

New Jersey Women's History

Middle School Lesson Plan

Women in the American Revolution: Working with Primary Sources

Part I: NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards & Assessment of Student Performance

Core Curriculum Standards

Standard Number: 6.4.8

Indicator: E: Revolution and the New Nation

4. Explain New Jersey's critical role in the American Revolution, including major battles, and the involvement of women.

From the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards Website

Assessment of Student Performance

Should the students be broken up into groups, ask each group member to submit their own assessments of the amount of contribution from each group member, on a scale from 1-10. From these assessments, you can take the average of each student's grade and put it toward class participation points. If the classroom remains an entire group, take note of student discussion and contribution. Make sure that each student speaks at least once during the class hour.

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Part II: Objectives

1. Students will be able to understand the key role of women during the Revolutionary War by looking at several different New Jersey women and their impacts.
2. Students will be able to understand the different opinions of the war, and how that impacted women's work in the war.
3. Students will be able to understand the economic influence held by women during the revolutionary war, and its impact on war effort.
4. Based primarily around discussion, students will be able to critically examine primary sources, and express their significance aloud.

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Part III: Materials

Access to a computer, projector, and Internet. The New Jersey Women's History Website is the only source necessary for this lesson. If desired, the teacher may print out a packet of the materials to be used for students. Students may be broken up into groups to have smaller discussion, or the entire class may discuss together.

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Part IV: Procedures

1. Explain to students the difference between primary and secondary sources, and the importance of primary sources for historians.
2. One thing that historians learn to do is ask the right questions. We should not just read sources and take them for face value; we have to ask certain questions and analyze the documents in order to learn more from them. In this lesson, we will be analyzing some documents and events by women during the American Revolution. The teacher will lead a discussion of the primary sources, in order that students will learn more from what they read.
3. Students should have a basic knowledge of the Stamp, Tea and Sugar Acts, as well as American trading with England as a primary cause for the Revolutionary War. They should also understand elements of the Boston Tea Party and boycotts.
4. Patriot Women played an important role in the boycotts begun during the Revolutionary War. They were the primary consumers in the household, and they no longer bought tea; instead families started drinking coffee instead.

Women who wrote about the Revolutionary War

While many actions that women took during the Revolutionary War are not recorded, many of their diaries have been saved. Many women wrote about the war.

The diary of Jemima Condict:

Original:



Transcript:

“Monday Wich was Called Training Day
I Rode with my Dear father Down to
see them train there. Being Several
Companys met together. I thought
It Would Be a mournfull Sight to see if
they had Been fighting in earnest & how
soon they will be Calld forth to the
field of war we Cannot tell, for by
What we Can hear the Quarels are not
like to be made up Without bloodshed.
I have jest Now heard Say that All Hopes of Conciliation
Between Briten & her Colonies are at an end
for Both the king and his Parliament have
announced our Destruction. Fleet and
armies are Preparing with diligence for that Purpose.

“On April 23, as every Day Brings New
Troubels So this Day Brings News
that yesterday very early in the morning
They began to fight at Boston, the regulars.
We hear Shot first there: they killd 30 of our men
A hundred & 50 of the Regulors.”

These excerpts are from 1775. Read the transcript aloud to students.

Ask the students the following questions:

1. Who wrote this diary entry? What sort of woman was Jemima? What can you gather about her family? How do you know this? Encourage students both to use prior knowledge and the primary text.
2. What do Jemima's words tell us about the events leading up to the Revolutionary War?
3. How do you think that Jemima got news? What from the text tells you this?
4. What did Americans like Jemima hope for in the war? Did they all want to fight?

Women who took sides during the Revolutionary War

Women sided both with the Loyalists, and with the Patriots. They played an important role on both sides of the Revolutionary War.

