

# The Ride of Young Jack Jouett

(In imitation of broadsides in circulation about 1800)

There was a man of Charlottesville,  
    (Jack Jouett was his name.)  
Who made a ride so perilous  
    It won for him great fame.

When Jefferson was Governor,  
    With all his legislature  
From Richmond he was forced to flee,  
    Though much agin their nature.

Cornwallis compassed them by night  
    And harried them by day;  
For Washington's Colonial Lads  
    Were many miles away.

In Charlottesville they made a stand,  
    These legislators forty,  
Including Henry, Nelson, Lee,  
    And Harrison the Haughty.

About this time Jack Jouett said:  
    "To Cockoo I've a mind  
To travel on my huntin' mare.  
    She's sturdy, swift, and kind.

"These forty mile won't be too much  
    My filly for to travel.  
The County Road has just been worked  
    And topped with sand and gravel."

At Cuckoo Inn Jack did dismount  
    And led his mare to stable.  
He's ordered her a clean straw bed  
    And sat him down to table.

Nigh on to midnight there did come  
    A thunderin' commotion.  
Immejiately did Jack opine  
    Some mischief in promotion.

When he got up and cast about,  
    By George! what did he see?  
Two hundred horse go sweepin' past!  
    'Twas Tarleton's cavalry.

"They're out to capture Jefferson  
    And his brave legislators!  
They'll hunt all down with sword and pike,  
    And hang the lot for traitors!"

Jack's saddled up his huntin' mare.  
    He's led her from the stable.  
"To Monticello we mus' win  
    This night gin we be able."

Them British took the County Road.  
    Jack knew a shorter way,  
Though Injun trail and bridle path  
    Beset him with delay.

And once Jack heard a panter scream,  
    And once his filley neighed.  
So nigh the County Road they were,  
    She him almost betrayed.

Through tangled vine and underbrush  
    That huntin' mare has busted.  
She's jumped the gullies and the cricks;  
    But nowhar was she wusted.

The moon was up and at the full,  
    Or he never could have made it;  
For when he reached Rivanna Ford,  
    He seen his mare was jaded.

Jack's halted on the southern bank  
    Until his mare had rested.  
Then up the bluff to Milontown  
    Whar folks thought that he jested,

He's galloped, shoutin' as he sped:  
    "The British air acomin'!"  
To *Monticello* he has spurred  
    And set all hands ahummin'.

Jack's roused Tom Jefferson from bed,  
    (Daylight was hardly breakin'!)  
And sent him (family, coach, and all),  
    Escape to *Blenheim* makin'.

Jack's drank a glass of good strong wine,  
    (The best he'd ever tasted,)  
Then down the hill to Charlottesville,  
    No further time he's wasted.

He's rid up to his father's inn,  
    Whar the alarm he's sounded.  
The Assembly has toward Staunton fled  
    With narry a member wounded.

This ride occured on June the third  
    And on the day that followed.  
The year was seventeen–eighty-one.  
    Forever be it hallowed!

The Assembly voted Jack a sword  
    And pistols, a fair brace,  
For savin' them and Jefferson  
    From capture and disgrace.

God grant us peace! All war must cease,  
    Or we shall surely rue it,  
Unless to us Thou send'st dear Christ,  
    Ten thousand like Jack Jouett!

Cary F. Jacob

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Jack Jouett Chapter