

Around and About New Jersey

TEACHER'S GUIDE

PROGRAM SEVEN

MORRISTOWN NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

by

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Trenton, N.J.

Revised, 2006

I. SYNOPSIS

The Revolutionary War was an important time in our nation's history. The United States was born more than two hundred years ago, when the people of the British colonies in North America fought to gain their independence from England. Even today, people dress up like Revolutionary War soldiers and come to places like Morristown in order to imagine the life of the ordinary soldier in the Continental Army.

At the site of Fort Nonsense, overlooking Morristown, Midge Guerrero, the series host, asks the question: why did George Washington bring his army to Morristown? She points to the Great Swamp and the Watchung Mountains, and explains that these geographic features protected Washington and his army from the British, who had their headquarters in New York City. Here the army was also close to iron mines and foundries that could supply it with cannons and cannonballs.

Midge explains that Washington and his army came to Morristown twice during the Revolutionary War: first in January 1777, after he crossed the Delaware River and defeated the British at the battles of Trenton and Princeton, and second in December 1779.

During the second encampment, Washington and his staff stayed in Morristown at a large house owned by Mrs. Theodosia Ford, a widow. General Washington, his wife Martha, and his staff lived in the main part of the house, which they made into their headquarters. Other officers lived closer to the troops in modest farmhouses like that of Henry Wick. The ordinary soldiers lived in log huts in Jockey Hollow. Many of these soldiers were farmers and workers who owned little or no land; some were African-Americans; and many were substitutes hired to serve in the army for other people.

Park Ranger Ted Edger explains that during winter encampments soldiers

drilled and trained. Ranger Edger recruits several students and inducts them into the Continental Army. He shows them how to march and use their muskets. He then asks them if they are ready to fight the British army.

The winter of 1779-1780 was one of the worst of the century. Many soldiers got sick, there was little food, and the Continental Congress failed to pay them. Some of the soldiers refused to obey their officers. A full-fledged mutiny almost occurred, but Washington managed to quiet their complaints by obtaining more supplies and money from the Continental Congress.

The army eventually won the war, the United States gained its independence from England, and Washington emerged from the war as a national hero.

II. KEY WORDS

Colony - a new territory settled by people from another country who maintain economic and political ties to the country from which they came.

Continental Congress - the political body, meeting in Philadelphia, to which the colonies sent representatives, which protested English colonial policies and eventually declared independence from England.

Revolution -- the overthrow of one government or ruler and its replacement by another, usually resulting in fundamental changes in society.

Continental Army - the army established by the Continental Congress, under the command of General George Washington, to fight the British during the War of Independence.

Mutiny - a revolt of soldiers or sailors against their superior officers.

III. NEW JERSEY CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS

6.1: ALL STUDENTS WILL UTILIZE HISTORICAL THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND RESEARCH SKILLS TO MAXIMIZE THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF CIVICS, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, AND ECONOMICS.

By the end of Grade 2, students will:

A. Social Studies Skills

3. Identify sources of information on local, national, and international events (e.g., books, newspaper, TV, radio, Internet).

Building upon the knowledge and skills gained in the previous grades, by the end of Grade 4 students will:

A. Social Studies Skills

2. Use critical thinking skills to interpret events, recognize bias, point of view, and context.
3. Assess the credibility of primary and secondary sources.
8. Compare and contrast competing interpretations of current and historical events.

STANDARD 6.4 (UNITED STATES AND NEW JERSEY HISTORY) ALL STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE OF UNITED STATES AND NEW JERSEY HISTORY IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND LIFE AND EVENTS IN THE PAST AND HOW THEY RELATE TO THE PRESENT AND FUTURE.

By the end of Grade 2, students will:

B. State and Nation

1. Recognize the names of major figures in American history, including George Washington ...

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Grade 4, students will:

B. State and Nation

2. Discuss the reasons why revolutionary leaders, including George Washington, ... fought for independence from England.
3. Discuss New Jersey's role during the American Revolution.

