

Unit Title: Role of Women in the Revolutionary War

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District: Appoquinimink

Content Area: US History

Grade Level(s): 8th grade

Summary of Unit This unit guides the student through the war years of the American Revolution. Emphasis will be placed upon the role women during the war. Connections will be made to our modern day war on terrorism. By studying the culture and ideologies of the time, the students will understand the background for the freedoms we fought for today and that wars during any time period are “times that try men’s (and women’s) souls.”

Stage 1 – Desired Results

What students will know, do, and understand

Delaware Content Standards History Standard 3: Students will compare different historians’ descriptions of the same societies in order to examine how the choice of questions and use of sources may affect their conclusions.

Big Idea(s) A historian’s choice of questions and use of sources may affect their conclusions

Unit Enduring Understanding(s) Students will understand that those who piece together the story of the past offer interpretations that often change because of differences in the kinds of questions they ask and how they use sources.

Unit Essential Questions(s) Why might historians disagree about the same historical event? To what extent does history change?

Knowledge and Skills

Students will know...

- **There are often varying and conflicting descriptions of a society**
- **Historians need to evaluate the credibility, bias, purpose and audience of all sources**

Students will be able to...

- **Assess the credibility and reliability of historical sources**
- **Explain why there are multiple interpretations of historical events**

**Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence
(Design Assessments To Guide Instruction)**

(This should include evidence that will be collected to determine whether or not the Desired Results identified in Stage One have been achieved? [Anchor the unit in a performance task that requires transfer, supplemented as needed by other evidence – quizzes, worksheets, observations, etc.]

Suggested Performance/Transfer Task(s)

Essential Question Addressed: To what extent does history change?

Prior Knowledge: Students have learned the role of women during the Revolutionary War, by reading about it and by researching particular women who were involved in the war effort.

Final Product: Students will listen to a guest speaker, a female veteran of the current conflict in the Middle East. Prior to listening, students will work with a partner to compile questions about her role as a female in the US military to ask the speaker. After listening to the speaker and taking notes on what she said, each student will write a 5-paragraph essay comparing the roles of US women in the military from the Revolutionary War to the present, to illustrate their understanding of the extent that history changes.

Rubric(s): See attached “Guest Speaker Rubric” (*Handout #4*)

Other Evidence: Answers to questions from the “Women of the Revolutionary Era” reading, poster rubric.

Student Self-Assessment and Reflection Work completed in class, such as reflections on the word “heroine”, descriptions of the pictures of “Molly Pitcher” and research on Revolutionary War heroine.

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

(Design learning activities to align with Stage 1 and Stage 2 expectations)

(You might consider this the “Procedures” section of your unit plan. Be very specific in describing the procedures you want followed. A unit should consist of 3-5 lessons. This should include instructional activities and learning experiences needed to achieve the desired results (Stage 1) as reflected in the assessment evidence to be gathered (Stage 2). Give special attention to ways that you might differentiate learning so that the activities are broadly accessible, incorporate technology that is accessible broadly, and promote the acquisition of 21st Century skills.

Lesson # 1

Introduction to the Role of Women in the Revolutionary War

Lesson Description: Students will discover the role of women in the Revolutionary War, through background and secondary source information.

Time Required: three days

Essential Question Addressed: Why might historians disagree about the same historical event?

Enduring Understanding: Students will understand that those who piece together the story of the past offer interpretations that often change because of differences in the kinds of questions they ask and how they use sources.

Materials: overheads of Molly Pitcher images (attached), book Molly Pitcher by Jan Gleiter and Kathleen Thompson, article Women in the Revolutionary Era with accompanying questions (attached), overhead projector or LCD projector.

Procedures:

1. Engage students in a discussion on the role of women during the Revolutionary War, using prior knowledge from the colonial period and information previously studied about the Revolutionary War.
2. Write the word “heroine” on the board, then ask students to write their definition of the word. Share class responses.
3. Read the book Molly Pitcher aloud to the class. Ask the class for their opinion of the book and whether it matches their idea of the role women played in the war.
4. Project the 2 images of “Molly Pitcher” on the overhead or LCD projector. (*Handout 1 – Molly Pitcher images*) Ask students to describe what they see in the

- two images. What is the same? What is different? Are there any common themes in the two images?
5. Give students the “Women in the Revolutionary Era” reading passage. (*Handout 2 – “Women in the Revolutionary Era”*) Read passage out loud as a class, stopping after each paragraph to discuss the information contained in the paragraph.
 6. Have students answer questions based on the reading passage.
 7. Review answers to questions.

