

"CAMP FOLLOWERS"

For many women, staying home alone was not an option. Instead, they became "**camp followers.**" Camp followers were women who literally followed an army as it marched and camped. Both the American and British armies had large numbers of camp followers. They included married women (with their children) who followed their husbands to war, and single, poor women looking for work.



"I desire that you would remember the ladies" - Abigail Adams

Women showed their support for the war by raising money for Washington's army, collecting blankets and socks, and by sewing shirts for the soldiers. They also collected metal to be melted down for bullets.

The war brought an additional burden on women - with so many husbands and fathers away as soldiers, women had to run the family farms and businesses by themselves. In the countryside, this often proved more dangerous than fighting; marching armies were notorious for looting homes and farms, stealing livestock, and assaulting women.

Women's lives did not drastically change after the war. Although they were in the newly independent colonies, most went back to their former lives.

Deborah Sampson,

enlisted in 1782 under the name of Robert Shurtleiff, and joined the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment.

During her time in the army, Sampson fought in several battles. In one, she was shot in the thigh. Worried that her secret would be discovered, she left the hospital before the doctors could look at her wound and removed the musket ball herself with a penknife and sewing needle. She eventually received an honorable discharge from the army and a military pension, even though, by then, her secret was out.



Women in the Revolutionary War

Margaret Corbin, took over firing a cannon during the Battle of Fort Washington in November, 1776. Margaret's husband John, an artilleryman, had been killed during the battle, leaving his cannon unmanned. Margaret, who had been with her husband on the battlefield the entire time, immediately took his place at the cannon. With her dead husband lying at her feet, she fired away at the British troops until her arm, chest, and jaw were hit by enemy fire. After the English captured the fort, Margaret was released as a wounded soldier. In 1779, Congress made her the first woman in the United States to receive a military pension. Most historians consider Margaret to be the basis for the "Molly Pitcher" story.

Female Spies - One famous female revolutionary spy was **Hannah Blair**, a Quaker from North Carolina. Blair had a farm where she would hide and protect patriots, supplied food and medical help to soldiers hiding in the woods from loyalist raiders, mended uniforms and carried secret messages. When loyalists in the area discovered what she was doing, they burned her farm down. Fortunately, Congress compensated her for her loss after the war by issuing her a pension for her service.

African Americans in the Revolutionary War

The Continental Army - Congress and General Washington were initially opposed to the use of African Americans, whether free or slave, as soldiers in the Continental Army. For many whites, particularly slave-owners, there was a great fear of armed slave revolts.

Also, Congress needed support from the South – particularly Virginia, the most populated and wealthiest colony – if all the colonies were to win their independence from England. As result, in November of 1775, General Washington issued an order that all blacks, slave or free, were to be excluded from the Continental Army.

However, the realities of war soon forced Washington and Congress to change the policy. The army was always short of men, as fewer and fewer white recruits signed up. By January 1777, Washington reversed himself and re-opened the Continental Army to free blacks. By 1778, continued manpower problems led Washington and the Continental Congress to open the door to slaves as well.

At the End - After Washington's victory at Yorktown, he posted soldiers on the beach to prevent escaped slaves who had been with the British from fleeing. While he allowed all free blacks to leave, he ordered that all former slaves be held and returned to their masters. In desperation, many swam out after the English ships which were to return their troops to England, rather than be returned to slavery.

By the Numbers

100,000 African Americans escaped, died or were killed during the American Revolution.

5,000 - Served with the Continental Army

1,000 - Served with the British Army

20,000 - Nurses, cooks and laborers with the British Army

3,000-4,000 - African Americans who left with the Loyalists at the end of the War



Marquis de Lafayette

"I would never have drawn my sword in the cause of America if I could have conceived thereby that I was founding a land of slavery."

The British Army - British policy motivated slaves to run away from their American masters. British General Clinton ordered that any slave who ran away from an American rebel to the British would be given freedom and protection. On the other hand, any slave who remained with his or her American rebel master and was then captured by English troops would be immediately sold into slavery in the West Indies.

