

Letter from Benjamin and Jemima Taylor to Her Parents, Peekskill, March 2, 1777

Lesson type: Worksheet

Grade Level: Elementary School

Middle School

High School

Lesson Topic: American Revolution > Women and Children

New York State Learning Standard: Social Studies > Standard 1: US/NY History > Key Idea 1: Culture

Common Core Standard: English Language Arts and Literacy > 6-12 > Reading > Craft and Structure

21st Century Skills: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
Information Literacy

Education Project: The American Revolution

Funder: New York Community Trust
The Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, Inc.

Historical Context

During the American Revolution its estimated that up to 20,000 women marched with the army. Its believed that women made up roughly 3% of the overall camp population. Women joined army regiments for a variety of reasons, including: fear of violence and starvation, poverty, and loneliness if they stayed at home. Women of the camp were subjected to the same treatment as soldiers under the command of a general. They

could also be expelled for sharing opinions.

Army units located on front lines or in enemy territory accommodated more women than in safer locations. Perhaps because women in front line battle areas sought protection with the Continental Army. Women worked in the army camps as washerwomen, cooks, nurses, seamstresses, and supply scavengers.

Essential Question

What caused women to give up their own children during the Revolutionary war?

Check for Understanding

Using historical context and clues from the letter recreate the setting from which this letter was written.



Letter from Benjamin and Jemima Taylor from Peekskill to their parents , Other, USMA_Taylor_001

Document Description

Letter from Benjamin and Jemima Taylor to her parents. Written in Peekskill, March 2, 1777 and sent to Mr. John Allen in Rehoboth.

Questions

1. Why would Jemima Taylor's child 'Augustus' have remained with her parents?
2. What does she mean when she asks her parents to be "father and mother to them both"?
3. For what reason is she prevented from writing to them more often? (Explain and infer)
4. Do you think Jemima has a good relationship with her family? (Explain)

Resources

1. Peekskill, NY, Revolutionary War history through 1778: Washington situated the headquarters at Birdsall house on Main Street, Peekskill. The area was a superb hilly defensive location with views of the bay. Also, the surrounding industries were used for military purposes. "Fort Hill" in Peekskill had five large barracks and two redoubts. The river fortifications were garrisoned soldiers from Camp Peekskill, and from the forts Independence, Montgomery, Clinton and Lafayette.

A raid resulted in a destructive day as all barracks were burned along with mills, supplies and houses. The British were held off due to a successful counterattack. Peekskill was proven vulnerable to attack and West Point became the military command center in 1778. Numerous conspiracy events regarding the Benedict Arnold conspiracy were said to take place in Peekskill, 1780.

Refer to the Peekskill history at: <http://peekskillmuseum.org/about-the-museum/peekskill-history-summary>

2. http://maass.nyu.edu/resources/r1/lesson_plans/work.html - great lesson plan for women's work in war

Transcription

Peacks Kills March the 2, 1777

Honored Father and Mother

After our duty to you and love to all my brothers and sisters friends and relations thes lines come hopen to fiend you all in good helth as throw the goodness of god we are at present[.] My husbend is much as he youst to be and Polly has ben poorly with her old ale for this thre months but is got better[.] Remember my love to my Der Augustus[.] O how we long to see our children and to hear from them[.] It maks my hart ack to think of them but I hope you will be father and mother both to them[.] I last weack heard the molingedy news of my brother Bartholomew dath wich is hard for me to bare but much harder for my mother[.] But if we can say with Job the lord doth give and tack away and blessed be his name. I want to writ a grat dal but we are so throng with soldgers that I cant get time so I must leav you beging you to tak cair of my der child and bring him up in the fear of the lord hoping that god will keep us and be with us in this grat day of troble and santefy our afflictions for the good of our sols[.] No more at present but we remain your dutiful children.

Benjamin and Jemima Taylor

Reverse: To Mr. John Allen

Rehoboth