Debrief: Our essential question is “Why might historians disagree about the same historical event?” We will engage students in discussion regarding their ideas about women in the Revolutionary War prior to this lesson, and then their ideas about women following this lesson.

Formative Assessment (“Check for Understanding”): We will check for understanding by checking the answer to the questions accompanying the “Women in the Revolutionary Era”.

Lesson # 2 Real Heroic Women and the Revolutionary War

Lesson Description: Students will research a heroic woman in the American Revolution: Martha Washington, Betsy Ross, Hannah Arnett, Abigail Adams, Phyllis Wheatley, Deborah Sampson, Peyton Randolph, Catherine Moore Barry, Nancy Hart, Esther Reed, Nancy War, Martha Bratton, Lydia Darragh, Rebecca Motte, Prudence Wright, Anne Bailey, Elizabeth Zane, Elizabeth Burgin, Emily Geiger, Grace and Rachel Martin, Margaret Corbin, Sybil Ludington, Mary Lindley Murray, Elizabeth Freeman, and Mercy Otis Warren. Students will create a poster depicting their heroic woman, which will then be placed around the room. Students will then complete a “gallery walk” around the room, studying the posters.

Time Required: three days

Essential Question Addressed: Why might historians disagree about the same historical event? To what extent does history change?

Enduring Understanding: Students will understand that those who piece together the story of the past offer interpretations that often change because of differences in the kinds of questions they ask and how they use sources.

Materials: computer lab/library time, posterboard, markers.

Procedures:

1. Teacher will meet with librarian prior to the implementation of the lesson to pull any books or websites that will be helpful in this assignment.

2. Give students time in the library and/or computer lab to research their assigned Revolutionary War heroine.
3. Students will use the information they have researched to create a poster about the woman they researched.
4. Place posters around the room for a “gallery walk” and allow students to walk around and ask questions about the posters.
5. After the “gallery walk”, ask the whole class to discuss the information that they learned from their classmates.

Debrief: Our essential questions are “Why might historians disagree about the same historical event?” Students will become “experts” on their assigned heroine, and will be able to share the information they learned from their research.

Formative Assessment (“Check for Understanding”): Students will be graded for their posters based on the attached rubric. (*Handout 3 – Poster Grading Rubric*)

Handout #1 – Images of *Molly Pitcher*



MOLLY PITCHER AT THE GUN.



Handout 2 – “Women in the Revolutionary Era”

Women in the Revolutionary Era by Lesley Nelson-Burns

For the majority of women, life in the Revolutionary Era centered on the home. Invariably a man was the head of the household and women had a supporting role. If a woman did not have a husband she was probably assisting a parent, relation or master. Women fed the family, made clothing and household essentials, cleaned house and clothing, cared for and supervised the children (her own and any others that might live with the family), and served as nurse and midwife. Few items were purchased and most were manufactured in the home. Kettles, knives, nails, salt and tea would come from shops but candles, soap, clothing and food were domestic produce that took countless hours of work. Life was labor-intensive.

Although common laws were not uniformly enforced, a wife had few legal rights. Under law she could hold no property and a husband was legally entitled to beat her for disobedience. Spinsters and widows, however, could own property and manage property - until they married. Divorce was difficult and rarely granted, although courts did sometimes allow couples to live apart. In a novel approach to the difficulty this presented, couples in Maryland and North and South Carolina drew up divorce agreements, published them in newspapers and considered themselves free to remarry. These were not, of course, legal divorces. Other women simply ran away from bad marriages. Husbands often advertised for runaway wives in the same way they advertised for runaway slaves. In the lower and middle classes, marriages were sometimes made and unmade solely upon mutual consent.

Women indentured servants did not have the freedom to marry without the consent of their master. If they did so they were subject to fines or extension of their service. Women who bore illegitimate children during their service were subject to the same and could also be publicly whipped. Free white women in populated areas could often find employment as maids, cooks, laundresses or seamstresses.

Black women servants, unlike white women servants, worked in the fields as well as the house. During the Revolutionary Era there were laws in the South and in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania against interracial marriage. Black slave women were also subject to sexual exploitation and abuse for which there was no legal recourse. (1)

Diaries of women in the 18th century show hours devoted to ironing, cooking, baking, sewing and knitting. In the Fall women would preserve fruit and vegetables, in the winter they would salt beef and pork and make sausage. These were part of women's chores whether they lived in urban or rural areas. In urban areas labor and materials were more readily available and therefore, for those who could afford it, less time had to be spent on domestic chores.

