

Women of the Revolution

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I can identify the roles women played during the Revolutionary War

- California Social Studies Fifth Grade Standard
- 5.6.3 Students understand the course and consequences of the American Revolution. Identify the different roles women played during the Revolution (e.g., Abigail Adams, Martha Washington, Molly Pitcher, Phillis Wheatley, Mercy Otis Warren).



“Read the fresh annals of our land the gathering dust of time
Nor yet has fallen on the scroll to dim the tale sublime;
There woman's glory proudly shines, for willingly she gave
Her costliest offerings to uphold the generous and the brave
Who fought her country's battles well; and oft she periled life
To save a father, brother, friend, In those dark years of strife.
Whatever strong-armed man hath wrought, whatever he hath won,
That goal hath woman also reached, that action hath she done.”

Mary M. Chase



For the Majority of Women, Life in the Revolutionary Era Centered on the Home.



- *Men were the head of the household and women had a supporting role.
- *Women fed the family, cleaned, sewed, and cared for the children.
- *Women had few legal rights.



Wives of Our Founding Fathers

- Martha Washington
- Abigail Adams



First Lady Martha Washington



"The difficulties, and distresses to which we have been exposed during the war must now be forgotten. We must endeavor to let our ways be the ways of pleasantness, and all our paths Peace."

Martha Washington

The “First” Lady

- Martha Washington’s biggest role during the American Revolution was the support of her husband, George Washington.
- As the political unrest in the colonies grew, Martha became torn between the Loyalists and the Patriots
- When George became Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, Martha traveled with him. When the General was feeling ill, his wife was there to nurse him back to health. But when the fighting got closer, he sent her back home to Mt. Vernon to care for her family.
- George Washington became the country’s first president in 1789, he and Martha traveled to New York, where the first capital was.

Abigail Adams



"Remember the ladies."

Abigail Adams

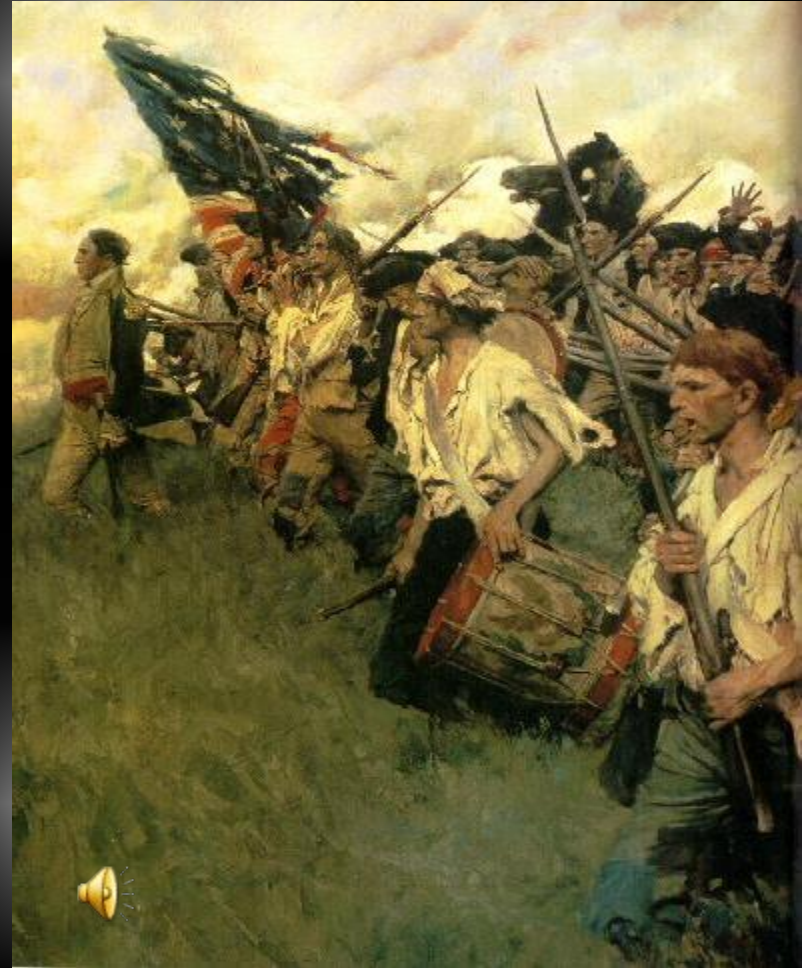
- Abigail married John Adams in 1764.
- Abigail wanted the new government to protect women and increase their rights.
- Later in life, as first lady, she was called "Mrs. President" for her efforts in shaping the country.