Jane V. Drummond: Loyalist

Show the students this portrait of Jane V. Drummond



Oil Portrait of Jannetje Vrelandt Drummond, 1776. Courtesy of the New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, NJ

Read the students this description of Jane's life

Jannetje Vrelandt Drummond, a daughter of prosperous Dutch farmers in Bergen County, was a Loyalist during the Revolutionary War. Her life and family were torn apart by her political views and those of her husband. In 1759, Jannetje (also known as Jane) married Robert Drummond, a general merchant and shipper in Acquackanonk Landing (now Passaic), an important inland port on the Passaic River. They were the parents of three living children and, appropriate to their station in life, had their portraits painted. Robert was an officer in the local militia. He served in the New Jersey Assembly and then in the Patriot Provincial Congress. While Robert was interested in correcting injustices brought by the Crown, he was not an advocate of independence.

When the British army invaded New Jersey in November 1776, it appeared that the patriot cause would soon be lost. To protect his family and his considerable business interests, Robert formally affiliated with the Loyalists and was made a major in the New

Jersey Volunteers by the British General William Howe. Through his local influence, he recruited some 200 local volunteers to his company. At this time, the fortunes of Jane and her family changed forever.

Loyalists and their families in New Jersey, as in other states, were subject to personal harassment and physical harm, as well as to punishing anti-Tory laws. Early in 1777, local mobs plundered the Drummond Store and carried off some £1000 worth of goods. Presumably, for reasons of safety, Jane and her children, ages 14, 11, and 2, accompanied Robert when he was stationed in Long Island, and then in Virginia, Georgia, and the Carolinas. During their absence, Robert's land and property was confiscated and sold, Jane was indicted for treason, and property she had inherited from her father was confiscated and sold.

After the peace of 1783, Robert fled to England, presumably with Jane and their children. He lived in London and died there in 1789, leaving no will. At this time, Jane must have returned to New Jersey. She died in 1790 in Essex County, also leaving no will. Her daughter Mary soon married and her youngest son Elias (age 16) became the ward of a family friend. It isn't clear what became of her other son, Robert.

Like Mr. Drummond's store, many other stores were damaged or affected during the Revolutionary War.

- a. What sort of woman was Mrs. Drummond? Pick a few words to describe her.
- b. Mr. Drummond was a Loyalist. Do you think that the Drummond's job had any influence on which country they supported during the war?
- c. What would the Drummond family be like? What tells you this?
- d. What kind of items would he be selling?
- e. Why do you think his store was damaged?
- f. What do you think the Patriots' act symbolized to them?

Hannah White Arnett: Patriot

On the Patriot side, spoke out for the American Cause against the British. She is bravely memorialized by the Daughters of the American Revolution.



Memorial honoring the patriotic dead, especially Hannah White Arnett (1733-1823). Source: First Presbyterian Church Burial Grounds, Elizabeth, New Jersey. Courtesy of the Penny Colman Collection.

Here's Hannah's story:

This memorial "honoring the patriotic dead of many wars, . . . especially a noble woman Hannah White Arnett" was erected in 1938 in the cemetery of the First Presbyterian Church, Elizabeth, New Jersey, by the Boudinot Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.

Arnett (1733-1823) was honored for preventing a group of Elizabethtown (now Elizabeth) men from proclaiming their loyalty to Great Britain in exchange for "protection of life and property." Arnett overheard the men who were meeting in her house discussing the offer. Storming into the meeting, she called them traitors and cowards. Her husband Isaac tried to get her to leave the room, but she continued to berate the men and announced that she would leave her husband if he deserted the Revolutionary cause. Finally the men refused the offer. White and Isaac and three of their children who died in infancy are buried in the cemetery.



Gravestone for the Infant Children of Isaac and Hannah Arnett Courtesy of the Penny Colman Collection. First Presbyterian Church Burial Grounds, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Another marker on the cemetery wall that is now too worn to read originally read in part, "Near here rests Hannah White Arnett...Her patriotic words, uttered in the dark days of 1776, summoned discouraged men to keep Elizabethtown loyal to the cause of American independence."

Arnett's deed was publicized many years after her death by Mary Smith Lockwood, who helped found the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) in 1890. Although for many years, the DAR refused admission to some groups of women, including Jews and African Americans whose descendants fought in the American Revolution, it has played an important role in preserving and promoting various aspects of women's history.

