

How did Women Support the Patriots During the American Revolutionary War?

Historical Thinking Skills Assessed: Sourcing, Critical Reading, Contextualization

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Course: United States History

Level: Elementary

Task Question: How did women support the Patriots during the American Revolutionary War?

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to contextualize and corroborate two sources to draw conclusions about women's contributions to the American Revolution.

Standards Alignment:

[Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy](#)

- RI.5.3 Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.
- W.5.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- SL.5.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
 - SL.5.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
 - SL.5.1d Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and from the discussions.

[National History Standards](#)

Era 3: Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)

Standard 2: The impact of the American Revolution on politics, economy, and society

[College, Career, and Civic Life \(C3\) Framework for Social Studies Standards](#)

- D2.His.5.3-5 Explain connections among historical contexts and people's perspectives at the time.
- D2.His.10.3-5 Compare information provided by different historical sources about the past.
- D3.4.3-5 Use evidence to develop claims in response to compelling questions.

Materials:

- RS#01: Document A – *Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams*
- RS#02: Document B – *The Female Patriots*
- RS#03: Document Analysis Chart
- RS#04: Document Analysis Chart (SAMPLE)
- RS#05: Thoughtful Application – Editorial
- RS#06: ARCH Elementary Historical Thinking Skills Rubric

Background for the Teacher:

When writing about the American Revolution, many historians have tended to focus almost exclusively on the actions of male Patriots. After all, social norms of colonial America dictated that women of the middle and gentry class restrict their attentions to the realms of home and family and avoid politics and the public sphere. As tensions between the colonists and Great Britain escalated, it was the men of the era who set policies, led most large public protests, and performed military service. The same sentiments that rallied men to the Patriot cause, however, also motivated women to engage politically.

To a great degree, women expressed their support of the Patriot cause through traditionally female activities. Women supported non-importation and non-consumption agreements, refusing to purchase tea and imported textiles. Instead, they switched to drinking coffee and made their own clothes from simple homespun cloth. They applied pressure to other members of the community to do the same. In Edenton, North Carolina in 1774, a group of local women signed an agreement to boycott all British tea and cloth. Such formal organization was rare, however. Most women preferred quieter expressions of Patriotic sentiments. They encouraged their men to stand strong in their convictions, operated their households without British goods, and networked with like-minded women.

Some colonial women participated in forceful demonstrations of patriotism. Much has been made of the very small number of women who disguised themselves as men and fought in militias or the Continental Army. Equally remarkable given the gender roles of the time were the larger number of women who participated in public protests and riots. Often this public participation took the form of attendance at political speeches and rallies, such as the annual commemorations of the Boston Massacre. Women occasionally joined men in actual violent actions, such as the burning of effigies. And, perhaps most surprisingly, women occasionally organized and led violent protests and riots. These women-dominated mob actions most often revolved around domestic concerns, especially price-gouging by merchants who refused to honor price controls set by patriot committees.

Although the contributions of women to the Patriot cause are less visible than those of men, they played an important role in sustaining the boycotts and reinforcing the policies at the heart of the Revolution.

Note: In *The Female Patriots* poem, the author refers to British Whig George Grenville. George Grenville was Prime Minister of Great Britain at the time of the Stamp Act's passage.

Sources:

Berkin, Carol. *Revolutionary Mothers*. New York: Knopf, 2005. *Google*. Web. Nov. 5, 2013.

http://books.google.com/books?id=uY4TWMfXsQwC&pg=PA12&source=gbv_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false

"The American Revolution." National Women's History Museum. Accessed 9/25/14.

<http://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/spies/2.htm>

Procedure

Context Setting:

- Activate the students' prior knowledge about the events leading up to the American Revolutionary War. Divide the class into two large groups. Assign one group to be the "Colonists" and the other group to be the "British Government." Have the members of each group independently generate a list of the most important events that angered them following the Seven Years War.
- Next, pair a "Colonist" with a "Government Official" and have them discuss the following question with their partner: In what specific ways did the colonists rebel against Great Britain? Encourage students to be as specific as possible and even name specific incidents, such as the Boston Tea Party.
- Discuss the students' responses, and create a list on the board.
- Now ask: In learning about these protests, have you heard of any in which women played a major role?
- On the board, brainstorm a list of eighteenth century gender roles. What were men expected to do? What were women expected to do?
- Ask: Understanding gender roles of the time, how do you think women might have contributed to the Patriot cause during the American Revolution?

