our best to be fair. This was an Indian town before we got here, you know. Shawanah Town they called it... I can tell from the look of you that you think we robbed them of their land, that they were "noble savages." Well, the Indians I knew here were just as greedy and foolish as the rest of us, only more susceptible to alcohol and disease. I had to break up many a drunken bout and nurse them through deadly epidemics of chickenpox, mumps, measles. Some were killed by

whites, the passersby, when the winds were high and the ferry couldn't run and drunken brawls broke out. But probably fewer died that way than would have died from their fighting among themselves if we hadn't come this way.

There's an old battleground just to the north of here, where many an Indian died fighting other tribes for control of this land. The Indians we found when we arrived were newcomers themselves, with little respect for the land and no intention of staying for very long. At least they didn't act like they intended to stay. Each year they'd burn down the woods because they couldn't bother to clear the land properly for their paltry crops of corn. We tried and failed to teach them our way of life. And I still firmly believe that our way of life is better than theirs was. And even if they did die off, I believe that while they lived we sheltered them from other tribes that surely would have descended on them, as they had descended on their predecessors, and murdered and pillaged.

SUE: You have a grim view of human nature.

SUSANNAH: Not grim, just practical.

*(enter Betsey, excited)*

BETSEY: Aunt Susannah, the coach just arrived from Lancaster.

SUSANNAH: As it does every day.

BETSEY: But this time General Miffin has come in it.

SUSANNAH: And haven't we had our fill of so-called generals by now?

SUE: Is there any mail? Mail from Philadelphia? Mail for us?

BETSEY: There might be. I didn't stop to look.

*(Sue leaves quickly; enter Tom Boude with Miffin)*

TOM: Miss Wright, and Miss Wright, I'd like to present Major-General Thomas Miffin. General may I present Miss Susannah Wright and her niece Elizabeth. Susannah owns the ferry and most of the land hereabouts.

*(fetches him a chair and stands nearby in attendance)*

SUSANNAH: Aren't you rather young to be a general?

BETSEY: Oh, auntie, how can you say such things?

MIFFLIN: *(laughs)* Your aunt is perfectly right. In ordinary days I'd probably been no more than a major by now. But then again, I wouldn't be a soldier at all, if these were ordinary times.

SUSANNAH: And is there such a dearth of experienced men?

MIFFLIN: *(a bit put off)* Both yes and no, ma'am. There are few officers with military experience dating from before the present war. But the need is so great and the vents are so pressing, that those who were called upon to serve from the outset have already received large doses of experience, much of which I'm sure we'd prefer to forget.

SUSANNAH: So bitter for one so young.

MIFFLIN: And not so young, by today's hasty standards. At 33, I'm a full thirteen years older than my peer in rank, the illustrious Marquis de LaFayette.

*(enter Patience)*

SUSANNAH: Boys, mere boys. Playing at war.

PATIENCE: And dying at it too, I fear.

SUSANNAH: What is it, Patience?

PATIENCE: A list of the casualties at Saratoga came with the coach.

MIFFLIN: But that list was published over a month ago.

PATIENCE: Not the British list.

BETSEY: Not Frank?

PATIENCE: Yes.

*(Betsey leaves immediately)*

SUSANNAH: We must go to her.

*(Susannah, Patience, and Tom Boude, as well, leave just as Conway enters)*

CONWAY: What's the great rush?

MIFFLIN: Another dose of experience for young and old. Apparently the death of someone's sweetheart.

CONWAY: Indeed, most regrettable. *(anxious to get down to business; checks his watch)* We're running a bit behind schedule, but with roads and ferries the way they are this time of year, plans must be kept flexible. Are the troops to arrive soon?

MIFFLIN: Troops? What troops?

CONWAY: Your troops, our troops. Didn't my messengers arrive? I sent three of them.

MIFFLIN: They must have gone astray.

CONWAY: Indeed... *(sizing up the situation)* They were sent to urge you to bring a contingent of loyal troops for securing key lines of communication.

MIFFLIN: Loyal?

CONWAY: Of course, Tom, loyal to you. Men you can personally trust. In days like these you don't give important assignments to just anyone.

MIFFLIN: Of course, of course. But what's this matter of such great importance?

CONWAY: But surely you remember our conversations?

MIFFLIN: You mean you actually intend to follow through....?

CONWAY: Of course, of course. Do you have any word of Gates? Why does he take so long to arrive? Timing is essential, as I'm sure you realize. Now he's the hero of Saratoga, the darling of Congress and the colonies. Today he could have a triumphal march into York.

MIFFLIN: But not into Philadelphia.

CONWAY: Emphasizing all the more the loss of that fair city.

MIFFLIN: And Washington's incompetence?

CONWAY: But, of course. Dissatisfaction is already widespread. A brilliant display, a triumphal entry. Loyal troops at key points.

MIFFLIN: But this isn't Italy. You can't change the government with a handful of palace guards.