Women As Soldiers and Spies

Deborah Sampson

Nancy Hart

Molly Pitcher



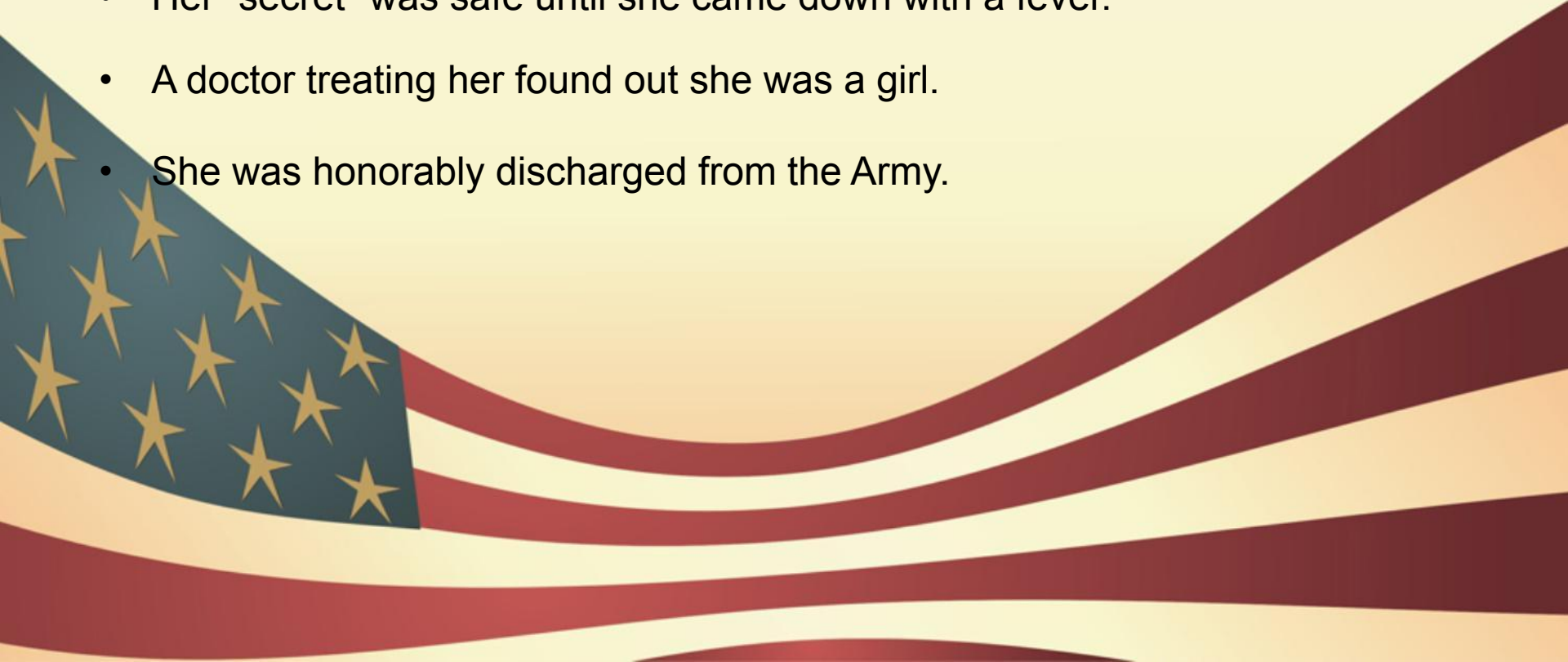
Robert Shurtliffe enlisted in the 4th Massachusetts Regiment in 1778.

