

## Camp Followers Discussion Plan

**Grades:** 5-8

**Time Allotment: Total for EVERYTHING – 3-5 hours. Can be spread out over several days.**

- Videos – 28-30 minutes, 45 minutes with “Part 4: Why People Followed the Army” stories
- Videos WITH DISCUSSION – 1 hr.
- Hands on activities - 2-4 hours total.
- **Note – you can pick and choose which activities to do from the packet and which videos to watch. You can also do the hands-on activities as rotation stations, or assign written activities as homework.**

**Extension activities will add on additional time.**

**See Lesson Plan for Common Core Standards**

### Objectives:

Students will:

- Engage with a series of videos (linked on Washington Crossing Historic Park’s website) to learn about the life of camp followers. Each video is approx. 5 minutes or less.  
**Teachers can choose which videos to watch.** Videos include:
  - Informational videos explaining who followers are and policies they had to follow
  - Demonstration videos related to the jobs followers did and the lives they led
- Understand and explain the importance of followers, including women and people of color, during the Revolutionary War. This will be achieved through the videos, hands on activities, and 5 stories looking at specific people and their reasons for following.
  - This will increase student’s historical empathy and critical thinking skills by encouraging them to see the war through a more inclusive lens
- Complete a series of hands on activities designed to put students in the shoes of a follower. **Teachers can choose which activities to assign, including:**
  - Engaging critical thinking skills in deciding what to pack on a journey
  - Increasing math, reading comprehension, critical thinking skills, and understanding by making a baby sling
  - Engaging critical thinking skills through reading and interpreting a recipe as well as creating their own recipe
    - Describe a simple food made and consumed by colonial people
    - Measure ingredients accurately to create Johnnycakes
  - Inspiring historical empathy as well as increasing writing and comprehension skills through activities like “What Would You Do”, “Misbehavior”, and “Soldier’s Wives on Twitter”
  - Imagine themselves in the shoes of a follower while engaging critical thinking and decision-making skills with a “Choose your own adventure” game.

## **Materials:**

- 9 Videos on Washington Crossing Historic Park website - [www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/education/digital-resources/camp-followers/](http://www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/education/digital-resources/camp-followers/)
- Information on laundry on Washington Crossing Historic Park website - [www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/education/digital-resources/camp-followers/](http://www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/education/digital-resources/camp-followers/)
- 5 stories on Washington Crossing Historic Park website - [www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/education/digital-resources/camp-followers/](http://www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/education/digital-resources/camp-followers/)
- Camp Followers Activity Packet – [www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/education/digital-resources/camp-followers/](http://www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/education/digital-resources/camp-followers/)
- Pen/pencil and paper – 1 per student
- Computer or smart board for “Choose Your Own Adventure Game” - <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdY60spsbcA6ZCXILfMO19KA9K04ofwhUr6qCXYQdKd67rCig/viewform>
- Materials for *Tube Sock Market Wallet*:
  - For each market wallet, 1 per student:
    - 1 tube sock
    - Scissors
    - Staples
- Materials for *Make a Baby Sling*
  - For each sling (this can be done individually, students can take turns, in small groups, or as a demonstration):
    - 1.5-2 yards of fabric or a fitted sheet
    - 1 doll or stuffed animal
- Materials for *Make a Whirligig*
  - For each whirligig, 1 per student:
    - 1 cardboard circle, cut to template
    - 2 patterns from attached templates
    - 2 feet of string
    - 1 kitchen skewer or hole punch
    - Scissors and glue
- Ingredients for *Johnnycakes*
  - For class – recipe makes 12 Johnnycakes:
    - 1 cup water
    - 2 tablespoons butter
    - Extra butter to grease the skillet
    - 1 cup yellow cornmeal
    - ½ teaspoon salt
    - ½ teaspoon sugar
    - ½ cup milk
    - Saucepan, skillet, mixing bowl, spoon/spatula, and stove

## **Discussion Plan:**

This section includes detailed instructions for the videos, including questions to ask, ideas to integrate the activity packet, etc. The “Activity Packet Integrations” and “Extension activities” can be done as a class, small groups, or as guided and independent practice individually.

