

The Battle of Monmouth

by Daniel Rosen



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN

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BOSTON

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🔊 A Hot Day in New Jersey

The weather was hot and steamy in Monmouth, New Jersey. It was June 28, 1778. Two armies faced each other across a field. The British had won most of the battles in this war so far, but General George Washington thought his army could win today.

🔊 The American **Revolution** had begun in 1775, three long years earlier. Many battles had been fought, but the battle about to begin was special. No other battle had been fought with armies this large. Both armies had more than 10,000 soldiers in the field. What happened this day would help make America a free nation.

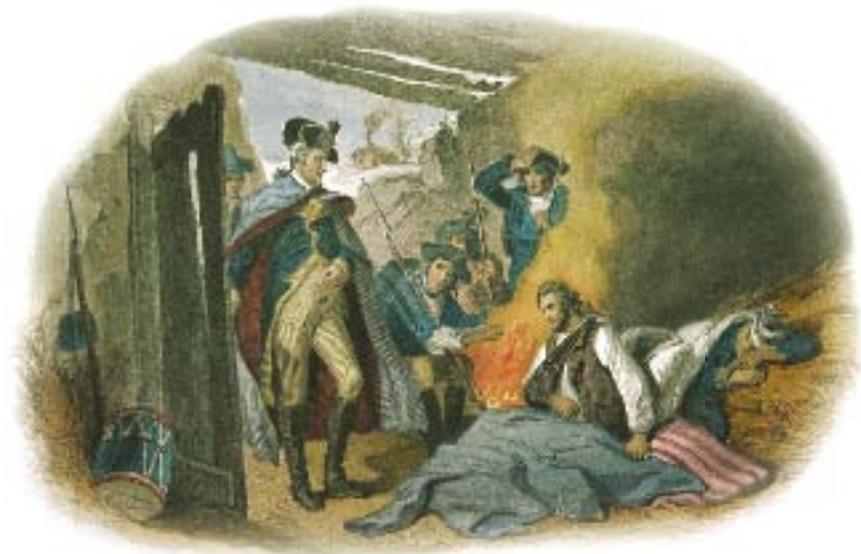
🔊 The British army was considered the best in the world.



🔊 Training to Fight

George Washington was full of hope on this June day. His army had just come through a very hard winter. The army had spent the winter camped at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. There had been no place for them to live so they had to build simple huts. There was so little food and fuel that many soldiers got sick.

🔊 But there was good news, too. A German general named Baron Friedrich von Steuben had come to Valley Forge to train General George Washington's soldiers.



🔊 About 2,000 soldiers died of disease at Valley Forge.

 Von Steuben showed the soldiers how to fight the British **foe**.

Von Steuben was a popular teacher. Many officers were **formal** and did not spend time with their soldiers. Von Steuben liked being around these brave men. In return, the soldiers **gushed** in admiration at Von Steuben. He became a **legendary** officer in Washington's army.



 Baron Friedrich von Steuben



 General George Washington

Washington's Plan

George Washington had a **strategy** for winning the American Revolution. He knew that the British army was stronger than the American army. Washington's plan was not to fight big battles where he could lose his entire army. Instead he fought smaller battles. His goal was to make the war last longer, hoping the British would grow tired of the fight.

 In 1777, Washington's strategy paid off. At the Battle of Saratoga, the Americans won a great victory. Now it looked like the Americans might actually win the war so France decided to help America.





 General Lee did not believe the American soldiers could beat the British.

Before the Battle

The British army was in Philadelphia in 1777. Their commander was Sir Henry Clinton. In June 1778, Clinton decided to march his army to New York City. The way to New York was through New Jersey.

 Washington was ready. He decided to attack a part of the British army at Monmouth, New Jersey. General Charles Lee asked to lead the attack. Lee was the highest-ranking general under Washington. Washington agreed to give Lee command, but he did not have confidence in General Lee. Lee was not in favor of attacking the British. Washington hoped Lee would do a good job.

🔊 On the morning of June 28, Lee marched his men towards the British lines. The sun was just coming up, and it was already hot. Neither army was ready for the heat.

🔊 The British Army looked magnificent in their bright red coats. But their coats were made of thick wool. Their hats were made of bearskin or leather. Some of the American soldiers wore blue uniforms made of wool while others wore their own clothes.



🔊 British uniforms were not suited for hot weather.

Lee Retreats

The British army was traveling along a single road. They had more than 10,000 soldiers. There were hundreds of wagons filled with baggage and other supplies. The British line stretched out for more than 25 miles.

 Washington told Lee to attack the end of the British column. Lee rode out at dawn with his men. When the British saw Lee's army, they prepared to fight. When Lee saw that, he began to **retreat** from the British. Not a single shot had yet been fired!

 On the American side, there was total confusion among the troops. Many soldiers began to retreat. Others did not know what to do. Lee began the retreat before most of his officers had heard the order.

 One of Lee's officers sent word back to Washington. Quickly, General Washington rode up and found Lee.

Molly Pitcher

Mary Hays, called Molly, was the wife of an American soldier at the Battle of Monmouth. In the great heat, she brought water in a pitcher to the fighting men. The soldiers called her "Molly Pitcher." When her husband fell, she took over his job of firing a cannon.



