



New York State Testing Program

English

Language Arts Test

Listening Selection

Grade

5

January 7–11, 2008

This listening selection is to be used in administering Book 2 of the English Language Arts Test. The entire selection is to be read aloud twice to the students. For complete directions, please follow the instructions in the *Teacher's Directions*.

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The Courage of “Molly Pitcher”

by Karen S. Hopkins

It was the end of June 1778. The 13 colonies that made up America were in the middle of a daring war. The colonists wanted freedom from the harsh laws imposed by England’s king. The British soldiers were ordered to keep them from winning that freedom. But the colonists had already proclaimed their independence, and the Revolutionary War was on.

At Monmouth, New Jersey, a fierce battle was raging. General George Washington had ordered his men to drive the British soldiers out of the area. The fighting must not stop until the enemy withdrew! One soldier, John Hays, had an important job to do. He was to help fire one of the huge cannons that was pulled from battle to battle.

John’s wife, 23-year-old Mary Hays, was at the battle too. In those days, wives could accompany the army from camp to camp. Mary and the other wives cooked and washed clothes for the soldiers.

On this day, the hot, June sun was blazing. As the fighting wore on, the temperature neared 100 degrees. Hundreds of soldiers fell down, exhausted from the heat. Mary knew what to do. Grabbing a pitcher, she quickly filled it with water from a nearby stream. She ran onto the battlefield and gave drinks to the thirsty soldiers. Soon, more men were shouting, “Molly, pitcher!” Molly was a nickname for Mary. Mary refilled the pitcher again and again.

Suddenly, Mary’s husband collapsed near the cannon. Mary ran to help him, but he was too weak to get up. Mary knew the cannon could not remain silent. She stepped up to take John’s place without thinking of her own safety. She helped fire the cannon many times. It has even been said that a shot from the enemy passed directly between her legs that day. Mary stayed with the cannon until dark when the fighting stopped. The battle was over, but the story of Mary’s bravery would go on.

Mary, soon known everywhere as “Molly Pitcher,” was considered a heroine for what she had done. George Washington thanked her in person and praised her for the courage she had shown. When John recovered, Mary and he continued to fight for the cause of freedom.

By 1783, the British were defeated, and the colonists had won their independence. Mary and John went home to Pennsylvania.

Go On

Many years later, when Mary was nearly 70 years old, she was honored again for what she had done at the Battle of Monmouth. Pennsylvania lawmakers awarded Mary a pension of \$40 a year for her bravery.

Only a few women actually fought in a Revolutionary War battle. Mary Hays had been one of them. The courageous spirit of people like “Molly Pitcher” had helped to transform 13 colonies into the United States of America.

STOP



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