

"Take Stony Point!" That was General Washington's order to General Wayne.

Stony Point was an important fort. Once it had been held by the Americans. Now the British held it.

The fort was on the Hudson River. It was at the tip of a long finger of land. At high tide this tip of land became an island. Water cut it off from the mainland. At low tide the land was swampy. There was a road across it. But the British kept the road well guarded.

Taking the fort would not be easy. But General Wayne had one bit of luck. He had someone who could help him.

The owner of a nearby farm had a slave named Pompey. Pompey often went to Stony Point. He took strawberries and cherries with him. He sold the fruit to the soldiers there. They came to look on him as a friend.

Little did they know! Pompey's trips were not just friendly visits. He was a spy. He reported all he saw to his master. The farmer, in turn, told General Wayne.

So Wayne knew what went on in the fort. But he still could not get near it.

Then a lucky thing happened.

Pompey always went to the fort at night. It was a dangerous trip. In the dark, the British guards could not tell who he was. Once or twice they almost shot him.

"Why don't you come in the daytime?" they asked.

"It's corn-hoeing season," answered Pompey. "I have to work while it's light."

Then the British made their mistake. They told Pompey the secret password. The instant he gave it, the guards would let him pass by.

That was just what General Wayne needed. On the night of July 15, 1779, he attacked.

Pompey led the way. Two strong men went behind him. It was very dark along the road. Suddenly, as they neared the fort, a guard cried "Halt!"

Pompey gave the password. "Pass on!" said the guard.

Seconds later the two men seized the guard and tied him up.

And so the fort had no warning. Wayne's men crept right up to it. The attack was a complete surprise. There was a short battle, and the fort was theirs.

Washington and Wayne praised the soldiers. Many of the men got medals. But Pompey, who made the victory possible, was soon forgotten.

Only his master rewarded his service to America. Pompey was given a horse to ride. And he was never made to work in the fields again.

CHECK YOUR READING

1. **Stony Point was an important**
 - A hill
 - B fort
 - C city

2. **It was on the edge of a**
 - A river
 - B desert
 - C forest

3. **At Stony Point, Pompey sold**
 - A cookies
 - B eggs
 - C fruit

4. **The real reason Pompey went to Stony Point was to**
 - A earn a living
 - B spy on the soldiers
 - C look for a friend

5. **Pompey went to Stony Point at night because**
 - A the trip was easier then
 - B the British soldiers told him to
 - C he had to work by day

6. **To make his trip safer, the British gave Pompey a secret**
 - A map
 - B weapon
 - C password

7. **The guard who let Pompey through was**
 - A killed
 - B wounded
 - C tied up

8. **The reason Stony Point fell so easily was that the British had no**
 - A warning
 - B powder
 - C leader

9. **Washington thought taking Stony Point was a**
 - A brave deed
 - B sad mistake
 - C cowardly act

10. **The reward Pompey got was a**
 - A medal
 - B horse
 - C uniform