

Impact Statement

Makena Bryan, Grade 8.

The First, 2020.

Quilt, 36 x 60 Inches.

Dickerson Middle School, Marietta, GA

Unsung Hero: Anna Smith Strong

Anna Smith Strong, like stated in her name, is strong. She was the only female who was a member of the Culper Spy Ring during the Revolutionary War. The Culper Spy Ring was a secret spy division, created under the orders of General George Washington. Alone in Setauket, New York, Mrs. Strong had to take care of her nine children. Because she lived in the south of New York State, the heavy British surveillance was a large threat. Although under constant threat of danger, Anna continued to eaves drop on British soldiers. The only way she could obtain relevant information, Anna had to listen to conversations while hanging up clothes on clothes lines. Role model and unique, I chose Anna Smith Strong for my project, not because she is the only female spy, but because while her husband was in jail she stayed with her family and her country. She never gave up on the possibility that the future could hold something more, for her and her country.

The research part of the project was a breeze, I read almost all articles already written about her. In the quilt, I created an abstract American flag because the Revolutionary War was not a straightforward time, no one knew what lie ahead. The future of America was unclear and unknown. The sections of the quilt were divided into nine sections to represent Anna Smith Strong's children. Her children were her world so that is why they are in her background. Standing out from the bright colors of red, white, and blue, a silhouette stands alone looking across the chaos. As one may imagine, the silhouette represents Anna Smith Strong. She is looking at the chaos of her country, she stands against it alone. The only way Anna was able to help was by tuning in to the surrounding British soldiers, which would make me feel insane. I would not be able to do anything with the information except pass it on to someone with a higher authority.

One of the many lessons I learned during this project was patience. I had to paper quilt the flag, which was a new technique to me. Long hours paid off when I finally got the hang of it. Another important lesson I learned was determination because I did not know if I was going to finish the project in time for the deadline, but as you see today, I did make the submission date. I was able to finish the quilt quicker than I expected because of the quarantine caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. My school closed Monday 16, 2020 and two weeks later I had finished my project. I learned that you could make something good out of any weird or boring situations. The biggest impact this project has had on my life is that have learned to be proud of something without diminishing what I did or myself. Because I finished my project in the mist of the corona virus, I was not able to share it with my community as I had hoped too, but I did share it on an online Zoom meeting with my VA Comp class. Even if I was not able to share it with as many people as possible, I was able to show my work to the people that matter to me the most, my family and friends.

To many, quilting is not a part of the arts. If someone put their hearts and soul into something, it is an art. Anna Smith Strong is indeed strong, but she is so much deeper than one word. She is brave, loyal, level minded and passionate. Everything I ever want to be. I may not be the first female spy, but I can keep Anna Smith Strong's memory alive. People around the world should know that it is good to be the first.