 Washington demanded to know why Lee was retreating before a shot had been fired. Lee had no answer. Then Washington knew that he had been wrong to appoint Lee to command his troops. General Lee clearly did not believe the Americans were strong enough to win a battle against the British.

Washington Takes Command

Washington was angry. His soldiers were running away. He rode his horse back and forth, yelling at his men to turn and fight. Washington knew his soldiers could stand and fight against the British. He knew Von Steuben had done a fine job training the men.

Washington got his officers to stop the retreat. The men gained courage from the sight of their commander on his horse. They turned and began to advance toward the British lines, plunging toward the British charge.

For more than an hour the two armies stood under the broiling sun and fought. Washington watched the sun shimmer off his soldiers' rifles as his men fired at the British enemy.

Many of the American soldiers carried a gun, like this one, called a musket. It was about 5 feet long and weighed 10 pounds.





 Washington rode all over the battlefield, urging his soldiers on.

 In the end, the hot day helped decide the battle. Soldiers on both sides passed out from the terrible heat. On the British side, almost as many soldiers died from the heat as from being shot.

 The American army held off the British attack. In the late afternoon, the British began to retreat. Washington tried to rally his men to attack, but they were too hot and tired to fight anymore. The Battle of Monmouth was over.

Who Won?

In most battles, one side wins and the other loses. The Battle of Monmouth had no clear winner. In a way, both sides could claim victory. The Americans had stood and fought against the British army. They had not retreated. In the end, it was the British who withdrew. The American army gained confidence from the battle. They saw that Von Steuben's training worked.

 However, the British could claim victory, too. They were able to continue on their way to New York, which was their goal. Washington had not stopped them.

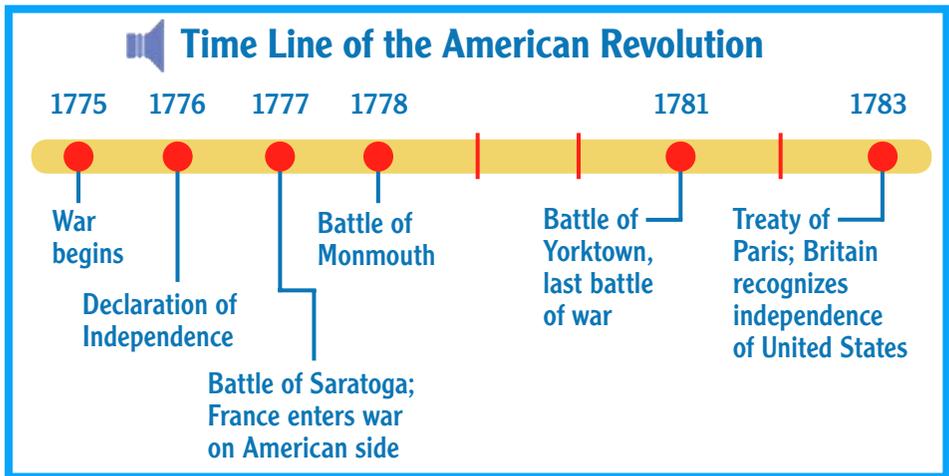
 Results of the Battle of Monmouth		
	Americans	British
Number of soldiers	11,000	10,000
Killed by gunfire	69	65
Died from heat	37	59
Wounded	160	170

The Importance of the Battle

The Battle of Monmouth was an important battle in the American Revolution. It was the largest battle of the war. More soldiers on both sides fought there than in any other battle.

 The American Revolution did not end until 1781. But the Battle of Monmouth turned out to be the last major battle fought in the northern colonies.

 Most importantly, the Battle of Monmouth gave American soldiers confidence. They had held their ground against the powerful British army. They had overcome terrible leadership from General Lee. More than ever before, they now believed that this bold war for independence was a war they could win.



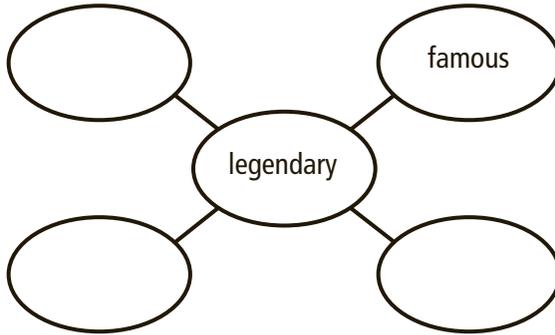
Responding



TARGET VOCABULARY

Word Builder

What words mean the same as **legendary**? Make a word web around the word legendary. Write words in the circles that mean the same as legendary. Copy this word web and add more words.



Write About It

Text to Text Write a paragraph telling why you think George Washington was a legendary general. Use information from this story and other ones. Use the word web in your writing, too.



TARGET VOCABULARY

foes

formal

gushed

legendary

magnificent

plunged

retreat

revolution

shimmering

strategy



TARGET STRATEGY

Analyze/Evaluate Think carefully

about the text and form an opinion about it.



If you take away my first two letters, you will get something you will enjoy.

Level: S

DRA: 40

Social Studies

Strategy:

Analyze/Evaluate

Word Count: 1,110

5.3.13 Build Vocabulary

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