

Study Guide For Teachers

Anne Pasquale
in
*The Revolution of
Deborah Sampson*
presented by

Young Audiences
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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Revolution of Deborah Sampson is a two-person play based on the life of an extraordinary woman. Deborah Sampson, better known as the Secret Soldier, was the only recognized female veteran of The American Revolution. This play is one of high energy which employs the art of quick-change, reenactments, and a touch of stage combat. This play is not just another tale of female heroism. It is an extraordinary story that epitomizes the needs and actions of the early Americans and illustrates their reasons for revolution. In short, it is a lesson in early American History.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

A descendent of William Bradford and Miles Standish, Miss Sampson was born into an impoverished family of eight and was left fatherless by the age of five. The excessive taxation of the colonies by England forced her mother to sell her into a ten-year term of indentured servitude. At the age of twenty-one, Deborah wished to fight for her own independence. She wove her own military uniform and journeyed on foot from her home in Plymouth, Mass., to West Point, where she was outfitted and enlisted in The Continental Army in May of 1782. She served as a male soldier, taking the name of her deceased brother Robert Shurtleiff, for eighteen months. Deborah Sampson fought honorably. She was wounded, fell ill and was examined by a surgeon, whereupon her secret was discovered. On October 25th 1783, she was given an honorable discharge. Nine years later, she received payment and official recognition as a veteran of The Revolutionary War.

LEARNING GOALS

1. To have students gain a deeper understanding of the Pilgrim's original relationship to Great Britain and The New World.
2. To expose students to the lifestyle of the colonists and the events that led to the Revolutionary War.
3. To highlight the role of colonial women in society.

DEFINITIONS AND PLACES

Colonist: Any inhabitant of a colony. Here it refers to those people occupying the thirteen British colonies

Indentured Servant: In order to survive, many of the early Americans sold themselves and their children as servants.

Most agreements lasted for ten years. The servant was given an initial sum of money, land or transportation, food, clothing, and shelter for the duration of the servitude. In return, the servants were to devote all of their efforts and energies to their master's needs.

Native Americans: More commonly referred to as Indians, they taught the pilgrims to hunt, fish and plant and made it possible for them to survive in the New World

Pilgrims: Any person setting out on a voyage. In American history it refers to the early group of English Settlers in New England. The first group arrived on the Mayflower on December 26, 1620 in Plymouth Massachusetts.

Rebel: An American colonist fighting for independence.

Separatist: The early English pilgrims known as Puritans who had separated from the main English Protestant (Anglican) church.

The American Revolution: 1775-1783: The war that was fought between Great Britain and the Thirteen Colonies. This led to the birth of a new nation - The United States. On Sept. 3, 1783, Britain signed the Treaty of Paris by which it recognized the independence of The United States.

Tory: A colonist whose loyalties lay with England.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

Take some time to familiarize your students with the following historical figures:

Bradford, William: The second governor of the Pilgrim Colony from 1621 to 1657 and ancestor to Deborah Sampson. Under his rule, the pilgrims survived despite poverty and blight. He is responsible for the first Thanksgiving and maintaining a 45-year peaceful co-existence with neighboring Indian Tribes.

Henry, Patrick: A famous lawyer, he was a member of the First Continental Congress. In 1775 he delivered the famous line "Give me liberty, or give me death" in a speech before a Virginian Provincial Convention.

King George III: Became ruler of England in 1760. It was his attempts to control the land and monies of the colonies through legislative acts such as The Sugar Act, The Quartering and Stamp Act, etc. that eventually led to America's Revolution.

King James I: The ruler of England who, believing in "The Divine Rights of Kings," persecuted many of the Puritan Protestants. Eventually his actions caused the Pilgrim voyage of the Mayflower in 1620.

General Patterson: Deborah Sampson was his aide to camp at West Point when she was given an honorary discharge by General Knox.

Queen Anne of Denmark: The wife of King James I. Our plays' depiction of a meeting between Standish and Queen Anne is fictional, yet plausible. The Queen did cause the king much embarrassment by publicly opposing his religious point of views.

Sampson, Deborah: Born 1760, and died 1827. She enlisted as a soldier in the Continental Army disguised as a man in May of 1782. She took the name of her older brother Robert Shurtleiff. She was honorably discharged on October 25th 1783.

Standish, Miles: One of the original pilgrims aboard The Mayflower. Standish was a non-separatist who offered his services to the separatists as a soldier, and later as a messenger to England. He was also an ancestor of Deborah Sampson.

Washington, George: The historic American figure who is often referred to as "Father of Our Country". In 1775, he was elected commander and chief of the Continental Army that won American Independence from Great Britain. In 1787, he was elected president of the convention that wrote the American Constitution. In 1789, Washington was elected President of the United States.

ARTIST INFORMATION

Actress and writer Anne Pasquale has been performing and writing for children's audiences for over a decade. She is a founding member of the Patchiddy Players Children's Theatre. A member of The Actor's Studio, Anne has appeared in numerous Off-Broadway productions such as "Fallen Angels," "Life at the Bottom" and "Challenge Her." Paul O'Keefe's stage credits include Godspell, Groundhog and Job. He has shared the stage with such well-known names as Patty Duke, Barbara Cook. The Drifters and The Shirelles.

AFTER THE PROGRAM

1. The Pilgrims were some of America's first immigrants. Their immigration from their comfortable homes in 1620's England, to the uncivilized New World was very courageous indeed. Have students list the differences in amenities between those who inhabited England in 1620, to the those of the early American settlers. Have students make a list of reasons as to why one might want to stay in England. Have them make a list of reasons as to why they the pilgrims left England.

2. Indentured Servitude is thankfully a practice of the past. People would commonly indenture themselves and or their children to feed their families. Indentures usually lasted for ten years or more and servants were not allowed to engage in any activities outside of their work obligation - such as school, marriage, etc. without their master's permission. These servants received no salary. Have students break into groups. Have the groups make a list of their everyday activities. Have them compare their lifestyles to those of indentured servants. What are the differences? Are there any similarities?

3. Have students improvise everyday events around an imaginary inn and tavern in 1762. Then have them recreate the same events but in 1763 after King George III's introduction of The Sugar Act. Do the same again with the Quartering and Stamp acts etc. Discuss students' reactions and discoveries.

RESOURCES

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