Based on Hannah's story, ask the students to answer the following questions:

1. What sort of woman was Mrs. Arnett? What tells you this about her?
2. Discuss the significance of Arnett's gender. Would the story be different if she was a man? Why was she so special?
3. Women clearly had very strong opinions about the Revolutionary War. Given their position in the home and the understanding of Republican Motherhood, how do you think their opinions were influential?
4. Ask students what they would be willing to stand up for against their superiors, against intimidation, and in spite of criticism.

Perhaps one of the most famous women in the Revolutionary War comes from New Jersey. Molly Pitcher, whose real name was Mary Ludwig Hays McCauley, was a part of the Battle of Monmouth in New Jersey.

Show students the engraving of Molly Pitcher:



More on McCauley's life can be found on this [site](#).

“To General Washington”

Ann Boudinot Stockton wrote a poem to George Washington after the Articles of Peace were signed in 1783.

“To General Washington” by Annis Boudinot Stockton, 1783. Courtesy of the New Jersey Historical Society, 1783. Copybook of Mrs. Stockton, MG 1221, following page 54.

Annis Boudinot Stockton (1736-1801) sent this poem to George Washington on August 26, 1783, just a few months after the U.S. Congress ratified the provisional Treaty of Paris, ending the Revolutionary War. At the time, the Congress was meeting in Princeton, with Stockton’s father, Elias Boudinot, serving as president. Stockton had been widowed in February 1781 and continued to live at her estate, Morven, in Princeton, where she hosted George and Martha Washington and other Revolutionary notables. As a member of the American elite, she took pleasure and pride in her gracious home and gardens, to which she alludes in this poem. For more information about Stockton and her poetry, see Carla Mulford, ed., *“Only for the Eye of a Friend”: The Poems of Annis Boudinot Stockton*, 1995.

To General Washington

by Annis Boudinot Stockton, Morven, August 26, 1783

With all thy country’s blessings on thy head,
And all the glory that encircles man,
Thy martial Fame to distant nations spread,
And realms unblest’d by Freedom’s genial plan.
Address’d by statesmen, legislatures, kings –
Rever’d by thousands as you pass along.
While every muse with ardor spread her wings,
To greet our hero in immortal song –
Say, can a female voice an audience gain,
And stop, a moment, thy triumphal car?
And wilt thou listen to a peaceful strain
Unskill’d to paint the horrid scenes of war?
Tho’ oft the muse with rapture heard thy name,
And placed thee foremost on the sacred scroll,
With patriots who had gain’d eternal fame,
By wondrous deeds that penetrate the soul: –
Yet what is glory? – what are martial deeds?
Unpurified at virtue’s awful shrine?
And oft, remorse a glorious day succeeds –
The motive only stamps the deed divine.
But thy last legacy, renowned chief
Has deck’d thy brow with honor more sublime,
Twin’d in thy wreath the christian’s firm belief,
And nobly own’d thy faith to future time.

Thus crown'd – return to Vernon's soft retreat,
There with Amanda taste unmixed joy;
Nor sorrow ever pour her hard alloy!
May nature paint those peaceful walks more gay,
And rural graces haunt the silent grove!
May angels guard you in your lonely way,
And show the path to brighter scenes above!
And oh! If haply in your native shade,
One thought of Jersey enters in your mind,
Forget not her on Morven's humble glade,
Who feels for you a friendship most refin'd.

Stockton's attitudes reflect the country's intensifying glorification of George Washington as a demigod after the Revolutionary War. While reading the poem to students, show them this painting of girls' greeting George Washington in Trenton:



Washington's Reception on the Bridge at Trenton in 1789 on his way to be Inaugurated 1st President of the U.S. *Courtesy* of the New Jersey Historical Society, 1789.

Ask the students these questions:

1. Who do you think Mrs. Stockton was? What does the way she writes tell you about her?
2. What is Mrs. Stockton's opinion of the war and of George Washington?
3. What did George Washington represent to the country, so far as you can tell from Mrs. Stockton's poem?
4. The engraving says that Washington is passing on a bridge some twenty feet high, supported by 13 columns. The banner above his head says, "The Defender of the Mothers Will Protect the Daughters," while women place flowers under his path for the horses to walk on. What do the different elements in this picture symbolize? Why are only some segments in color?
5. What sort of imagery is in both the poem and the engraving?
6. Why does the engraving feature only women?