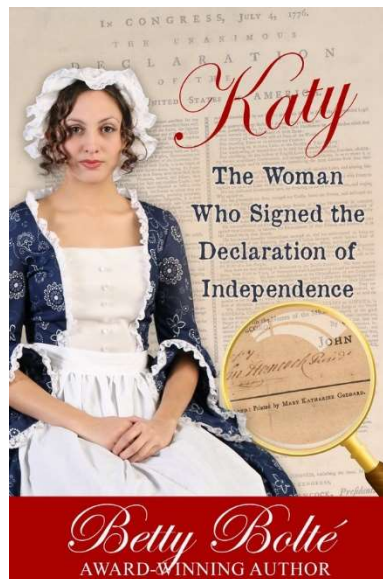


Excerpt of

*Katy: The Woman Who Signed
the Declaration of Independence*

By
Betty Bolté



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About

Katy

One woman's courage can make all the difference.

One woman, Mary Katharine Goddard, signed the Declaration of Independence and risked hanging by doing so. Yet most people don't know who she was or why she signed it.

Katy grew up in the American colony of Connecticut, educated and trained to be a proper wife and mother. She was supposed to marry and have children, living the 'normal' life of an 18th century woman. Destiny said otherwise.

Instead, at the behest of her impulsive brother she moved from one colony to another, efficiently running his string of printing business ventures when he took off in pursuit of some new scheme. Little did she know that each move would bring her closer to the dangerous choice she would be forced to make during the American Revolution.

What led her to become the most daring woman in America – the woman willing to sign her name to treason? *Katy* explores the answer to that burning question – as she shows us how some risks are worth taking, even when the price could be your life.

Buy your copy of *Katy*!

Author's Note

Dear Reader,

I've wanted to write the story of how Mary Katharine Goddard, known to family and friends as Katy, worked to be in the right place at the right time with the right skills to be the only woman to ever have her name on the American Declaration of Independence in 1777. I hope you enjoy learning about this amazing woman as much as I did!

I'd like to thank readers like you who continue to inspire me to write stories with joy and passion. I always enjoy hearing from my readers, so please drop me a line at betty@bettybolte.com anytime.

If you enjoy this book, please subscribe to my newsletter via www.bettybolte.com to be informed of upcoming book related news and appearances. You can also learn more about me, my other books, and read excerpts of each book at my website. You may also enjoy learning more about the behind-the-scenes research I did for this story at www.bettybolte.net.

Again, thanks for reading! I hope you enjoy *Katy*.

Betty

Chapter One

Providence, Rhode Island – 1762

The ship bumped against the wharf, rattling Katy's nerves even more than the alarming and uncomfortable trip from Connecticut. If only the ship could turn about and go back to her childhood home, but she held out no hope of such an event. She clutched the railing, her gloves soaked through, the sharp tang of fish and salty sea masked by the scent of rain. Seagulls cried out as they drifted overhead. Providence loomed before her, its bustling streets evidence of the population that had attracted her brother's flighty interest. An interest in the printing trade he'd apprenticed to learn and now was striking out on his own. Well, with her and her mother's help.

The British colonies were slowly gaining in both population and respect for the exports they produced. The resulting influence and clout the colonies enjoyed continued to be a source of pride across all thirteen colonies. In her native town of New London, Connecticut, the merchants and artisans also continued to multiply. Home. How she'd miss it.

She hummed a ditty to herself, a means of calming her agitation, as she scanned the streets swarming with coaches pulled by gleaming horses, and wagons by lumbering oxen. People dressed in lightweight linen beneath various outer garments dodged among the vehicles, avoiding the biggest of the mud puddles from the seemingly ceaseless rain. Her stalwart mother stopped beside her with a gentle smile on her face, her dark cloak glistening in the rain.

"My darling, don't fret. All will be well. You'll see. We'll have the men bring the trunks and meet us at our new home." Sarah Goddard was tall, graceful, confident.

Everything Katy tried to be but failed at miserably.

"Yes, Mother." Widowed but still a strong and attractive woman at fifty-six years of age, her mother had earned Katy's admiration more than she could say. "I'll adjust."

"We both will." Sarah huffed an impatient sigh. "I have a little surprise for you since I know how difficult this move is for you. We'll have our own place instead of accepting William's offer to live with him."

“Difficult” barely served to describe her feelings. Indeed, Katy had lived in New London the entirety of her twenty-four years on earth. She knew everyone in her neighborhood, having grown up and socialized with them through various church and community activities. She never thought to live anywhere else. She’d even found herself expecting to spend her entire life living in the house she’d been born in and had grown up within its walls. In the city where everyone knew who she was and her relations so she never had to introduce herself. The last several years had been so peaceful and calm, what with her brother away from home.