### **Part 1: Overview**

#### **Video 1 – Camp Followers Introduction – 3 minutes 30 seconds:**

- This video is focused on an introduction to camp followers. Teacher can pause video and discuss answers with the class when Allison asks the following questions, accompanied by slides and images:
  - Who were the camp followers?
    - To discuss: What does that term “camp followers” mean? What jobs did they do? Who would be included?
      - Potential answers: Camp followers were people who “belonged to the army”. They did specific jobs for the army, such as laundry, nursing, or selling things at “mobile grocery stores” known as sutleries. Followers were not soldiers. They had to do a job for the army to receive pay and rations.
  - Do you think that men followed the army?
    - To discuss: Were followers only women? Were men only soldiers?
      - Potential answers: Men could follow, like William Lee (shown on slide). Sometimes women served in battle as well. Ex. Robert Shirliff/Deborah Sampson, Anna Maria Lane, Margaret Corbin.
  - How many camp followers do you think there were?
    - To discuss: How many women and men do you think followed the Continental Army? Do you think there were more followers with the British army, the Continental Army, or the Hessian Army?
      - Ratios of women to men for each army:
        - Continental Army – 1 woman to 33 soldiers
        - Hessian Army – 1 woman to 15 soldiers
        - British Army – 1 woman to 8 soldiers
  - What led to the difference in the number of followers?
    - To discuss: Why were the follower numbers of each army so different?
      - Potential answers:
        - The army didn’t keep track of every woman who followed. Women could follow unofficially.
        - The British set quotas on the number of women allowed to follow, but also had an established system. The Continental Army was a new organization, figuring things out as they went.
        - Women from Europe may have chosen to follow more frequently, due to their loved one serving across an ocean

- Read Washington’s August 1777 General Orders quote about followers. Ask students how they would feel, Washington’s motivations, and what it means
- **Activity Packet Integration:** After the video, students can do the “Soldier’s Wives on Twitter” activity
  - For #’s 1 and 2, students will read the quote from the wife of a soldier and translate it into a 140-character tweet
  - For #3, students will respond to the writer who has “thrown some shade” about followers in a 140-character tweet

**Video 2 – Military Policies for Camp Followers – 2 minutes 30 seconds:**

- This video looks at the policies and regulations instituted for followers
- Teacher and students can discuss the following, either pausing during the video or after:
  - To discuss: What sorts of policies and orders do you think followers had to obey? Have students brainstorm some of the rules for followers.
    - Potential answers: Not plundering, or stealing, from civilians. Not riding on the army’s baggage wagons. Selling liquor at a sutlery without a license. Buying a shirt from a soldier and selling it without permission. Insubordination.
  - To discuss: How could women disobey these orders? Have students brainstorm.
    - Potential answers: Plundering and stealing from the army or civilians. Riding on the baggage wagons. Speaking out of turn. Participating in a battle, not staying with the baggage wagons. Drunkenness and behavior unbecoming a follower.
  - To discuss: What sorts of punishments could the army issue? Have students brainstorm.
    - Potential answers: Acquittal, being forced to return items, formal reprimands, corporal punishment, imprisonment, or being “drummed out of camp” (expulsion).
  - To discuss: Why institute military discipline for followers? Why did followers disobey?
    - Potential answers: To keep order in the army.
    - Potential answers: There are many reasons followers disobeyed. Money, hunger, poverty, personality, being tired, sickness, opportunity, the specific situation, etc.
- **Activity Packet Integration:** After the video, students can do the following activities:
  - What Would You Do? – Students put themselves in the follower’s shoes and decide what choices they would make
  - Misbehavior – Students will read the case of a follower who has broken a policy and decide their sentence
- **Extension Activities:**
  - Students can research “bad behaving” followers and women including:
    - Bridget Connor – court martialed for selling stolen soldier’s shirts, expelled from camp for insubordination

- For more information: Kirsten Hammerstrom. Kitty Calash Blog. [www.kittycalash.com](http://www.kittycalash.com)
- Margaret Corbin, Mary Ludwig Hays, Robert Shirliff/Deborah Sampson, and Anna Maria Lane, and others
  - For more information: Nancy K. Loane. *Following the Drum: Women at the Valley Forge Encampment*. Potomac Books. 2009.

