

My Name Is Deborah Samson

• Reader's Theater •

by | Jane Anderson

Content Connections

Social Studies

Deborah Samson returned to Massachusetts and married Benjamin Gannett in 1785. The family was always in need of money. Paul Revere heard about Deborah's situation. He felt she should get a pension for her war service and, at his urging, the Massachusetts legislature gave Deborah 37 pounds in 1792.

A local writer, Herman Mann, wrote a book about Deborah in 1797. *The Female Review; Or Memoirs of an American Lady* was full of inaccuracies; he even misspelled her last name as Sampson!

Deborah earned some money from "The American Heroine" lecture tour. In 1804, with Paul Revere again supporting her in a letter to Congress, the federal government granted Deborah a pension of \$4 a month. She moved in with her son's family in 1813 and lived there until her death in 1827.

Because the British continued to occupy New York City, American troops remained camped by the Hudson River until June 1783. The last British troops didn't leave until November 1783.

Try This!

Make a time line of Deborah Samson's life.

1. Turn an 8½" x 11" sheet of paper sideways. Draw a 10½" horizontal line in the middle of the paper.
2. Draw a short vertical line at each end of the long line. Write 1760 above the line at the left end and 1830 above the line at the right end.

3. Use short vertical lines to mark off the rest of the line in ¾" sections. Label the lines 1765, 1770, 1775, 1780 and so on.
4. Fill out the time line for Deborah Samson using events in the play and from the Social Studies Content Connection. For each event, add a line in the appropriate place and label it with the year and a short description of the event.

Literacy Extensions

Life Lecture

Plan to give a lecture about your life, as Deborah Samsom did about hers. Make notes about important or interesting events and then arrange the notes in chronological order. Practice giving your lecture to a partner.

Interview

Imagine you have interviewed Deborah Samson. With a partner, write questions you would ask her and answers you think she would give. Then with one of you playing the interviewer and the other playing Deborah, role-play the interview.

Character Education Connection

Unlike Deborah Samson in the 1700s, women today can serve in the military. Interview a woman who is or has been in the army, navy, marines, air force or coast guard. Ask why she decided to join and what she learned during her time in the service.