CONWAY: And a battlefield isn't a polite southern drawingroom either — you do not win battles and wars by politely bowing and taking your leave. You know as well as I that it will take more decisive men than Washington to win the war

**MIFFLIN:** Agreed. Agreed. There's no love lost between the two of us.

**CONWAY:** Indeed. And I'm sure he knows it. As he knows of my own enmity. Any day now I expect him to anticipate us and retaliate with force.

**MIFFLIN:** Don't be ridiculous.

**CONWAY:** But what restrains him? Whoever controls the army rules this country. His will is law if he would but recognize it.

**MIFFLIN:** One moment you overestimate his weakness and the next you overestimate his strength.

**CONWAY:** I merely urge that we act quickly if we are to act at all. We should place this feery and other key points in reliable hands, in the hands of sympathizers, who will speed the passage of Gates when he arrives and will hinder Washington's communication with Congress, if necessary.

**MIFFLIN:** Do you want to be king?

**CONWAY:** Don't be foolish. I don't want power for myself. I want it for friends. I want the power to be in the hands of my friends rather than my enemies. And the power is there for the taking. From sheer inertia, no one has made a move; but soon they will and better us than another party.

**MIFFLIN:** And what of the war?

**CONWAY:** I have assurances from my friends in Paris that the French alliance is a certainty. That alliance will make eventual victory a certainty. The war may drag on for a few more years; but it is not independence from England that is at stake now, but rather who will rule once that independence is gained.

**MIFFLIN:** There must be a better way.

**CONWAY:** It's the nature of man, Tom. Whether it's savages battling in the wilderness or courtiers bying in a palace. Men must strive for supremacy. They must rule or be ruled.

**MIFFLIN:** Admittedly, in Europe men may have degenerated to the point. There your rulers may read Machiavelli more often than the Bible. But this is America. Here mankind has had a fresh start, a chance to make good on all the mistakes of the centuries.

**CONWAY:** No doubt you've been listening to your recruiters. Fine sentiments to raise the masses with; but you can see quite clearly how rank and favoritism creep into the democratic ranks of your fine Revolutionary army. Men are men, whether here or in Europe, and men will have favorites and men will seek their own best interest, it not openly, then covertly. Don't fool yourself and don't try to fool me. You quarrelled with Washington and resigned as Quartermaster General over this very issue.

**MIFFLIN:** I believe he had shown poor judgement.

**CONWAY:** In failing to recognize your merits, in promoting others, younger and less experienced than you.

**MIFFLIN:** One man's proclivity toward favoritism does not negate....

**CONWAY:** But it is that one man that we are talking about. We are talking about limiting that man's powers and shifting some of his responsibilities to other men, perhaps to men of more democratic inclinations, men less impressed by foreign titles, by self-styled barons and marquis. Not another southern aristocrat, but level-headed merchants or businessmen or lawyers.

MIFFLIN: But Gates is a professional soldier, and English. He settled in Virginia not that long before hostilities broke out. He was spoonfed notions of aristocracy from the cradle.

CONWAY: Of course, he wouldn't make a suitable substitute for the long run. But for the short run, consider the man's reputation; consider, too, his ambition and his enmity toward Washington. He would make a suitable figurehead, a temporary leader, until the time were ripe for the right man, someone with democratic ideals, someone like yourself, to take his place.

MIFFLIN: But I have no such ambition.

CONWAY: Indeed, indeed. But if the need arose and your nation called on you to serve... There's no need for violence; no need even for a vote of Congress, even though that body is already strongly dissatisfied with Washington. As you well know, Gates was just elected president of the Board of War, of which you yourself are a member. That body's functions are still ill-defined, but independent, clearly independent of the commander-in-chief. There is no precedent. Your powers will be defined by the actions you take. Without ever attempting to officially strip Washington of his powers, you could gradually strip him of his troops and his supporters, sending them off on expeditions planned by the Board of War, with other, more competent generals in command. (*Mifflin has become interested by now.*)

First, we must secure this ferry and other key points with troops we can trust. Much will depend on communication and timing; and unlikely though it may be that Washington would retaliate openly, he still wields some influence, despite his setbacks, and should he sense the scope of our plans, never underestimate a desperate man.

## ACT TWO

### SCENE ONE

(*Tom Boude, Sam Wright — Both drunk; and Betsey*)

BETSEY: Sam Wright, you should be ashamed of yourself, getting all liquored up, and just when your Aunt Susannah needs you.

SAM: She doesn't need me, Betsey. She doesn't need anyone.

BETSEY: Well, you need her, that's for sure. Or somebody like her, to keep you out of evil ways and evil company.

SAM: You mean old Tom here? You thought better of him a couple days ago, before that general of yours....

BETSEY: Why whatever do you mean?

TOM: You know what he means. I've seen the way you've been playing up to that General Mifflin, and a fine general he is, I'm sure. (*raises his jug*) To the health of General Mifflin.