Document Analysis:

- Distribute RS#01: Document A – *Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams* and RS#02: Document B – *The Female Patriots*. Set the purpose for reading. Project the documents to highlight the source (author and date) of each. Tell the students that as they read they need to focus on the ways in which women rebelled during the American Revolution.
- Assign partners, and distribute RS#03: Document Analysis Chart. Explain to the students they will be looking for specific information in each text that will lead them to the connections and contrasts between the two documents. Direct partner "A" to read Document A and complete the left hand column of analysis sheet. Direct partner "B" to read Document B and complete the right hand column of the analysis sheet. Circulate, and assist individuals as needed.
- Provide time for student partners to summarize and discuss the documents. Be sure that students have completed both the left hand and the right hand columns of Document Analysis sheet.

Corroborating Evidence and Constructing Interpretations – Close Analysis:

- Direct partners to discuss how British policies might have affected women following the French and Indian War. Then, students should complete the center column of RS#03: Document Analysis Chart. Remind students to include to specific information from both documents to connect the two events.
- Students should be given time to respond to the question: What main role did women play during the American Revolution according to both documents?
- Finally, students should respond to the final question on RS#03: Document Analysis Chart: How did the event Abigail Adams witnessed contrast with *The Female Patriots* publication?
- Teachers may choose to score the document analysis chart using RS#04: Document Analysis Chart (SAMPLE) and RS#06: ARCH Historical Thinking Skills Rubric – Sourcing and Critical Reading.

Thoughtful Application:

- Remind students of the Task Question: How did women support the Patriots during the American Revolutionary War?
- Distribute RS#05: *Thoughtful Application – Editorial*. Review the prompt. Remind the students that they should refer to any reliable sources they have studied.
- Review RS#06: ARCH Historical Thinking Skills Rubric with the class.
- Allow approximately 20-30 minutes for students to complete the task
- Assess the students using RS#05: ARCH Historical Thinking Skills Rubric – Contextualization.

Resource Sheet #01

Document A – *Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams*

Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams. 30-31 July 1777

. . . It was rumoured that an **eminent**, wealthy, **stingy** merchant (also a Batchelor) had a **Hogshead** of coffe in his store, which he refused to sell to the committee [of Patriots] under six **shillings** per Pound. A Number of Females, some say a hundred, some say more, assembled with a cart and trucks, marchd down to the Ware House and demanded the keys, which he refused to deliver, upon which one of them seized him by his Neck and tossd him into the cart. Upon his finding no **Quarter**, he deliverd the keys when they tippd up the cart and dischargd him, then opened the Warehouse, Hoisted out the Coffe themselves, put it into the trucks and drove off . . . A large **concourse** of men stood amazd silent Spectators.

Adams, Abigail. Letter to John Adams. July 30, 1777. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*. Web. Accessed 9/23/14..

http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/doc?id=L17770730aa&bc=%2Fdigitaladams%2Farchive%2Fbrowse%2Fletters_1774_1777.php

eminent- standing out so as to be noticed

stingy- not generous

hogshead- a large barrel, especially one containing from 63 to 140 gallons

shillings- a form of money

quarter- mercy

concourse- a meeting produced by voluntary or spontaneous coming together

Resource Sheet #02

Document B – *The Female Patriots*

The Female Patriots

. . . If the sons, so **degenerate!** The Blessings despise
Let the *Daughters* of Liberty nobly arise;
And tho' we've no Voice, but a negative here.
The use of the *Taxables*, let us **forebear**,
(Then merchants import till your Stores are full,
May the buyers be few and your Traffic be dull.)
Stand firmly resolv'd & bid *Grenville* [Prime Minister of Great Britain] to see
That rather than Freedom, we'll part with our *Tea*.
And well as we love the dear **Draught** when a dry,
As American Patriots, our Taste we deny . . .