STANDARD 6.6 (GEOGRAPHY) ALL STUDENTS WILL APPLY KNOWLEDGE OF SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND OTHER GEOGRAPHIC SKILLS TO UNDERSTAND HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN RELATION TO THE PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT.

By the end of Grade 2, students will:

B. Places and Regions

1. Describe the physical features of places and regions on a simple scale.
2. Describe the physical and human characteristics of places.

D. Human Systems

1. Identify the types of transportation used to move goods and people.
2. Identify the modes of communication used to transmit ideas.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Grade 4, students will:

D. Human Systems

1. Describe the development of transportation and communication networks in New Jersey and the United States.

IV. THEMES

A. Geography - Why did Washington bring the Continental Army to Morristown?

B. The Continental Army - What was life like in the Continental Army during the winter of 1779-1780?

C. Mutiny at Morristown - Why did some of the soldiers mutiny?

V. CORE ACTIVITIES

A. GEOGRAPHY

1. Objective

The students will locate key places on a map and analyze the factors that resulted in Washington's decision to locate two winter encampments at Morristown during the

War for Independence.

2. Before Viewing the Program

Write the following places on the board: Morristown, the Great Swamp, the Watchung Mountains, New York City, Trenton, and Princeton. Distribute the blank maps of New Jersey to the class. Tell the students to pay special attention while watching the program to the locations written on the board and the reasons Washington brought his army to Morristown.

3. After Viewing the Program

Ask the students to draw and label on the maps the locations listed on the board. Then ask them to list the reasons why Morristown was a good location to use as a winter encampment for the Continental Army.

B. THE CONTINENTAL ARMY

1. Objective

Students will describe life in the Continental Army during the winter encampments at Morristown.

2. Before Viewing the Program

Tell the class that one of the themes in the program they are about to watch is what life was like in the Continental Army during the winter encampments at Morristown. Ask them to pay special attention to this theme, because they will be asked to describe life in the army in their own words.

3. After Viewing the Program

Ask the students to pretend that they are soldiers in the Continental Army. Tell them to write an imaginary letter home, in which they describe life in the army

during the winter encampment. Suggest that they include such topics as the weather, lodgings, pay or lack of pay, activities during the day, attitudes towards the officers, and whether they would consider re-enlisting for another three years. Ask for volunteers to read their letters to the entire class.

C. MUTINY AT MORRISTOWN

1. Objective

Students will be able to interpret two primary historical documents about the same event.

2. After viewing the Program

Reproduce and distribute the excerpts in the Supplementary Materials section from Private Joseph Plumb Martin's journal and George Washington's letter to the Continental Congress describing the mutiny at Morristown in May 1780. Ask the class to discuss the following questions based on these documents: What were the complaints of the soldiers? What was the soldiers' attitude toward their country? What was their attitude towards their fellow countrymen? What was Washington's attitude toward the mutinying soldiers? Did he view their complaints as valid? Were the soldiers justified in disobeying their officers?

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. FOR STUDENTS

Egger-Bovert, Howard and Marlene Smith-Baranzini. *Brown Paper School U.S. Kids History: Book of the American Revolution*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1994.

Contains activities, games, and excerpts from primary sources on such topics as smuggling; spies; the diary of Joseph Plumb Martin; America's first flags; women in battle; Phillis Wheatley, an African-American poet; and the journal of Quaker Sarah Wister. Lavishly illustrated.

Fleming, Thomas. *Give Me Liberty: Black Valor in the Revolutionary War*. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1971.

Describes the exploits of black soldiers on both the British and American sides during the War for Independence, such as Prince Estabrook, who fought with the Minutemen at Lexington and Concord; James Armistead, who spied on the British for the Marquis de Lafayette; and New Jersey's own Oliver Cromwell, who crossed the Delaware with Washington and fought at the battles of Trenton and Princeton.

