

Cause and Effect: Historical Text

Name: _____

Directions: Read the information below and then fill in the cause and effect chart on the back of this page.



Deborah Sampson

Deborah Sampson was born in Plympton, Massachusetts, on December 17, 1760 and was the oldest of six children. Her family was very poor and her father abandoned them when she was very young. Since her mother was ill and couldn't support the children, she sent them off to live with various neighbors and relatives. When Sampson was about ten, she became an indentured servant for Jeremiah Thomas in Middleborough. For ten years she helped with the housework and worked in the fields, which made her strong. In the winter when there wasn't as much farm work to be done, she was able to attend school. In 1779, she was hired as a teacher in a Middleborough public school.

When Sampson was twenty-one (May 20, 1782) she realized that she wanted to join the Patriots and fight in the Revolutionary War. At that time, women weren't allowed in combat, so Sampson decided to disguise herself as a man. She spent a great deal of time practicing walking and talking like a man and did it so well, that she fooled her own mother. Finally, Sampson enlisted as "Robert Shurtleff". At 5 foot 7 inches tall, Sampson wasn't tall for a man and was teased by other soldiers about not having to shave, but they assumed that this "boy" was just too young to grow facial hair. Sampson was well-liked and performed her duties as well as any other man.

Back home, rumors spread that there was a strong suspicion that Sampson was "dressing in a man's clothes and enlisting as a Soldier in the Army." For this reason, she was excommunicated from the First Baptist Church. At that time however, Sampson had already left Massachusetts with her regiment and the town's suspicions were never proven.

While Sampson was fighting in a battle near Tarrytown, New York, she was hit by a musket ball in her thigh and got a severe cut on her forehead. She went to the hospital to have the cut treated but removed the musket ball herself with a penknife so her secret wouldn't be revealed. After leaving the hospital, Sampson bravely went on fighting but unfortunately her leg never healed properly. Later, when she was hospitalized for a fever in Philadelphia, the doctor taking care of her discovered that she was a woman. Deborah Sampson was then honorably discharged from the army on October 25, 1783.

When Sampson returned home, she married a farmer named Benjamin Gannett, and had three children. She taught at a nearby school as well. About nine years after her discharge from the army, she was awarded thirty-four pounds as a pension from the state of Massachusetts. In 1802, Sampson traveled throughout New England and New York giving lectures on her experiences in the military. During her lectures, she wore her military uniform. After Paul Revere sent a letter to Congress on her behalf in 1804, she started receiving a U.S. pension in the amount of four dollars per month. Deborah Sampson Gannett died at the age of sixty four on April 29, 1827 in Sharon, Massachusetts.

Cause

Effect

Sampson's father abandoned the family and her mother was ill.

She disguised herself as a man.

Sampson was excommunicated from her church.

She fought in a battle near Tarrytown, New York.

She removed a musket ball from her thigh.

She gave lectures on her experiences serving in the military.

Paul Revere sent a letter to Congress for Sampson.