SAM: What is it that makes a woman take after a man just because he has wealth and power?

**TOM:** Damned if I know, Sam. There's more to life than what wealth and power can buy.

**SAM:** I'll drink to that.

**BETSEY:** Certainly, there's refinement and manners and courtesy and consideration, and ....

**TOM:** There's the satisfaction that comes from what you've built with your own strength and skill, and there's tenderness and the warmth of an understanding woman in your arms....

**BETSEY:** (*avoiding him*) Not in your arms, not with that stench of whiskey on you.

**TOM:** Just listen to her. She has such a sweet voice.

**BETSEY:** I can almost touch the smell, it's so strong.

**TOM:** Well, get on home to your perfumed general, then. And pay no mind to us who risk our lives to fight for your freedom; and who seek for a few idle hours to forget the cares of war.

**BETSEY:** Then you do more than the generals for the good of the cause?

**TOM:** Why, yes, yes, of course. The generals just fight for themselves. They vie for power and position; they fight for their personal fame and fortune. But we... we fight for... for the good of all. And we drink to it, too; to the good of all.

**BETSEY:** A regular martyr you are, getting drunk for the good of all. And I suppose you'd make love for the good of all, as well?

**TOM:** So be it, so be it, lass, a jolly thought. For if thou and I be happy, isn't that a start and a fine start toward the happiness of all?

(*exit Betsey*)

**TOM:** Women are such unaccountable beasts. Such lack of moral fortitude and scruples. Always coddling up to men of fortune and power. It sickens me to see Betsey, dear sweet little Bess, throwing herself at a stranger like that Mifflin.

**SAM:** And Sue as well; have you seen the way Sue Loudon plays up to that Conway?

**TOM:** Such is the way of the world.

**SAM:** (*toasting*) To the way of the world.

**TOM:** Well, if you can't beat them, join them. You've got the right idea, Sam. Get some money and some power yourself; and then the girls will come running. You're going to build a city?

**SAM:** Yes.

**TOM:** A big city?

**SAM:** The very biggest.

**TOM:** I can see it now: houses and factories stacked on top of one another, a regular metropolis.

**SAM:** I'm thinking of advertising. Tom, you'd be good at advertising. I'd send you all over the countryside recruiting settlers. You'd bring them in from Philadelphia and New York. You'd even bring them back from Kentucky. You'd make this town the most populous in the whole nation.

And we need friends, the right friends, like these big wigs who pass through all the time, using the ferry. With the right friends, my city, our

city could be the county seat, or the state capital or even the nation's capital. Like Conway says, it pays to have friends. With the right friends most anything's possible. And if we don't have the friends ourselves, we can pay people who do have the friends.

*(enter Young Jack, also drunk)*

YOUNG JACK: Friends, indeed, we need friends; we all need friends. *(puts his arms around both Sam and Tom)*. In this time of trial and tribulation. Some have lost husbands; others have lost lovers....

TOM: And what have you lost, Jack?

YOUNG JACK: I have lost a lover, or a would-be lover. She certainly would have been had that Conway not come along as he did.

SAM: You mean Sue?

YOUNG JACK: No, I wouldn't bandy with a shrew like that, no matter how fair of face. It's her mother I fancy. Her dear, sweet, mature, and understanding mother, Patience. Lord, grant me patience. *(drinks a toast)*

TOM: I'll drink to that as well. We all could use patience.

YOUNG JACK: Aye. But use her tenderly, lads, for she's a deserving woman.

SAM: And is she indeed smitten with Conway?

YOUNG JACK: I should say she is. Both she and her daughter. Though neither of them would probably admit it to themselves. The poor dears; they sorely need companionship, advice and compassion, in this their time of tribulation.

TOM: To the time of tribulation. *(toasts)*

YOUNG JACK: The mrs. having just buried her husband and the young one just getting word that her betrothed died nobly in battle. They need sympathy, I'm sure, but they need distraction as well; they need a man who can fascinate them into forgetfulness. If Conway had never shown, I feel sure that I could have risen to the occasion. And Sam here could have comforted the young one; or at last matched wits with her to pass the time of day for this time of tribulation.

TOM: Time of tribulation. *(toasts)*

YOUNG JACK: But Conway came, and so I slip back to my old dissolute ways. A middle-aged man with neither past nor future. Dependent on an ancient old maid aunt, and rather resentful of her, as I'm sure we all are, though we're ashamed to admit it. A man in debt to everyone both for money and for kindness, a fine model of a man. A fine man for you to look up to and follow, Sam.

TOM: But Sam's different, Jack. Sam won't be like the other nephews of her highness. Sam's going to build a city.

YOUNG JACK: Save a job for me, will you, Sam? A nice easy high paying job. And I'll marry me a widow and settle down. Now that would be real independence.