## Part 2: Camp Followers' Jobs

- This section can also tie into our Zoom Virtual Lesson "The Role of Camp Followers". Learn more here - <https://www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/education/digital-resources/virtual-lessons/>

### Written information about Laundry:

- We include a written description of the 18<sup>th</sup> century laundry process as well as the role of a laundress.
- Teacher and students can discuss the process and why laundresses were needed.
  - Potential answers for why followers did laundry: Dirty clothing can lead to disease, a major issue for all of the Revolutionary War armies. Clothing and cleanliness were also important for a well-regulated army.
- **Extension Activities:**
  - Teacher can recreate the process of laundry
  - Students can research the 18<sup>th</sup> Century laundry process and list the steps

### Video 3 – Nursing Demonstration – 4 minutes:

- This video explains and demonstrates the process of making a poultice
- Teacher and students can discuss what they saw, the differences in nursing today and then, and the differences in training for nurses
  - Potential answers for differences in training: Nurses had no professional training as they do today. They were responsible for caring for sick and wounded soldiers while they recuperated. On both sides, nurses performed a variety of duties such as emptying and cleaning the patients' chamber pots or bathing newly admitted patients with warm water. Nurses were expected to be clean, have a good temperament, and not be away without leave. Even with these differences, nurses were as important to the Revolutionary Armies as front-line fighters as they are today during the Covid-19 pandemic.
    - For more information on nursing: Holly A. Mayer. *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community during the American Revolution*. University of South Carolina Press. 1996.
    - For more information on nursing: Nancy K. Loane. *Following the Drum: Women at the Valley Forge Encampment*. Potomac Books. 2009.
- **Extension Activities:**
  - Students can list the process of making a poultice, seen in the video
  - Teacher can recreate the poultice, shown in the video

#### **Video 4 – Sutler Demonstration – 2 minutes 15 seconds:**

- This video explains and demonstrates the job of a sutler, which were essentially grocery stores on the go
- Teacher and students can discuss what they saw, what sutlers sold, etc.
  - For more information on sutlers: Holly A. Mayer. *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community during the American Revolution*. 1996.
  - For more information on nursing: Nancy K. Loane. *Following the Drum: Women at the Valley Forge Encampment*. 2009.
- **Extension Activity:**
  - Teacher can set up a “sutlery” in the classroom for students to visit, including:
    - Beef
    - Potatoes
    - Onions
    - Carrots
    - Rice
    - Peas
    - Flour or Cornmeal
    - Herbs
    - Honey
    - Butter
    - Handmade soap
    - Bread

#### **Part 3: Life in Camp**

#### **Video 5 – Food and Rations – 1 minute 48 seconds:**

- This video explains cooking on campaign and the rations followers and soldiers received
- Allison asks several questions throughout this video. Teachers can pause the video and discuss these questions with students, including:
  - To discuss: You’ve received your rations and gone to the sutlery to buy some extra things. **Who’s going to cook the food?**
    - Answer: Women cooked for themselves and their children in mess groups of 5 or 6. Soldiers cooked for themselves in mess groups.
  - To discuss: What are rations?
    - Answer: Rations were the fixed amount of food that the army would supply to its soldiers and followers. In the British Army, women were usually entitled to half rations, children received quarter rations. Nurses received full rations in the British army. In the Continental Army, camp followers’ rations ranged from full rations to no rations.
- After the video, students can discuss how people would survive if the Army was unable to provide rations to soldiers, followers, and/or children. This was the situation the Continental Army found themselves in in December 1776.

- **Activity Packet Integration:** After the video, students can do the following activities:
  - Johnnycakes – make a recipe soldiers and followers used
  - Make Your Own Recipe – have students come up with as many recipes as they can, using only the ingredients listed, a camp kettle, frying pan, and fire
- **Extension Activities:**
  - Teacher can make students recipes
  - Teacher can bring in Continental Army promised rations to show students:
    - 1 pound of bread or flour
    - 1 pound of meat, likely beef
    - 1 pint of milk
    - 3 pints of vegetables
    - ½ pint rice or 1-pint corn meal
    - 1 quart of spruce beer or cider (Water can serve in place of this)