McGovern, Ann. *The Secret Soldier: The Story of Deborah Sampson*. New York: Four Winds Press, 1975.

An account of the a 23-year-old woman who disguised herself as a man named Robert Shuttliff and enlisted in the Continental Army. She was originally from Massachusetts, where she worked for ten years as a servant looking after children in another family.

Osborne, Mary Pope. *George Washington: Leader of a New Nation*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1991.

A biography of Washington that puts Morristown into the context of

Washington's life and the Revolutionary War. Briefly mentions discontent and mutiny among the officers and soldiers of the Continental Army. Authentic period illustrations.

B. FOR TEACHERS

Blackaby, Anita. *Washington and the American Revolution: A Guide to the Campaigns in Pennsylvania and New Jersey*. Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania: The Council of American Revolutionary Sites, 1986.

Describes the action that took place in New Jersey during the Revolutionary War. Also contains brief excerpts from historic documents, illustrations, and activities. Useful information on tours of historic sites.

Lender, Mark E. *The New Jersey Soldier. New Jersey's Revolutionary Experience*, no. 5. Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1975.

Describes the make-up of the Continental Army with an emphasis on the New Jersey Line. Distinguishes between the citizen-soldiers of the militia and the paid professional soldiers in the Continental Army.

McCormick, Richard P. *New Jersey From Colony to State, 1609-1789*. The New Jersey Historical Series, vol. 1. Reprint, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1964.

A popular history of New Jersey from the explorations of Henry Hudson to New Jersey's ratification of the U.S. Constitution. Chapters VI and VII, "The Movement for Independence" and "Fighting for

Freedom," deal with the political and military aspects of the Revolution.

National Park Service. *Morristown: A History and Guide, Morristown National Historical Park, New Jersey*. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Interior, 1983.

The revised guidebook to the Morristown National Historic Park. Contains photographs, illustrations, maps, and an informative text dealing with such topics as 18th century warfare; the British army; the Continental Army; the Ford Mansion, the Wick House, Jockey Hollow, and Fort Nonsense.

Supplementary Materials

Map of New Jersey



Adapted from
Peter O. Wacker
Land and People

A SOLDIER ON THE MUTINY AT MORRISTOWN

We left Westfield about the twenty-fifth of May and went to Basking Ridge. We did not reoccupy the huts which we built, but some others that the troops had left. Here the monster Hunger still attended us. He was not to be shaken off by any efforts we could use, for here was the old story of starving, as rife as ever. We got a little musty bread and a little beef, about every other day, but this lasted only a short time and then we got nothing at all. The men were now exasperated beyond endurance; they could not stand it any longer. They saw no other alternative but to starve to death, or break up the army, give all up and go home. This was a hard matter for the soldiers to think upon. They were truly patriotic, they loved their country, and they had already suffered everything short of death in its cause; and now, after such extreme hardships to give up all was too much, but to starve to death was too much also. What was to be done? Here was the army starved and naked, and there their country sitting still and expecting the army to do notable things while fainting from sheer starvation. All things considered, the army was not to be blamed.

*Adapted from the Journal of
Private Joseph Plumb Martin*

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ON THE MUTINY AT MORRISTOWN

Headquarters, Morristown, May 27, 1780

Sir: It is with infinite pain I inform Congress that we are reduced again to a situation of extremity for want of meat. On several days of late, the troops have been entirely destitute of any. Two regiments of the Connecticut line mutinied on Thursday night with a determination to return home.

I have been informed by two colonels of the Pennsylvania line in whom I have the utmost confidence that the troops very pointedly mentioned their not being paid for five months.

Every possible means in my power will be directed on this and on all occasions to preserve order and promote public service; but this will be found, at least, extremely difficult. If the troops could only be comfortably supplied with provisions, it would make them forget, or at least forgo, many matters which make a part of their anxiety and present complaints.

Adapted from a letter
from George Washington to
the President of Congress