



BROOKLYN CONNECTIONS

Plan of the Battle of Brooklyn

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR IN BROOKLYN PRIMARY SOURCE PACKET

Student Name

INTRODUCTORY READING "American Revolution." *Gale Encyclopedia of U.S. Economic History*. Ed. Thomas Carson and Mary Bonk. Detroit: Gale, 1999. Student Resources in Context.

Adaptation

The American Revolution was a war between Great Britain and 13 **colonies** it controlled in North America. The colonies wanted to be free from British rule. After the war, they became the United States of America.

The **colonists** thought it was unfair to pay **taxes** to the British government when they had no say in it. They called this "taxation without representation." When Britain raised taxes to help pay for the **French and Indian War**, many colonists got angry. They decided it was time to fight for their freedom.

George Washington was chosen to lead the American army. At first, the army was small and not well-trained. The soldiers were just volunteers. Many only stayed for a short time. There was no strong government to help them, and things were very hard.

Still, the American army had some early wins. In 1775, they fought the British at Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill in Massachusetts. In 1776, the British left Boston after pressure from the Americans. But then, the Americans lost some battles. The British took New York City. Washington and his troops had to run away.

Later that year, Washington surprised the British by crossing the icy Delaware River. He won battles in New Jersey at Trenton and Princeton. These wins gave the soldiers hope.

Even though they had some victories, things were still tough. In the winter of 1777, the army stayed at a place called Valley Forge in Pennsylvania. It was very cold. Many soldiers got sick or died. Some went home and didn't come back. But in the spring, things got better. A man named Baron von Steuben helped train the army. The soldiers became stronger and better prepared.

Another big win came at the Battle of Saratoga. This victory helped convince France to help the Americans. In 1781, American and French soldiers worked together to trap the British at Yorktown, Virginia. The British **general**, Lord Cornwallis, had to surrender.

After this, the colonies had won. They were now free and independent.



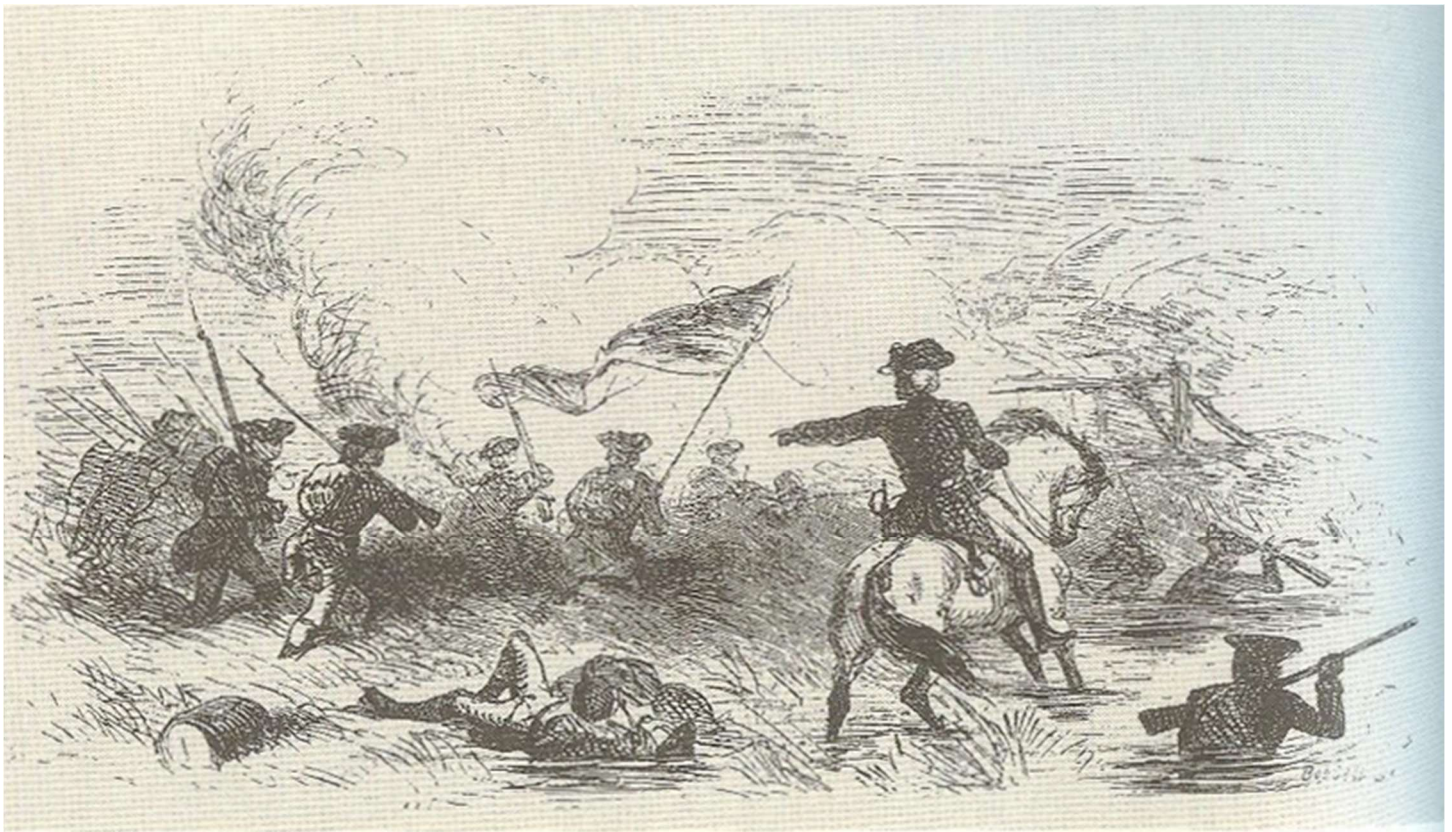
Document 1 - Plan of the Battle of Brooklyn. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. What is the title of this map? What is the subtitle? (Hint: look underneath the title).

