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archives Jr!

Battle of Long Island

AMERICAN REVOLUTION



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Additional Resources and Activities can be found at:



ConsidertheSourceNY.org

Battle of Long Island

In August 1776, the American army, led by General George Washington, was trying to protect New York from being taken by the British. Washington had about 20,000 soldiers, and many of them were camped in Brooklyn, on the western part of Long Island. The British army, led by General William Howe, had a much larger army—about 32,000 soldiers. They also had help from Hessian soldiers, who were from Germany and were paid to fight for Britain.

Washington made some mistakes when getting ready for the Battle of Long Island. He thought the British would come straight toward his army in Brooklyn Heights, so he put his soldiers in strong places to stop them. But he didn't protect the back roads very well, and he didn't know the land in Brooklyn as well as the British did.

Before the battle, the British army landed their ships on the southern shore of Staten Island. From there, they crossed over to Long Island and came ashore near Gravesend Bay, which is in the southwestern part of Brooklyn. This gave them a good spot to start their attack.

On August 27, 1776, the British began their attack. Some of their soldiers came from the front, near Gowanus Road, just like Washington expected. But most of the British army, led by General Howe, took a secret path through Jamaica Pass. This pass was near modern-day East New York and Flatbush. The Americans didn't guard this road, so the British were able to sneak through

during the night. Early in the morning, they attacked from both the front and the back—coming from Gowanus Road and from behind through Bedford and Flatbush. The American soldiers were shocked and didn't know what to do. They tried to fight, but they were trapped. Many were captured, and some were killed.

One group of American soldiers, led by General William Alexander, also known as Lord Stirling, fought bravely to hold off the British. They were outnumbered, but they kept fighting so other American soldiers could escape. Most of Lord Stirling's men were captured, but their bravery helped save lives.

Even though the Americans lost the battle, George Washington didn't give up. He knew his army was in danger, so he came up with a smart plan. On the night of August 29, while it was dark and foggy, Washington ordered his soldiers to quietly leave Brooklyn. They used small boats to cross the East River to Manhattan. The fog helped hide them from the British. By morning, the entire American Army had escaped safely. The British didn't even know they were gone until it was too late.

After the Battle of Long Island, the British took control of New York City for the rest of the war. The battle lasted only one day, but it was a major battle in the war.

Gnaw on This



- The Battle of Long Island was the first major battle after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.
- The Battle of Long Island was the largest battle of the entire Revolutionary War. There were over 45,000 soldiers involved.
- While most of the American army retreated in boats across the East River, a few missed the boats and had to swim!
- This battle showed how important good maps and local knowledge were for success. Not knowing the land put Washington at a disadvantage.

Community Connections



- **Old Stone House,** Park Slope, Brooklyn. Visit a reconstructed 1699 Dutch farmhouse that marks the site where the Maryland 400 made a heroic last stand to help the American army escape. theoldstonehouse.org/
- **Battle Hill,** Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn. The highest point in Brooklyn, this hill was a key battleground during the Battle of Long Island. battlefields.org/visit/battlefields/brooklyn-battlefield
- **Fraunces Tavern Museum,** Manhattan. While not in Brooklyn, this museum has exhibits on the Battle of Long Island. frauncestavernmuseum.org/path-to-liberty

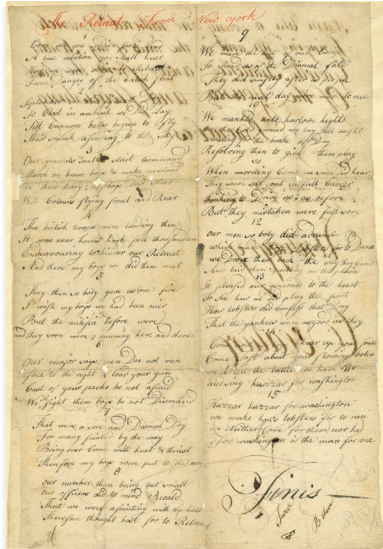


Take a Closer Look

Student Name _____



To the left is the poem, *The Retreat from New York*. You can read a transcription of this poem at considerthesourcenry.org/document/retreat-new-york-poem-written-soldier-american-revolution-nd. After you have read the poem, answer the questions below.



Observe:

1. What rhythm scheme does this poem use? _____
2. How many stanzas does the poem have? _____

Spelling was not standardized until the early 19th Century. Did you notice any words that seemed misspelled?

3. List some of the "misspelled" words. How are they spelled today?

4. Write a phrase from the poem where you had to use context clues to help you understand one of the "misspelled" words.

Courtesy: New-York Historical Society



Infer:

5. Who is speaking in the poem? Is it a soldier, a general, or someone else? How do you know?

6. Why do you think the poet wrote this poem? Was it to tell a story, to honor the soldiers, or to teach something? Support your answer with details from poem.

7. Stanzas 1-10 talk about the Battle of Long Island. From Stanza 10 until the end, the poet is writing about the Battle of Harlem Heights. From the poem, how did each battle end?

Battle of Long Island

Battle of Harlem Heights

Learning Activity



New York
Public
Library



When Archie visits New York City, he loves to go to The New York Public Library (NYPL) and look at documents in their large collection. The Library has a digital collection that you can see right from your classroom or home. Just search for New York Public Library Digital Collections or use this address digitalcollections.nypl.org.

Plus, all New York State students can get a free library card from NYPL to access even more resources in person and online! Sign up today: nypl.org/librarycard

We are going to use a map from The New York Public Library Digital Collection. It is thought that this map was issued in 1776. You can find this map using this QR code.



Locate the key in the lower right corner of the map. Zoom in so that you can read it. There is a transcript of this key in our online resources that might be easier to read. Zoom in on the section of the map to the left of the key.



Observe:

1. What color rectangles are used to represent the British?

2. What color rectangles are used to represent the Americans?

3. How is the path taken by the troops on each side shown on the map? _____
4. Look at the section of the map to the left. What do the markings the arrows are pointing to mean?



Infer:

5. From what you read in the text, and what you see on the map, why would Washington want to put his troops in this location?

6. The key in the lower right corner is titled, "References to the Battle of Long Island." The letters to the left in the key can be found on the map. The key explains which troops were in that area. From what you read in the text, and the information in this key, do you think the map maker was American or British? Use details from the text and the map to support your answer. *Write your answer on a separate piece of paper.*