Except his name wasn't Robert – and he wasn't a man!

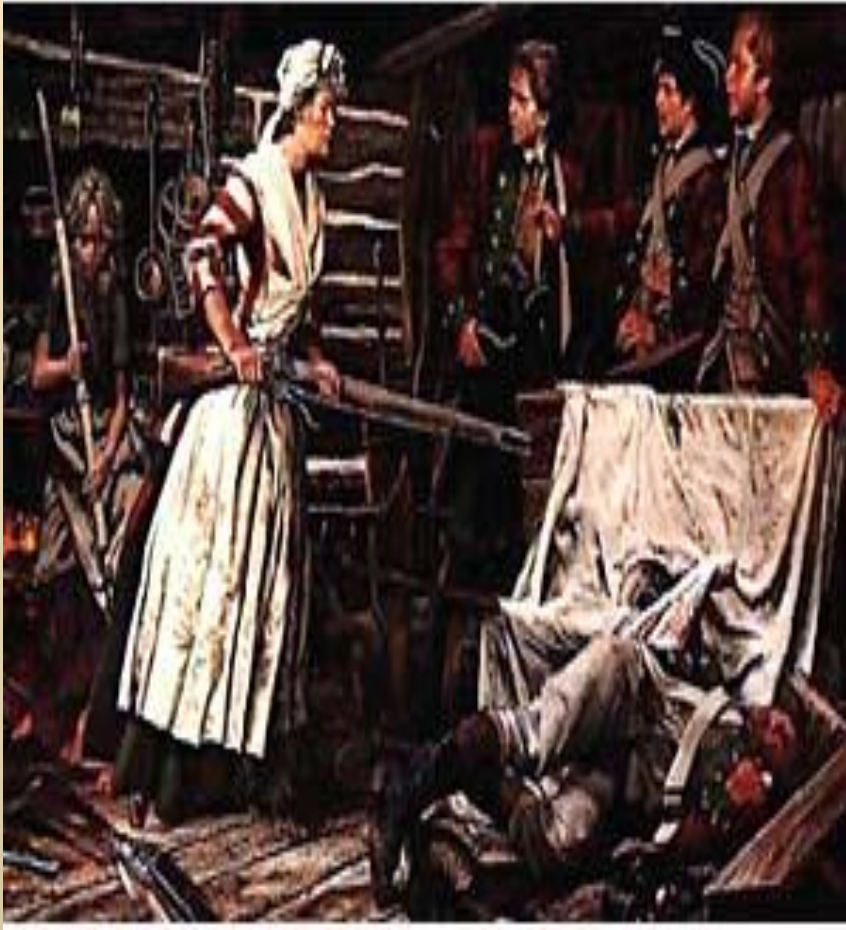


Deborah Sampson

- During the Revolutionary War Deborah wanted to help. But, they did not allow girls to join the army.
- She decided she could join the army if she pretended to be a man
- Her “secret” was safe until she came down with a fever.
- A doctor treating her found out she was a girl.
- She was honorably discharged from the Army.