Then William, her younger brother by two years, finished his apprenticeship at the print shop in New York. She hadn’t thought his choices would impact her life. But when he decided to start his own shop in Providence, because there wasn’t any competition there and the town needed a decent printer, everything changed. Until William set up his press, the only other one in the colony was in Newport, owned by Benjamin Franklin. But her brother had apprenticed with one of the best printers in the colonies, so he’d give Franklin some competition. How William had convinced their mother to give him three hundred pounds to start such a venture was beyond her. No, that wasn’t entirely true. It really wasn’t as unfathomable as one might hope. Her mother loved her son to distraction and would do anything in her power to help him.

Never mind that the move meant giving up everything and everyone she’d ever known. That was an entirely different matter. When the idea had been raised months earlier, she’d even considered staying in New London where she felt safe and welcomed. But her mother had immediately insisted on supporting William every way she could. Katy loved her mother too much to be separated from her by such a distance. So, eventually, she’d reluctantly agreed to make the move as well. Really, when she took a hard look at her options, she had no better choice.

“When did you have time to arrange for a new home just for us?” She resisted humming during the conversation with her mother, but her anxiety hadn’t abated. She was very relieved she was not to be forced to live under her brother’s roof. He could be a might difficult, to say the least. The man tended to push her beyond her patience more often than not. One of her failings when it came to being a dutiful sister. She really shouldn’t have wished for him to continue to live elsewhere when his apprenticeship ended. The thought evoked a flash of guilt at her unkind desire.

“I had William find a suitable place and make the arrangements for me. I’d rather we have

our own space, instead of living with the young men apprenticing under him.”

“Yes, a very good consideration.” Katy turned to investigate a sudden commotion on the dock in front of her. Two men in rough dock workers clothing were rolling a hogshead, an immense barrel containing merchandise from Spain by the labels pasted on its side, up the ramp to the street. Or at least trying to. She couldn’t help but notice how mismatched they appeared. The closer man with his black hair and beard pushing the barrel up the ramp had to be six inches shorter than the other shaggy haired man, with a similar difference in sheer size. “That doesn’t look particularly safe...”

Just then the larger man slipped on the wet dock, falling to his knees. He cried out in pain. The hogshead listed and then teetered backwards as the other man narrowly missed being crushed under the weight of the barrel. The hogshead bumped and bounced down the wood ramp to the dock and splashed into the river. Katy gave an involuntary start forward, as if she were capable of providing any help whatsoever. She held still with an effort.

“Those poor men. I hope they’re not injured.” Sarah clasped her gloved hands together as she watched the scramble of men to help get the shaken men back on their feet and fish the hogshead out of the water.

The group of men exchanged several coarse words of frustration and effort over the next minutes while they worked to right everything that had gone wrong. Some of the words were new ones to her, but they also entertained her distracted mind for a moment. Language and words were dear to her.

Katy slid a glance at her mother to confirm the humor she heard behind her mother’s comment. Her mother managed to find mirth in the most unexpected places. “Perhaps a lesson has been learned today.”

Sarah nodded, a twinkle in her eye. “Perhaps, indeed. We should be able to start for our new home shortly.” She turned to the two men in hunting shirts and pants who approached where they stood on the deck, their ruddy skin glistening in the damp.

“Mrs. Sarah Goddard?” The taller of the men pulled his cap from his head as he stopped in front of her mother.

“Yes. Did my son William send you?”

He nodded. “We’re here to carry your trunks and what-have-you to your new home.”

“You have this address?” Sarah stated the address clearly and waited until they nodded their

understanding. “We’ll meet you there shortly.”

Katy didn’t know the men her brother had hired to meet them and help with their move. She was glad her mother confirmed that her brother had given them the same address he’d told them. She hoped they could be trusted to deliver their belongings safely and without undue delay. Everything and everyone seemed new and foreign even though Providence wasn’t terribly far from New London. At least by boat. Trying to go across country would have taken much longer. Roads linked the various towns and cities of the American colonies, but many were little more than a deer path through the wilderness of forests and underbrush. What with all of their belongings they’d brought to their new home, they elected to travel by ship up the coast and into the harbor.

“Mother, should we let William know we have arrived before we go to the house?” Katy didn’t want his ire to get het up. “I really wish he’d met us himself, but I suppose he’s busy at the printing shop.”

His quick temper was famous despite his youth, only twenty-two years of age and already known as a firebrand. Yet now that their father had passed a few years before, he was the man of the house. Katy and her mother had come to Providence to help him run the new print shop. Would he appreciate their sacrifices made on his behalf? Would he even consider they’d had to make any? Not only had they left behind family and friends, but her mother had given up being the postmistress in her husband’s stead. A position that ensured she engaged with many of the people in the community and thus always knew what was happening in town. Her father had served in that position until his death five years ago.