## ACT TWO

### SCENE TWO

(Livingroom of Susannah's house; Susannah, Mifflin, Conway form the dominant conversational group; Sue, Betsey and Patience talk inaudibly among themselves or comment audibly on what Susannah-Mifflin-Conway are saying, they become increasingly absorbed in listening to that dominant conversation; they all drink tea, Susannah pouring; the drinking and pouring punctuate the main conversation giving intervals at which the others can be heard)

SUSANNAH: Independence? You don't know the meaning of the word "independence."

Independence comes from mastery. Either you master your craft or you're forced to obey a master. Say I'm an apprentice, and I take up arms against a tyrannical master — what do I gain if I take over his shop, but don't know the craft? Either I fail, or I must seek another master.

The question then becomes, not how tyrannical is England, but rather, how well has America mastered the craft of governing itself? Are we ready?

I'm inclined to think that we're not, not quite. But events have gone too far, and I can only hope that our ingenuity will make up for our lack of experience and that we will fashion a solid, if not a craftsmanlike government.

CONWAY: But you assume that the people will govern themselves immediately. I see it much more likely that a temporary form of government will evolve, with a few experienced men as caretakers till the people are ready for democracy.

SUSANNAH: That's precisely the danger I foresee. Either the people must learn to govern themselves, or they will find that they have but changed a king for a dictator.

SUE: (for all to hear) You might say trading one King George for another.

CONWAY: My very thought.

SUSANNAH: But you underestimate Washington. I would be much less sanguine if he were not in charge.

PATIENCE: (aside to Sue and Betsey) I wish they'd picked a man better disposed toward the Quakers.

MIFFLIN: You prefer Washington, with his long record of defeats, to a proven soldier such as Gates?

BETSEY: (aside to Patience & Sue) General Mifflin would make a fine commander. And he's a Quaker, you know.



SUE: (*in reply*) A Quaker general?  
That's a fine kettle of fish.

SUSANNAH: Gates is a vain, ambitious man.

SUE: (*aside to Patience & Betsey*)  
And a rich one, too. I've heard it said  
that Gates' wife is the richest woman  
in America.

CONWAY: If it comes down to it, we are all vain and ambitious, including Washington.

SUSANNAH: But Gates requires obedience.

MIFFLIN: A fine quality in a general.

SUSANNAH: But he can only govern an army of subordinates. He can admit no peers. He can share no glory. One need only hear the reports of his feud with Arnold to recognize that Gates is unsuited for any higher post.

MIFFLIN: Arnold? Now there's a vain man for you, a man with an inflated notion of his own abilities.

SUSANNAH: But abilities he has indeed. Abilities that are hard to come by these days. And it takes a broad-minded diplomat like Washington ....

MIFFLIN: You overestimate his fairness.

SUSANNAH: Well it's no easy task, I'm sure, managing an army full of generals. And a more aggressive, military sort than Washington, less of a diplomat could lose the lot of them.

MIFFLIN: And the cause would be the better for it.

SUSANNAH: Hardly. He'd be left with nothing but the rabble, with no discipline and no money to pay them. These dandies, these Yankee doodle dandies, if you please, command respect from their units and help pay for the war.

Self-reliant, independent men. The very qualities that make them revolutionaries make them insubordinate, unwilling to accept the authority of those placed in rank above them.

And why should they accept this military hierarchy when Congress raises and lowers their ranks from one day to the next, far from the scene of battle, often without consulting Washington or contrary to his advice.

(*Mifflin and Conway exchange glances; Mifflin in particular is rather disturbed by the remark*)

MIFFLIN: Your commentary, though well-intentioned, is misinformed. You can hardly know the facts....

SUSANNAH: But I can guess at them. It's an old woman's privilege to pretend to know more than she does. So let me have my say.

(*continues*) These generals are men of influence. Their promotions often matter more in a political sense than a military one. They make these influential men more visible as supporters of the cause.

Besides, when you have no money to pay your men, titles and honors come cheap. If this war keeps up 10 or 20 years, we'll have an army of nothing but generals.

CONWAY: Touche, madam. (*bows slightly*)

MIFFLIN: (*laughs*) You know how to put a major-general in his place.

SUSANNAH: (*addressing Mifflin directly*) I mock you and praise you at the same time, for your very faults are the basis of your virtues. Your vanity and your self-reliance are one of a piece. You are critical and readily offended, but you are also capable of independent judgement and command. Our fledgling nation needs men like you. I hate to see such talent thrown away over a personal grudge.

CONWAY: You overstep yourself, madam.

SUSANNAH: I'm not addressing those words to you, General Conway. You have your own reasons for joining the American cause, for seeking rank and recognition so far from your native land.

CONWAY: I readily admit that I'm ambitious and that advancement comes more quickly here than in Europe. I'll not parade about with lofty sentiments about the rights of man. Men act out of self-interest. If they say they don't, they delude themselves. Your government did not seek me out to offer me freedom from despotism, to offer me the rights of man. No, you needed my experience and talent, and I offered them not for money, of which you have little, but rather for rank and recognition and the opportunity to make a name for myself.