Nancy Hart



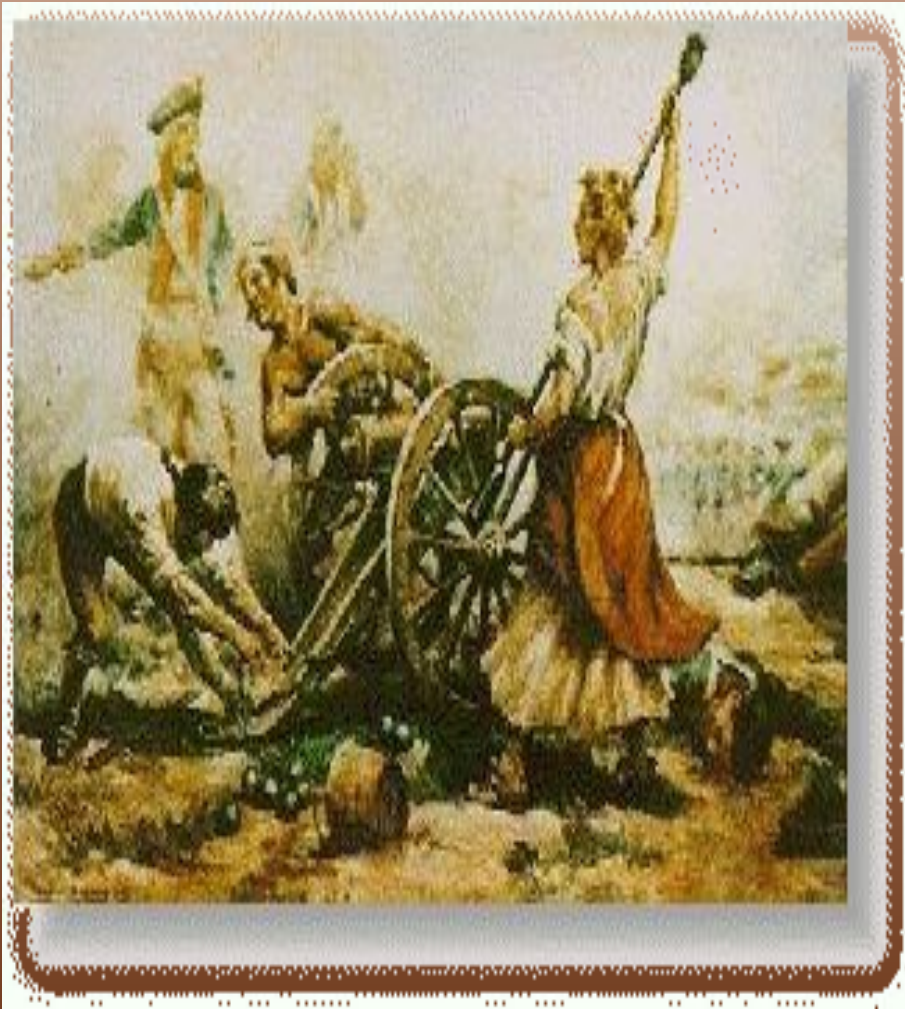
"Even in their dresses, the females seem to bid us defiance."

A British soldier stationed in Charleston, South Carolina, during the latter years of the Revolutionary War.

Nancy Hart

- Nancy took care of her family while her husband served in the war.
- She was a spy.
- Nancy would dress up as a simpleminded man and wandered into the enemy – Tory/Loyalist - camps.
- She was forced to cook the British a meal, and she killed two of them. Not with her cooking – but with their own muskets!
- She also fought in the [Battle of Kettle Creek](#) on February 14, 1779.

Molly Pitcher



"... this heroine had braved the hardships of the camp and dangers of the field with her husband, who was a soldier of the revolution..."

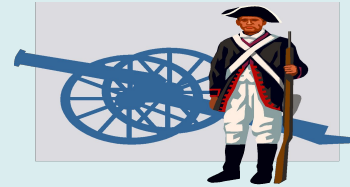
Molly Pitcher

Molly Pitcher

- * When her husband went to fight in the Revolutionary War, Molly went along.
- * Molly followed her husband to the battle of Monmouth on July 28, 1778.
- * It was an extremely hot day and the soldiers were falling from the heat. Molly carried pitchers of water to the men. That's how she got her name.