That thought rushed long-buried emotions to the surface, choking off her next words for a moment. How she missed her gentle, loving father! A religious, compassionate, strong soul who looked out for his community as a doctor and the postmaster for the town. Until that blasted gout took hold and didn’t let go. Her doctor father didn’t have any way to treat it. After years of suffering with the pain and inflammation, he’d collapsed and died. They would never know from what exactly, but the specifics didn’t matter. Only his loss mattered.

“Going to see your brother first thing is a good idea, dear. We’ll hire a cab to take us round there and then on to the house. By that time, our baggage should have arrived.”

Her mother’s soothing voice brought her back to the moment. “I am rather anxious to see our new house and begin to make it our own. Let us hurry to William and then on. It’s wet

everywhere and I'm tired after this difficult journey."

They hired a cab near the docks and soon found themselves alighting at the print shop located near the Great Bridge that crossed the river not very far from where they'd arrived. A fine location, in the heart of the growing city. They went inside and were immediately accosted by chaos and disarray, the sharp tang of ink, and the *clickety-clack-thunk* of the printing press. Katy halted, her mouth falling open. What had they gotten themselves into?

She drew in a long breath. Her brother was not known for his organization skills, but even she was surprised at the lack of order within the shop. He also harbored an aversion to recording of details, such as would be required to manage the revenue for the fledgling press. Thus his sending for their mother to help him with the financial records and supplies. Sarah had been doing a fine job of managing the financial reports in place of her deceased husband for years.

Two young apprentices were staring at an immense printing press, listening to William cursing on the back side of the machine. His tone suggested annoyance not anger, but the language was definitely not what he'd normally use with his mother in the room. She should do something to warn him they'd entered the shop. She pushed the door closed with a loud *thump*.

William stepped out from behind the press at the sound, wiping his inky hands on a rag as he hurried toward his mother. "Mother! I am sorry you heard all of that. I am so glad you've arrived safely."

William's light brown hair brushed his shoulders, his hazel eyes squinting as he grinned at them. He'd grown and matured into a rather good-looking young man while he'd been away in New York. He even managed to look like a respectable person in his dark blue suit coat and white working shirt over knee breeches and white stockings. If only his temperament had matured along with his appearance, then the transition wouldn't be so difficult. Hope swirled but didn't settle inside. She'd wait and see just how much her younger brother had actually matured.

"Yes. I'm sure." Sarah swept an assessing look around the large room crammed with the press, work tables, composing stands, and a tall table by the front door. Several young men, some little more than boys, worked at stacking reams of paper and refilling the ink vats. "I hope you've been expecting us and all is readied?"

To Katy's mind, the apprentices in the room seemed slow, inept, and slightly troubling. What had her brother seen in them to take them on as apprentices? One thing was apparent. Not a one of the men or boys in the room knew a jot about housekeeping. Bits and strips of paper lay about

on the floor and the tables. Ink had spilled over the edge of one table onto the floor, leaving a black puddle by a leg. Cobwebs draped like dirty lace across the upper corners of the room. She sneezed as dust floated past her nose despite the high level of moisture in the air. An unseemly situation for them to work in and for customers to witness.

“Yes, Mother. I’ve hired staff for you, too. But, of course, if you don’t like any of them, we can find someone else.” William made a show of tossing his hair out of his eyes. He’d let it grow too long again, probably through neglect rather than intent. “Let me take you to the tavern this evening for a fine meal. A welcome, if you will.”

“That is a kind offer, but one we are too tired to except.” Sarah approached William and gave him a quick, affectionate embrace. “We will return tomorrow and we can sort out how we can best help you. Be thinking on that subject in the meantime. I’ll have the cab take us to the house you located and we’ll see you tomorrow.”

“As you wish, Mother.”

Relief swept through Katy’s core as they emerged back outside into the lessening rain. The hustle and bustle on the street seemed less chaotic than the shop. “Oh, Mother...”

“I know, but we’ll sort it out tomorrow. Come, we’ll take a gander at the house, shall we?”

“I do so hope it’s in better order than the shop.” Katy shook her head as her mother flagged down a cab.

Not fifteen minutes later the cab dropped them off in front of a two-story frame house, with a central door on the first floor flanked by windows. The second floor boasted two windows above the others, and all the shutters had been painted white. A chimney sprouted from either end of the comfortable dwelling, a fine column of smoke dissipating into the rainy afternoon. The front stoop stood barely two steps above the muddy street. Katy inspected the new house and nodded. Not as fine as their previous home, but it would suffice.

“At least he found someplace moderately suitable.” Her mother echoed her thoughts.

The front door swung open and a young man wearing black slacks and coat with a plain white shirt greeted them. He towered over Katy, his red hair and green eyes hinting as to his Irish heritage. Behind him a young woman in an iron gray maid’s uniform stood silently, her eyes curious and gentle. Katy offered a smile in greeting, which the maid returned.