SUSANNAH: I appreciate your candor, Mr. Conway. And I certainly recognize that men often act out of self-interest, that they are often foolish, often even detestable. But I cannot condone such behavior. Nor do I believe that men always act that way. Many try to live in accord with more general principles. Often fail or fool themselves; but at least they maintain some notion of the good, and the right, and the fair; at least they feel some remorse when they recognize that they've subverted those principles out of self-interest.

CONWAY: But I myself heard you say that such romantic notions incapacitate men for the world of practical action.

SUSANNAH: I am not always logical, nor are men always so weak. I pray to God that men are not always so weak that they fail to do what they know is right.

MIFFLIN: And it was wrong of me to abandon my post as Quarter-Master General, despite the unwarranted criticism, the complete lack of appreciation?

SUSANNAH: You have heard as well as I of the suffering at Valley Forge. Could you have averted some of that suffering by making a stronger effort to procure supplies, by better fulfilling your duties? Did you let a personal grudge....

CONWAY: Why do you listen to this old woman's ramblings?

SUSANNAH: Because he learns by his mistakes. One day all this will be forgotten. He'll serve his nation well in other capacities. Some day he'll be a great man.

CONWAY: And me?

SUSANNAH: You wouldn't know what to do with success. You'd be suspicious of any man's praise, thinking he spoke out of self-interest, to curry

your favor. And you'd be always alone, because the success you seek is personal success; and other men, as ambitious as yourself struggle to hold you back, or to use you for their own advancement as you would use them if you could.

CONWAY: Such is the way of the world.

MIFFLIN: Yes, but let us hope that it does not become the way of America.

## ACT TWO

### SCENE THREE

*(Sue, Betsey, and Sam spotlighted or on the front of the stage with a plain backdrop)*

SUE: You should have heard how your Aunt Susannah put down the generals.

BETSEY: Not the generals, just Conway. Don't you remember how she said such fine things about Mifflin; that he would one day be a "great man"?

SAM: And what did she say to Conway?

BETSEY: I think she called him "detestable", or something like that.

SAM: She must have made a fine fool of herself. Was Conway offended? Badly offended?

SUE: Offended? Offended?

SAM: I should be thankful I wasn't there myself. I don't think I could have stood the humiliation.... I'd better go to him at once.

SUE: But whatever for?

SAM: To explain away her behavior as best I can. An old woman, nearly senile, accustomed to ruling and judging and ordering everyone for miles around, from the days of her prime, when there was no one else to take charge, before her sad decline....

SUE: Decline, indeed. She was most eloquent. You should be proud of her.

SAM: For insulting a man of the importance of General Conway?

SUE: And is your aunt of no importance?

SAM: You have to see things in their proper perspective.

SUE: Proper perspective indeed. And where do you get off, currying the favor of a passerby, a man who'd forget you before he's halfway across the river.

SAM: It doesn't hurt to be useful to a man of influence.

SUE: To be used?

SAM: I said to be useful.

SUE: He'd gladly use you, to scrape the mud from his boots and then pass on to the next doorpost.

SAM: You have to be prepared for such treatment. Of course, you can ex-

pect to be cast aside unless you can continue to be useful.

SUE: So now you intend to make a career of being a doorpost? And what happened to that fine idea of yours?

SAM: What idea?

SUE: To build a city. Here at Wright's Ferry.

SAM: I've not forgotten it. I've just come to realize that to do it properly you need power, influence, money.

SUE: So now we're to hear the Gospel According to Conway. Now listen here, Mr. Wright, (or is it Mr. Wrong?), that fine lady, who by some accident of nature happens to be your aunt has more sense in her arthritic little finger....

SAM: She's opposed to the idea of a city. You know as well as I....

SUE: Then forget it, for all I care. But don't forget your aunt. She stood up to Conway, which is more than you're ever likely to do. And she seems to have brought Mifflin to his senses. And she just may have brought me to mine. She needs no one to make excuses for her. But you most certainly do. (*exits abruptly. Betsey follows.*)

(*enter Conway, evidently looking for Sam and pleased to find him*)

CONWAY: Sam?

SAM: Yes, sir?

CONWAY: Yes, Sam, (I never forget a name, not the name of a friend). There's been a slight change in plans.

SAM: Yes, sir?

CONWAY: It seems that General Mifflin's handpicked troops won't be coming this way. They are needed elsewhere on urgent business. But still the need remains to place this ferry in reliable hands, as I'm sure you understand.

SAM: But you can trust Young Jack... Colonel Loudon, I mean. I've known him since the day I was born.

CONWAY: Indeed. Indeed. (*taking another tack*) But wouldn't you say the colonel, Colonel Loudon, is a bit too smitten with his jug? And I had more in mind a contingent of troops, under the command of an alert young officer, a man who knows the river and the people of these parts well, but a friend, a reliable, yes, a close personal friend of mine. Someone like you, Sam.