She also tended to the wounded and when her husband was overcome by the heat, she took his place and manned the cannon



Molly stayed at her post in the face of heavy enemy fire acting as a gunner. Without her, the battle would have been lost. General Washington made her an officer and afterwards, she was called "Sergeant Molly."



Women of Distinction: Poets, Playwrights, and Seamstresses

- Phillis Wheatley
- Mercy Otis Warren
- Betsy Ross



Phillis Wheatley



*"Twas mercy brought
me from my pagan
land,
Taught my beknighted
soul to understand
That there's a God,
that there's a Savior
too:
Once I redemption
neither sought not
knew. . . "*

Phillis Wheatley

- Born in Senegal, Africa
- she was seven years old when she was taken from Africa to Boston.
- Phillis wrote her first poem at 13 and her poetry became very popular in Boston.
- Her book of poems was the first book to ever be published in the colonies by an African-American.
- Phyllis Wheatley received a great amount of prejudice in her lifetime.
- She tried to show through her poems that all men are equal and that slavery should be abolished.

Mercy Otis Warren



"Our situation is truly delicate & critical. On the one hand we are in need of a strong federal government founded on principles that will support the prosperity & union of the colonies. On the other we have struggled for liberty & made costly sacrifices at her shrine and there are still many among us who revere her name too much to relinquish (beyond a certain medium) the rights of man for the dignity of government."

• Mercy Otis Warren

Mercy Otis Warren

- Mercy Otis Warren became a patriot writer.
- She wrote plays and poems that supported independence.
- Her ideas and writings convinced many people in Massachusetts to become Patriots.
- She was a good friend to Abigail Adams.
- Mercy's plays insulted the Loyalists.
- She believed that if the colonies had their independence and freedom, that women would have more rights.

Betsy Ross



*"A nation thrills, a nation
bleeds,
A nation follows where it
leads,
And every man is proud to
yield
His life upon a crimson
field
For Betsy's Battle Flag."*

Minna Irving, Poet, 1800's

Fact or Fiction

- Betsy Ross was real person, but there is really no proof that she made the first American flag. There also is no proof that she didn't!
- During the war, Betsy ran an upholstery shop.
- On June 14, 1777, Congress resolved that the flag of the U.S. should be "thirteen strips alternate red and white, that the Union be thirteen stars white in a blue field. . . ."
- According to Betsy Ross's journal, a committee from the Continental Congress came to see her about making the flag.

American's Love Their Flag!



- Women in the Revolution were mostly ignored by history books. The story of Betsy Ross became an important female voice of the American Revolution.
- People began to realize that women needed to be recognized because they were also part of the Revolution. We knew about our Founding Fathers -- there was a need to discover our “Founding Mothers” as well.



Conclusion

- During the Revolutionary War, America began to form its place in the world as an independent national identity. From Abigail Adams' urging for her husband to "remember the ladies" to Molly Pitcher's bravery on the battlefield, women were an integral part of this struggle in a variety of ways.
- For many wealthy women, the Revolutionary War began in the home—with the boycott of British goods such as tea. Many women chose to make homespun cloth, turning their backs on as many connections to England as they found possible. These choices highlight the role of women in the home—the private world instead of the public.
- However, some women chose to fight publicly, on the battlefield, against the British. A few fought alongside their husbands and other men, earning little recognition and sometimes a soldier's pension. Often the battle for acknowledgement was also quite difficult, and required the help of politically powerful men such as Paul Revere.



After the War

- The ideals of liberty and equality did not come to fully include women. During the Revolutionary War women voiced their political opinions freely and were considered part of the Revolutionary effort.
- After the war, women's lives were still primarily centered on the home and their role in society was still limited.

Questions / Review

- What roles did women play in the fight for American independence from England?
- How did a woman's class status affect her role?
- What were some of the issues that women thought were important during the revolution?
- Did anything change for women after the war?

Roles of women	Issues women think are important	Does class affect women; s roles? Did things change for women after the war?
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