Wherever the British army moved, slaves ran away from their masters and headed to the British lines to claim their freedom. Washington, Jefferson, and most of the revolution's southern leaders lost slaves to the English.

Not all British action was favorable to slaves. Since the English did not want to offend Loyalists, any slave running away from a Loyalist owner was returned to his or her master.

At the End - English officers generally refused to return thousands of former slaves who had been offered freedom in exchange for helping the English, or who faced punishment from their former masters. Thousands of black men, women and children who were with the British at the end of the war ultimately escaped with the English to be resettled in Nova Scotia, Canada. Others traveled to Sierra Leone in Africa.

Colonel Tye was perhaps the best-known of the Loyalist black soldiers. He wreaked havoc for several years with his guerrilla Black Brigade in New York and New Jersey. At one time he commanded 800 men. For most of 1779 and 1780, Tye and his men terrorized his home county -- stealing cattle, freeing slaves, and capturing Patriots at will. On September 1, 1780, during the capture of a Patriot captain, Tye was shot through the wrist, and he later died from a fatal infection.

THE IROQUOIS

In the first year of the war, both the Americans and British adopted a policy of keeping the natives neutral. That changed in 1776, when both tried to win over the Iroquois. The Iroquois, however, were split. Most of the younger warriors favored an alliance with the British. Others, however, favored siding with the Americans. Many of the older chiefs, and most of the women, simply wanted to remain neutral, hoping that the conflict would pass them by.

In the summer of 1777, **Mohawk** Chief **Joseph Brant** (**Thayendanegea** in his native tongue) succeeded in convincing four of the six tribes in the Iroquois Confederacy – the **Mohawk**, **Seneca**, **Cayuga** and **Onondaga** – to enter the war on the English side.

The **Oneida** and **Tuscarora**, however, refused to “take up the hatchet” on behalf of the British, and instead chose to fight for the Americans.

Joseph Brant described the war as though he was experiencing life “between two Hells.”



The War time Experience

- Nearly *every* single Iroquois town was burned to the ground during the war. American soldiers plundered Indian graves, stealing valuable goods buried along with the dead. Brant forbade torture and freed captive civilians, at one point returning a captured child with a note which read, “*whatever others do, I do not make war on women and children.*”

Native Americans in the Revolutionary War

THE CHEROKEE

In 1775, a colonist named **Richard Henderson** got several Cherokee chiefs to sell nearly all of what is modern day Kentucky – 27,000 square miles – in what is known as the **Henderson Treaty**. There was a split among the Cherokee between those young warriors who wanted to fight against the American “invaders” and the older chiefs who wanted to maintain peace with the colonists, even if it meant accepting the treaty. A young tribal leader named Dragging Canoe, the son of one of the chiefs, led those opposed to the treaty.

The War time Experience

- In 1775, Dragging Canoe led a force of warriors against settlers who had moved onto the Cherokee’s former Kentucky lands. Virginia and Carolina militia responded with wholesale slaughter.

Between 1776 and 1779, 6,000 militiamen ravaged Cherokee villages and farms, slaughtered men, women and children, and sold hundreds of captured Cherokee into slavery. Victims even included those Cherokee who did not support Dragging Canoe. Despite the fact that only a small minority of Cherokee had sided with Dragging Canoe, American militiamen made no distinction between “hostile” and “friendly” Indians. In the 1785 Treaty of Hopewell, the Cherokee – including those that had refused to join Dragging Canoe in fighting the Americans – were forced to accept a peace agreement that gave up five million acres of their remaining land. They hoped that this would be the final land grab by the Americans.

The End of the War – When the **Treaty of Paris** was signed in 1783, it made no mention of the Iroquois. The English made no attempt to help the Iroquois regain their land, even though almost half the Iroquois population had helped them fight. The Treaty of Paris gave the U.S control of all of the Ohio River Valley, even though the Iroquois still claimed much of the land.

The Iroquois had little choice but to try and negotiate a separate peace treaty with the Americans. The Americans, however, viewed the Iroquois who had fought against them as a conquered people who had lost the war, and therefore the Mohawk and their Seneca, Onondaga and Cayuga allies were forced to give up nearly all of their land.