SAM: I'm flattered, general, truly I am, but....

CONWAY: But what, my friend? (*putting his arm around Sam*)

SAM: If I'm to take charge immediately, who are to be my troops?

CONWAY: I've already spoken to a few men, reliable merchants, delayed here on their way to York, and they've expressed an interest in serving here under your command. There were about a dozen, I believe. I'll speak to them again, and bring them to your first muster, down by the ferry. Wait for us there.

SAM: Indeed, I shall, sir. Indeed, I shall.

## ACT TWO

### SCENE FOUR

*(scene by the Ferry, same set as at the beginning of the play; Old Jack; enter Sam)*

OLD JACK: And what brings you this way, Sam? I haven't seen you for a while.

SAM: *(preoccupied, checks his watch)* Business.

OLD JACK: Serious business, I see, quite serious, nothing to be shared with Old Jack.... And have you given any thought to my suggestion?

SAM: What suggestion was that?

OLD JACK: Your father's dream.

SAM: You mean the city?

OLD JACK: Have you given much thought to it?

SAM: In a way, you might say my business has to do with the city. You might say that I'm trying to make it more possible.

OLD JACK: Always three steps ahead of Old Jack. And what kind of city is it to be?

SAM: A booming city, an important city, a big city.

OLD JACK: That's a shame. Yes, that's a shame. I was rather hoping to live in a smaller city. Not one that sprawls all over the place, but rather the kind that grows slowly and keeps something of the shape and tone of its origins.

SAM: Well, what's the point of building a city if it isn't going to be big and important?

OLD JACK: Well, you don't always have to be big to be important. And, besides, what's the point of building a city if you wouldn't want to live there, or if your friends wouldn't? What kind of success would that be?

SAM: Well, how do you see the city?

OLD JACK: Oh, I see it all quite clearly. They'll build a bridge right here, to replace the ferry, but a flood will come and wreck it. And they'll build another, but it'll get burnt down. And they'll build another bridge, but a storm will come. And they'll keep on building bridges, through all the storms, and through all the storms Columbia will still be Columbia.

SAM: But what's "Columbia"?

OLD JACK: Your city, of course. You'll name it "Columbia."

SAM: But why "Columbia"? I was thinking more of "Wright's Ferry", "Wrightstown", "Wrightsburg", "Wright City"....

OLD JACK: Wrong. All wrong. You have to let go, boy. You can't hold on to your city forever. Start it yes. But don't try to stamp your family name on it. Give it a good solid American name — "Columbia" — a name that every settler can identify with and say "that's my city."

Just think, lad, the Columbias of America, the small towns and cities scattered across the countryside, the towns with roots and origins will keep

this nation strong. Through all the storms of the years, the Columbias will survive and the people will pull together and help one another; the Columbias will survive to....

*(enter Young Jack)*

YOUNG JACK: Sam, can you lend a hand?

SAM: *(checks his watch)* What is it, Jack?

YOUNG JACK: Well, the blacksmith finally came, and it looks like the winds are changing....

SAM: Do you want me to help with the ferry? Sure, glad to....*(checks his watch, hesitates)* Just hang on a little while and I'll be with you. I've got to take care of a little business.

YOUNG JACK: Sure, Sam. Sure, Sam. Only, I was feeling it's a bit urgent. Word's getting about that Conway means to seize the ferry. He's going around among the passersby now, stirring up trouble; and you know as well as I it wouldn't take much encouraging to start a row, the way those men have been forced to wait, some of them for weeks. They're fixing for a row, just out of boredom.

SAM: And what were you figuring on doing, Jack?

YOUNG JACK: Just thought I'd try to get the ferry to the other side. Then I'd worry about what to do next. Just get it away from that Conway.

SAM: Have you been drinking Jack?

YOUNG JACK: No, Sam, not a drop, not a drop since lunchtime.

OLD JACK: Well, hang on there, Young Jack. *(brandishing his cane/walking stick)* We'll give them a thrashing. *(joining Young Jack)*

YOUNG JACK: I tried to get help. Honest, I did, Sam.

*(enter Tom Boude)*

SAM: Well, here's Tom Boude, now. He ought to be able to help now, and I'll be along in a minute.

TOM: Word's about that you've....

*(Sam tries repeatedly, unsuccessfully to shut him up)*

YOUNG JACK: I tried, Sam, Honest I did....

gotten yourself a new command and a new title

*(slapping Sam on the back)*

I tried to raise the militia. There are plenty of militia among those passersby.

Congratulations, you stinker. You said you'd do something like that sooner or later, but how'd you ever pull it off so soon?

...You know what I said? I walked up to them and said, "Now's the time to fight for your rights." That's what I said. And you know what they said? They said "Fight for the Wrights?"

they said, "And why should we fight for the Wrights? Can't they fight for themselves?"