Source: Griffiths, Hannah. "The Female Patriots." 1768. In the Words of Women. Accessed 9/23/14.
<http://inthewordsofwomen.com/?p=703>

degenerate - wicked
forebear- do without
draught (draft)- drink

Resource Sheet #03

Document Analysis Chart

Name: _____ Date: _____

Document A: Abigail Adams to John Adams	Connections and Contextualization	Document B: "The Female Patriots"
<p>List the specific information from the document detailing the event that Abigail Adams witnessed:</p> <p>Who participated?</p> <p>Where were they?</p> <p>When did they do it?</p> <p>What did they do?</p> <p>Why did they do it?</p>	<p>What historical events influenced these women to act as they did?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>What main role did women play during the American Revolution according to both documents?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>List the specific points from the document that the "Female Patriots" were trying to make.</p> <p>Who were the speakers?</p> <p>How were they feeling?</p> <p>When did they write?</p> <p>What were they going to do?</p> <p>Why were they angry?</p>
<p>How did the event Abigail Adams witnessed contrast to "The Female Patriots" publication?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		

Resource Sheet #04

Document Analysis (SAMPLE)

Document A: Abigail Adams Letter to John Adams	Connections and Contextualization	Document B: "The Female Patriots" Published in the <i>Pennsylvania Chronicle</i>
<p>List the specific information from the document detailing the event that Abigail Adams witnessed.</p> <p>Who participated? A number of females – 100+ females</p> <p>Where were they? Boston</p> <p>When did they do it? July 1777</p> <p>What did they do? -Demanded the keys -Pushed him into a cart -Stole the coffee</p> <p>Why did they do it? The merchant was selling the coffee for an excessive amount of money.</p>	<p>What historical events influenced these women to act as they did? The British Government was taxing goods in colonies to generate revenue (Stamp Act-1765, Townshend Revenue Acts-1767, Sugar Act -1764).</p> <p>What main role did women play during the American Revolution according to both documents? Women were angry about the taxes on the goods that they used often in their homes. They fought back so that Britain could not make money off of them.</p>	<p>List the specific points from the document that the "Female Patriots" were trying to make:</p> <p>Who were the speakers? -The "Daughters" of Liberty -American Patriots</p> <p>How were they feeling? Defiant towards the British government</p> <p>When did they write (published)? December 25, 1769</p> <p>What were they going to do? -Refuse to buy the tea -Stand firm in their decision not to drink tea</p> <p>Why were they angry? Because they were being taxed on the tea that they love to drink.</p>

How did the event Abigail Adams witnessed **contrast** to "The Female Patriots" publication?
Abigail Adams described a violent approach where the women stole the goods rather than paying the tax, while "The Female Patriots" described a non-violent protest where the women just refused to buy the goods.

Resource Sheet #06

ARCH Historical Thinking Skills Rubric – Sourcing , Critical Reading, Contextualization

	Close-Reading Strategies		Strategies/Procedural Concepts
Criteria	Sourcing	Critical Reading (Author's Craft)	Contextualization
4	<p>Identifies all authors and all original dates of primary and secondary sources.</p> <p>Evaluates the reliability of sources based on the author's perspective and when and why they were produced.</p>	<p>Identifies the author's viewpoint and claims based on what is written and what the author leaves out.</p> <p>Cites examples of how the author uses persuasive language and specific words and phrases to influence the reader.</p>	<p>Applies prior and new knowledge to determine the historical setting of sources.</p> <p>Uses the setting to attempt an interpretation of the sources within that historical context, as opposed to a present-day mindset.</p>
3	<p>Identifies most authors and most original dates of a variety of primary and secondary sources.</p> <p>Examines the reliability of sources based on the author's perspective and when and why they were produced.</p>	<p>Identifies the author's viewpoint and claims based on what is written.</p> <p>Identifies at least one way the author attempts to influence the reader through persuasive language and specific words and phrases.</p>	<p>Applies prior and new knowledge to determine the historical setting of sources.</p> <p>May attempt an interpretation of sources with a present-day mindset.</p>
2	<p>Identifies some authors and some original dates of primary and secondary sources.</p> <p>Attempts to evaluate the reliability of sources.</p>	<p>Attempts to identify the author's viewpoint and claim.</p> <p>Attempts to identify how the author tries to influence the reader.</p>	<p>Attempts to determine the historical setting of sources.</p>
1	<p>Identifies few authors and few original dates of primary and secondary sources.</p> <p>Does not attempt to evaluate the reliability of sources.</p>	<p>Demonstrates little to no attempt to identify the author's viewpoint or claim.</p>	<p>Demonstrates no attempt to understand the historical setting of sources.</p>