The man indicated for the women to enter through the door he held open. “Welcome to your new home, Mrs. Goddard. Miss Goddard.”

“Thank you very much. And you are?” Sarah sauntered into the modest entranceway and paused to await his answer.

“My name is Trent McTavish, ma’am.”

“I assume my son hired you as the...?”

“Yes, ma’am. I’m your butler. He also arranged for a cook, Mrs. Lauren George, who is busy in the kitchen, and this maid, Patsy Smythe, to attend you both.”

“Very well.” Sarah glanced past the butler to smile at Patsy. “In a minute, I’d ask that you show us around the house and we’ll identify our bedchambers.”

“Yes, ma’am. I’ve ensured all is ready for you.” Patsy dipped a curtsy and then folded her hands in front of her to wait for her next orders.

Katy peered farther into their new home, curiosity mingling with her inner anxiety. A central hallway with gleaming pine floor led to the back of the house with doors set opposite each other at intervals. A dainty table stood to one side with a spray of flowers and reeds in a vase on top. A gray striped cat with yellow eyes stalked toward her slowly, apparently judging whether she was friend or foe. The walls showed signs of where frames once hung but were now barren. Serviceable but in need of some attention. She reached out a hand to the cat, letting it sniff her fingers before she stroked its head.

“That’s Ceasar. He’s cook’s mouser.” Trent nodded at the tom cat with a small grin on his lips.

“Every house needs a cat, in my opinion.” Katy patted Ceasar’s head again and then straightened. “Cats not only serve a purpose but also provide a certain underlying energy to a home.”

“Yes, miss.” Trent nodded once then noticed her mother’s expectant expression. “Now, what can I do for you, Mrs. Goddard?”

“Something smells divine.” Sarah leveled her gaze on Trent. “Cook must be whipping up a tasty supper for us. Please show me to her as I wish to speak with her on a few matters of importance.”

“Yes, ma’am.” Trent pivoted and led the way down the hall to a distant door at the rear of the house.

Katy took her time following them down the hall, peeking into each room as she went. Most of the rooms had little or no furniture. Some crates and barrels hid behind a door leading to a

small work room close to the kitchen where her mother had disappeared moments earlier. She eased back out of the serviceable space and continued toward the kitchen. As she drew closer, her mother burst through the doorway, stopping Katy in her tracks.

“All right. I’ve informed Miss George of our preferences and things to avoid in her menus. Cook is preparing our supper accordingly. We’ll go pick out our new bedchambers and begin to settle in. Tomorrow, we’ll sort out the mess at the print shop. Agreed?”

“Yes, ma’am.” Katy smiled at her mother. She was in command. Some things were as consistent as the sunrise. “Let’s begin.”

They spent the evening settling in, eating a fine welcome home meal, and then collapsed into their respective beds for a good night’s exhausted sleep.

The next morning, Katy rose to the smell of bacon cooking. She quickly recalled that her mother intended to depart for the print shop as the sun rose. So she threw back the quilt and performed her morning ablution. Dressing in a simple but flattering pale yellow linen day dress with light green trim, she slipped her feet into sturdy leather shoes. She brushed her long chestnut hair with a soft brush, then pulled it up into a simple bun at the back of her head. Best to keep the long locks out of the way while doing whatever chores she was assigned.

After a quick breakfast, the two women ventured out the front door into the early morning sunshine. The streets seemed a mass of mud and slop from the churning of carriage and wagon wheels, of hooves and boots. Katy picked her way carefully beside her mother to the waiting cab and climbed inside. She was thankful yet again for the efficiency of their new butler, knowing they’d need a cab this morning to go to the print shop with the roads in such a state.

The sun was barely above the horizon when they arrived and went inside, after Sarah requested the driver to return to pick them up at four in the afternoon. Katy withheld her true opinion with an effort. The apprentices, whatever their names might be, seemed not to know how to function together. It only took a heartbeat for Sarah to take charge.

“You there, what are your names and what are your assigned tasks?” She folded her fingers into a single fist in front of her and waited.

Katy could only grin as her mother made order out of chaos. As the boys—she really couldn’t call them men at that age—buckled down to work, her mother turned to her. “Now, how about you put this place to rights?”

Housekeeping. Of course. At least it was something she knew how to do and could do

without any instruction.

“I’ll get started, Mother.”

“And I’ll confer with your brother about my role here as well.” Her mother winked at her.
“Don’t worry, my darling, we’ll make this work. You’ll see.”

Katy wasn’t worried about how her mother might settle in to the new routine. Nor how she might do so as well. No, the bigger concern was, how long would her wandering, easily distracted younger brother stay in one place this time?

Continue the journey!

Buy your copy of *Katy*!