TOM: What's gotten into Jack there? Is he getting uppity, now that you're taking his place?

YOUNG JACK: Taking my place?

TOM: Sure, haven't you heard? Conway's taking over the ferry.

YOUNG JACK: Not if I have anything to say about it. Old Jack and Sam and I, we're going to put up quite a fight.

TOM: But Jack, you haven't heard the half of it. You see Sam here, he and Conway....

*(Sam is about to interrupt, but Conway enters before he has a chance, followed by a dozen muscular bored, angry men, with a variety of makeshift weapons — the director could also handle this scene without the dozen men, their presence in the background being implied)*

CONWAY: Ah, Jack, you're here as well. How fortunate. I suppose Sam has already explained to you, but I wanted to explain to you myself. It's no reflection on you personally. It's a necessity of war, I'm sure you understand. With Congress in York, this point is of key strategic significance. You've done a fine job, I'm sure. But we'll find other more challenging jobs for you... perhaps even a promotion. Yes, I'll speak to my friends about it when I get to York.

But for now we must make sure the ferry is in reliable hands. And I'm sure you know how trustworthy your cousin here is....

*(Sam jumps up on a bench, wall, an elevated portion of the stage — whatever is available)*

SAM: This ferry is already in reliable hands — the hands of Colonel John Loudon of the Lancaster militia.

CONWAY: Then as a major-general of the Continental Army, I order him to....

SAM: *(throws down his watch)* He is not in your command. As Inspector General, you have no command authority. File a report to his superiors, if you wish.

CONWAY: Step aside.

SAM: *(speaking slowly, deliberately)* If you attempt to take this ferry by force, from the men duly entrusted with its defense, Colonel Loudon *(Young Jack steps close beside him)*, Lieutenant Boude *(he and Old Jack do likewise)* and the rest of us assembled here will resist you.... *(Conway still unmoved)* to the death if need be. *(Conway smiles and looks back at his men, putting no stock in these melodramatics)* ... But I sincerely doubt that you will try .... for succeed or fail, you would face court martial on charges of treason. *(Conway hesitates)* As for the rest of you, step on up and lend a hand. Yes, I said, "lend a hand." You were ready to serve under my orders a moment ago. Now I'm telling you to step lively. There's work to be done. The blacksmith's done his work and the wind has changed. What are you waiting for? We've got to get these wagons and people

across the river. Get a move on. I don't know about you, but the rest of them are tired of waiting. (*The men rapidly exit toward the river, led by Young Jack*).

CONWAY: I won't forget, Sam Wright. You can count on it. I never forget a betrayal. (*exit*)

SAM: (*Somewhat relieved and ecstatic*) Pass the jug, Tom. Let's drink to the Battle of Wright's Ferry. (*takes the jug, sits down, and takes a swig*)

TOM: (*taking the jug back*) Well, you sure had me fooled. And that Conway, too. I'll never forget the look on his face when you stood up there, and then when you told him you'd have him courtmarshalled for treason. He didn't know what was coming off. Caught him by surprise, you did. Had him fooled over a barrel. And me too, I must say.

SAM: I came right close to fooling myself, as well.

TOM: Just wait till I tell dear Bess this tale of her brother's glory. And I had thought to be bringing her news that you were to be a major, and I thought that that was much to tell and be proud of. Your aunt will be wanting to hear all the particulars, and Sue as well, to be sure. I'd better hurry on, or they'll hear it from someone else, without the proper particulars to whet their appetite and lead them on to the noble deed. (*starts to leave, and is nearly knocked over by Betsey and Sue rushing in*)

BETSEY: Oh, Sam, how could you ever? And you too, Tom?

TOM: It was quite a sight indeed, my lass. You'd be proud....

SUE: Proud indeed. And did you get a promotion too? Or did he pay you off in pieces of silver?

TOM: Beg your pardon, miss, but I was about to tell you the full story, complete with particulars.

SUE: I'm sure you'll find some sweet talking way to explain yourself. But what about Sam? What about you, Sam? How do you explain betraying your Aunt Susannah and your friend Jack?

SAM: (*at first puzzled catches on and starts to laugh; Tom catches on too and starts to laugh*)

SUE: If it weren't shame enough, you laugh about it.

(*enter Patience*)

PATIENCE: What have they done to John?

TOM: You mean Jack?

PATIENCE: Young Jack, if you will. What have those ruffians done to him?

(*Sam and Tom break out in new peels of laughter*)

BETSEY: How can you be so heartless?

SUE: They're probably beating him to death. I can see them swarming all over the ferry.

PATIENCE: Won't anybody help him?

(*Sam and Tom laugh some more*)

SUE: Well, we can't just stand here and watch these hyenas laugh. Let's do what we can.