In addition to domestic work women found gainful employment. In addition to work as maids, cooks, laundresses and seamstresses, women had businesses of their own. As

noted before women could inherit their husband's business. Women owned apothecaries, foundries and taverns. They were barbers, midwives, sextons and blacksmiths. Many women took in boarders for extra money. There were also many women printers. While these should not be seen as the norm for women they do illustrate that there was some economic opportunity for women.

Prior to boycotts of British goods, manufactured cloth was inexpensive and in urban areas cloth was usually bought rather than manufactured. However, in rural areas spinning and weaving were important household tasks. It was predominately done by young women, hence the origin of the words "spinster" and the "distaff side". Colonial boycotts of British goods increased the necessity of manufacture and raised the art of spinning from necessity to an act of political protest. At one political gathering on Boston Common, women brought their spinning wheels and worked a full day. (2)

The Revolutionary War disrupted life for many American women. Women either followed their husbands to war or stayed at home to run the business and manage their homes alone.

Many women dressed as men and fought in the war. It was far more common for women to be camp followers. While the word "camp follower" has come to be synonymous with whore, the camp followers of the American Revolution were generally married women (with their children), who followed their husbands. They were recognized as part of the military, receiving rations - half rations for wives and quarter rations for children - and were subject to military discipline. (One woman, for instance, was jailed for using abusive language to an officer.) Camp followers earned pay as cooks, nurses and laundresses.

Women who were left alone were forced by necessity to make decisions that had been left to their husbands. As troops occupied areas many families fled to relatives, adding extra burdens to households. In many areas women were forced to quarter troops.

The ideals of liberty and equality did not come to fully encompass women. However, during the Revolutionary War women voiced their political opinions freely and were considered part of the Revolutionary effort. Despite the freedom of speech and Republican ideals, following the Revolutionary War women were still primarily relegated to the domestic sphere and a woman's role was limited by society. However, a woman's role in the household was given greater importance. The Republican woman's duty was to create a supportive, virtuous environment and she was valued for doing so. On the other hand, although domesticity became more important, the definition also became more rigidly defined. Women outside the domestic sphere became less feminine and less acceptable. The result was that women were accepted outside the domestic sphere only in those activities that fit broadly into the domestic context, such as teacher or missionary.

(1) Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, Scott Foresman & Co., Boston, 1980, 196.

(2) Linda Grant DePauw, *Founding Mothers*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1975, 153.

Name _____ Date _____ Per. _____

US History

Women in the Revolutionary Era

Directions: After reading the passage, answer the questions below.

1. Describe what life was like for the typical white women during the Revolutionary War time period.
2. How would life have been different for an African-American woman during the Revolutionary War time period (be sure to include information about both free and enslaved African-American women!)?
3. Describe three examples of how women supported the war effort at home. Why would they have gotten involved?
4. What was the importance of the “Camp Followers” during the Revolutionary War?
5. Why did women leave home and join in the camps during the Revolutionary War?
6. How was the role of “Molly Pitcher” different than the typical role that women fulfilled at home in the Eighteenth Century?

Handout 3 – Poster Grading Rubric

Scoring Category	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
Summary	Description is stated clearly and is accurate.	Description is stated and is mostly accurate.	Description is not clear and/or is inaccurate.
Images	Images are accurate and appropriate to the summary.	Images are mostly accurate and somewhat appropriate to the summary.	Images are inaccurate and/or inappropriate to the summary.
Appearance	Poster is neat and well-organized.	Poster is somewhat neat and well-organized.	Poster is not neat and/or well-organized.

Above the Standard: 7-9

Meets the Standard: 5-8

Below the Standard: Less than 5

Handout 4 – Guest Speaker Grading Rubric

Scoring Category	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
Thesis Statement	Interpretation is stated clearly. Thesis is obvious to the audience.	Interpretation is stated, but is not obvious to the audience.	Interpretation is not clear.
Use of Historical Evidence	Uses a variety of different sources to support thesis.	Uses some different sources to support thesis.	Uses few different sources to support thesis.
Showing Change Over Time	Interpretation is supported by multiple pieces of historical evidence. Interpretation is highly persuasive.	Interpretation is supported by some historical evidence. Interpretation is somewhat persuasive.	Interpretation is not adequately supported and is not persuasive.

Above the Standard: 7-9

Meets the Standard: 5-8

Below the Standard: Less than 5