#### **Video 6 – Clothing – 5 minutes 16 seconds:**

- This video explains what women, including followers, wore and how they got dressed
- Teacher and students will discuss the video they just watched.
  - Students can discuss the army not providing women with clothing. How did that play into their lives or misbehavior, discussed earlier?
    - For more information, see the story of Bridget Connor - Kirsten Hammerstrom. Kitty Calash Blog.  
<https://kittycalash.com/?s=bridget+connor&search=Go>
- **Extension Activities:**
  - Students can list the steps of the dressing process they saw in the video
  - Teacher can bring in clothing for students to try on

#### **Video 7 – Packing for Campaign and Carrying Children – 3 minutes:**

- This video demonstrates how to pack a market wallet and carry an infant on campaign
- **Activity Packet Integration:** After the video, students can do the following activities:
  - Tube Sock Market Wallet – make a market wallet out of a tube sock
  - Packing Decisions – students will choose which 7 items out of 14 listed they will carry in their market wallet
  - Make a baby sling – teacher and students will try carrying a baby in a baby sling, as demonstrated in the video
- **Extension Activities:**
  - Teacher can bring in items to have students choose which items to pack:
    - Extra clothing items (women’s and men)
    - Extra children’s clothing items
    - Extra pair of shoes
    - Cloak
    - Blankets
    - Personal toiletry items
    - Extra food

- Sewing kit/ “Housewife”
- Linen handkerchief
- Turned wooden bowl and a spoon
- Small iron pot with sheet iron lid
- Fire kit
- Personal item from home
- Linen/woolen mitts

### **Video 8 – Children on the Campaign – 5 minutes:**

- This video demonstrates and explains the toys and games children on campaign used
- Teacher and students can discuss what they saw in the video
  - Questions: What did kids do when parents followed? What toys and games did children on campaign play with?
  - Potential answers: Children also followed the army if a soldier’s wife was a camp follower. In British Army records, there were usually at least as many children as there were women. But, this number still varied. In camp, the children would probably be put to work. In the British Army, they might even go to school. Children also had some time to enjoy toys and games, usually when the army was on the march.
    - For more information: Holly A. Mayer. *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community during the American Revolution*. University of South Carolina Press. 1996.
    - For more information: Nancy K. Loane. *Following the Drum: Women at the Valley Forge Encampment*. Potomac Books. 2009
- **Activity Packet Integration:**
  - Teacher can list the “Colonial name” for games
    - **Extension Activity:** Students can figure out modern game from “Then and Now Games”:
    - All Hid – Hide and Go Seek
    - Noughts and Crosses – Tic Tac Toe
    - Hop Frog – Leap Frog
    - Nine Pins – Bowling (table top, miniature pins)
    - Scotch Hopper – Hopscotch
    - Jackstraws – Pick Up Sticks
    - Jackstones – Jacks
  - Students can Make a Whirligig
- **Extension Activity:** Teacher can bring in other games shown in video and listed in “Then and Now Games” for students to try

### **Part 4: Why People Followed the Army**

Teacher and students can discuss the reasons people followed, how the featured stories’ histories illustrate this, what they would do, etc.

- Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson, George Washington’s Housekeeper
  - Possible reason for following: Money
    1. For more information: Nancy K. Loane. *Following the Drum: Women at the Valley Forge Encampment*. Potomac Books. 2009.
- Lucy Knox, wife of General Henry Knox
  - Possible reason to follow: Practicality, the desire to be near loved ones
    1. For more information: Nancy K. Loane. *Following the Drum: Women at the Valley Forge Encampment*. Potomac Books. 2009.
- Mrs. Reed of Trenton, wife of a Continental soldier caught in the middle of war
  - Possible reason to follow: Safety
    1. For more information: William M. Dwyer. *The Day Is Ours: How a Ragged Rebel Army Stood the Storm and Saved the Revolution*. Viking Press. 1983.
- Sarah Osborn Benjamin, wife of a Continental soldier who followed
  - Possible reason to follow: No choice/lack of agency
    1. For more information: Nancy K. Loane. *Following the Drum: Women at the Valley Forge Encampment*. Potomac Books. 2009.
- William Lee, George Washington’s enslaved valet
  - Possible reason to follow: No choice/lack of agency
    1. For more information: George Washington’s Mount Vernon. “William (Billy) Lee”. <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/william-billy-lee/>
- **Extension Activities:**
  - Teacher can have students do further research into the 5 featured stories, as well as other less-known people of the Revolution, including:
    - a. Martha Washington – wife of General George Washington
    - b. Margaret Corbin – took husband’s place on cannon crew at Battle of Fort Washington November 16, 1776. Injured and received a pension. One inspiration for legend of Molly Pitcher.
    - c. Mary Ludwig Hays – brought water to cannon crew in Battle of Monmouth, June 28, 1778. Another inspiration for the legend of Molly Pitcher.
    - d. Catherine Greene – wife of General Nathaniel Greene
    - e. Anna Maria Lane – follower in 1776 who served at the Battle of Germantown October 4, 1777.
    - f. Robert Shirliff - born Deborah Sampson. They enlisted in the Continental Army as Robert Shirliff.
      - i. For more information on a-f: Nancy K. Loane. *Following the Drum: Women at the Valley Forge Encampment*. Potomac Books. 2009.
    - g. Baroness von Riedesel – wife of Hessian General Riedesel, caught in the middle of the 1777 Saratoga Campaign and later prisoner of war

- i. For more information: Marvin L. Brown. *Baroness Von Riedesel and the American Revolution. Journal and Correspondence of a Tour of Duty, 1776-1783.* University of North Carolina Press. 1965.
- Teacher can have students research and discuss why followers and soldiers chose to support one side or the other, specifically people of color, including:
  - a. Two Kettles Together - Oneida Indian Nation woman fighting with her husband and infant son at the Battle of Oriskany during the Saratoga campaign, September 1777
    - i. For more information: Joseph T. Glatthaar and James Kirby Martin. *Forgotten Allies: The Oneida Indians and the American Revolution.* Hill and Wang. 2007.
  - b. Colonel John Glover’s integrated “Marbleheader” Continental Army regiment in December 1776
    - i. For more information: David Hackett Fischer. *Washington’s Crossing.* Oxford University Press. 2006.
    - ii. For more information: William M. Dwyer. *The Day Is Ours: How a Ragged Rebel Army Stood the Storm and Saved the Revolution.* Viking Press. 1983.
  - c. James Forten, African-American privateer
    - i. For more information: Julie Winch. *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten.* Oxford University Press. 2003.
  - d. People of color’s responses to the British 1779 Philipsburg Proclamation - Offered freedom to people enslaved to Continental soldiers if they escaped to the British army.
    - i. For more information: Julie Hilvers. *Freedom Bound: Black Loyalists.* 2007.  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20071123113115/http://www.nku.edu/~freedomchronicle/OldSiteArchive/archive/issue4/studentscorner.php#Julie>
    - ii. For more information: John U. Rees. *“They Were Good Soldiers”:* *African-Americans Serving in the Continental Army, 1775-1783.* Helion and Company. 2019.

## Part 5: Conclusion

### **Video 9: Conclusion - 40 seconds**

Teacher and students will watch this concluding video and can discuss

### **Additional Activity Packet Integration**

- Having watched the videos (including conclusion video) and read the featured stories, students and teachers can do “Choose Your Own Adventure” Game from the Activity Packet:
  - [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdY60spsbcA6ZCXILfMO19KA9K04ofwhUr6qCXYQdKd67rCig/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdY60spsbcA6ZCXILfMO19KA9K04ofwhUr6qCXYQdKd67rCig/viewform?usp=sf_link)

### **Additional Extension Activities**

- Teacher can combine this lesson with Washington Crossing Historic Park's "Women of the Revolution" Lesson Plan.  
<https://www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/education/lesson-plans/>
- Teacher can combine this lesson with Washington Crossing Historic Park's "Soldier's Life" or "Durham Boats" Lesson Plans. Followers were connected to the soldiers who wrote the letters and crossed in the Durham Boats, as they did jobs for the army. A follower may also have a family connection to a soldier.  
<https://www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/education/lesson-plans/>

### **Closure and Assessment:**

- Students and teacher will discuss what they learned today, what they think about followers now, why followers were important, and the decisions they would make in the shoes of a follower.