(*they start off determined, toward the ferry, picking up sticks or other*



*possible weapons)*

*(Betsey looks back)*

**BETSEY:** Oh, no. Aren't things bad enough as they are? Aunt Susannah's coming. She must have heard. It's sure to be the death of her.

*(enter Susannah, in tears; Sam runs to her, holds her, she clasps him; Sue and Betsey run up to them; Patience keeps going toward the ferry to save Young Jack)*

**SUSANNAH:** I'm proud of you, boy. I've never been so proud of a man.

**SUE:** Proud of what?

**SUSANNAH:** Haven't you heard?

**SUE:** Heard? Why it's outrageous.

**SUSANNAH:** Yes, it is wonderful, isn't it? I ran into Conway on the road. He looked like he wanted to crawl into a hole.

**SUE:** You mean....

**TOM:** Like I was trying to tell you, Sam here just won the Battle of Wright's Ferry.

**SUE:** Oh. *(upset)*

**SAM:** What is it?

**SUE:** Mother. I let her run off into that mob of ruffians. She thinks she's going to save Young Jack.

*(enter Young Jack and Patience)*

**YOUNG JACK:** And save me she did. It'll be hours before those people settle down. They're in such a hurry to get across that none of them's going anywhere.

## *Epilogue*

**OLD JACK:** You're probably wondering what became of all these people. But even if you're not, I'll tell you anyway.

Conway soon fell into disgrace over his plots against Washington, resigned his commission and returned to France. Eventually, they made him governor of the French possessions in India; and he succeeded in wrecking French prospects in that part of the world by quarrelling with the native royalty. He then returned again to France to lead royalist armies against the troops of the French Revolution. He was defeated and again left France, this time riding off the pages of history.

As for Mifflin, he too fell into disgrace for his connection with the intrigues against Washington and had to leave the army. But later he was elected to Congress, served on the Constitutional Convention, and did distinguished service as the first governor of the State of Pennsylvania.

Meanwhile, Young Jack, from what I hear, gave up his drinking and became a distinguished Revolutionary officer, participating in a number of battles. I don't know if he ever married Patience, Sue's mother, but I be-

lieve he did, and moved to a valley on the west branch of the Susquehanna, where he could be his own man.

As for Tom Boude, he fought with distinction under General Anthony Wayne. And after the war, Governor Mifflin appointed him general of militia. Boude married Betsey, Sam's sister, like everyone expected; but she died shortly after the birth of their only child. He remarried, had a large family, went into the lumber business, then went into politics, and, for a spell, served in Congress as the representative from Lancaster County.

Aunt Susannah died quietly, not long after the end of the war, leaving the ferry and her land to her nephew Sam.

And Sam, well, he married Sue Loudon, and founded his city, the way I wanted him to, and called it "Columbia."

And in 1789, the House of Representatives of the United States voted to locate the permanent capital of the new nation near the center of the population at that time — namely the Susquehanna in Pennsylvania, and specifically on the east bank of that river at Wright's Ferry, newly renamed "Columbia." The motion passed the House by 32 to 18.

But the Senate disagreed. (Maybe there were some old friends of Conway in the Senate, and that was their way of taking revenge). Anyway, Congress settled on a site on the Potomac, and another Columbia, the District of Columbia, became the nation's capital.

It was just as well, as I see it. I wouldn't want to live in one of those capital places with folks moving in and out every four years. I like a place small enough so I can know my neighbors and big enough so I can have a lot of friends. And it hasn't stopped growing yet, growing to be a better place to live. And with the help of my friends, and the whole town's my friends, we'll make this a town that not only Sam, but even Susannah, even old Susannah Wright herself would be proud to call her own — a right nice town to live in. □

### *About The Author*

**H**ow does a brilliant young linguist, fresh from translating political dissent and chemistry articles published in Russian to English for the U.S. Army and the Library of Congress, get mixed up with American history on the banks of the community his father serves as superintendent of schools? Simple! Lots of interest and plenty of creativity!

Richard Warren Seltzer, Jr. received his preparatory education at Holderness School, Plymouth, New Hampshire; and Brentwood School, Essex, England. He received his B.A. in English (*cum laude*) from Yale in 1969, and went into graduate work in comparative literature (Russian, French and German) on the Clark-Eldridge Fellowship. He earned his M.A. in comparative literature (Russian and French) from the University of

Massachusetts at Amherst in 1973. At Brentwood he took the History Prize and Upper VI Arts form prize. At Holderness he maintained the school's highest average during his four years in residence, and earned numerous prizes. In 1964 he earned the New Hampshire State French Prize. Seltzer studied creative writing with Robert Penn Warren and Joseph Heller.

As a professional translator he has done much work in translating technical and political science articles published in Russian to English, under commission to Linguistic Systems, Inc., Aerospace Technology Division of the Library of Congress, and the U.S. Army Security Agency. At present he is a writer-editor for Benwill Publishing Co., and is associate editor for *Circuits Manufacturing*. He is married and the father of one child.