2. Find the position of the British Army from August 22nd to 26th and circle it. What is it near? (Hint: use the compass rose to help you! “The British Army was north/south/east/west of...”)

3. Where did the British march on August 26th and 27th? (Hint: “They marched from...to...”)

4. What names on the map are still names of places in Brooklyn? Do you see any that have changed?



Lord Stirling Orders His Men to Retreat Across the Gowanus Swamp. With the tide rising, the soldiers began making their way to safety. While crossing, a number of them were killed by British marksmen while others who could not swim were drowned. Nevertheless, they managed to take 30 British prisoners with them (reprinted from "The Battle of Long Island" by John W. Chadwick, *Harpers Magazine*, August 1876, page 345).

Document 2 - Chadwick, John W. "The Battle of Long Island." *Harpers Magazine* August 1876: 345.

1. Find Lord Stirling in the picture and circle him. How do you know it's him?

2. Where did the retreat shown in this picture take place? Write the name of the place below. Then, go back to the map (Document 1) and circle where you think it is. (Hint: it is not labeled, so use clues on the map to make a good guess.)

3. Once you've found the Gowanus Swamp on the map, name two safe places the American soldiers could have run away to.

4. What year was this image originally published? Why is this date important?

Document 2 - Chadwick, John W. "The Battle of Long Island." *Harpers Magazine* August 1876: 345.



Document 3 - Brainard, George Bradford. *The Old Stone House*. 187-?. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. Make three observations about the Old Stone House in Document 3:

2. Find two differences between the photographs in Document 3:

3. The Old Stone House (shown here) was used as a temporary headquarters for British officers. It was also the scene of a tense battle where American troops from Maryland charged into an overwhelming group of British soldiers and mercenaries. Though most of the American troops died in battle, their sacrifice helped delay the British and let Washington escape to Manhattan. Imagine you're a soldier with the Maryland 400. Describe how you're feeling right before battle:

4. What time of year does it appear to be in the photographs? List three pieces of evidence to support your claim.

Document 3 - Brainard, George Bradford. *The Old Stone House*. 187-?. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

[Washington also wrote to Gen. Schuyler, on the 24th, an account of the skirmish at Flatbush, with some additional particulars.]

* * * On *Wednesday* night and *Thursday* morning a considerable body of the enemy, said to be eight or nine thousand, landed at *Gravesend Bay*, on *Long-Island*. They have approached within three miles of our lines; and yesterday there was some skirmishing between a detachment of them, and a party from our troops. Their detachments were obliged to give ground, and were pursued as far as where they had a post at a Judge *Lefferts's*. His house and outhouses served as quarters for them, and were burned by our people. We sustained no loss in this affair, that I have heard of, except having two men slightly wounded. Our people say the enemy met with more; they found one dead body, in the habit of a soldier, with a good deal of money in his pocket, and got three hangers and a fusee. They fired a shell from a howitz, which fell on and burst in a house where some of the enemy were; but whether they were injured by it, I have not learned. A firing has been heard this morning, but know nothing of the event.

Go. WASHINGTON.

[*Ibid.*, 1142.]

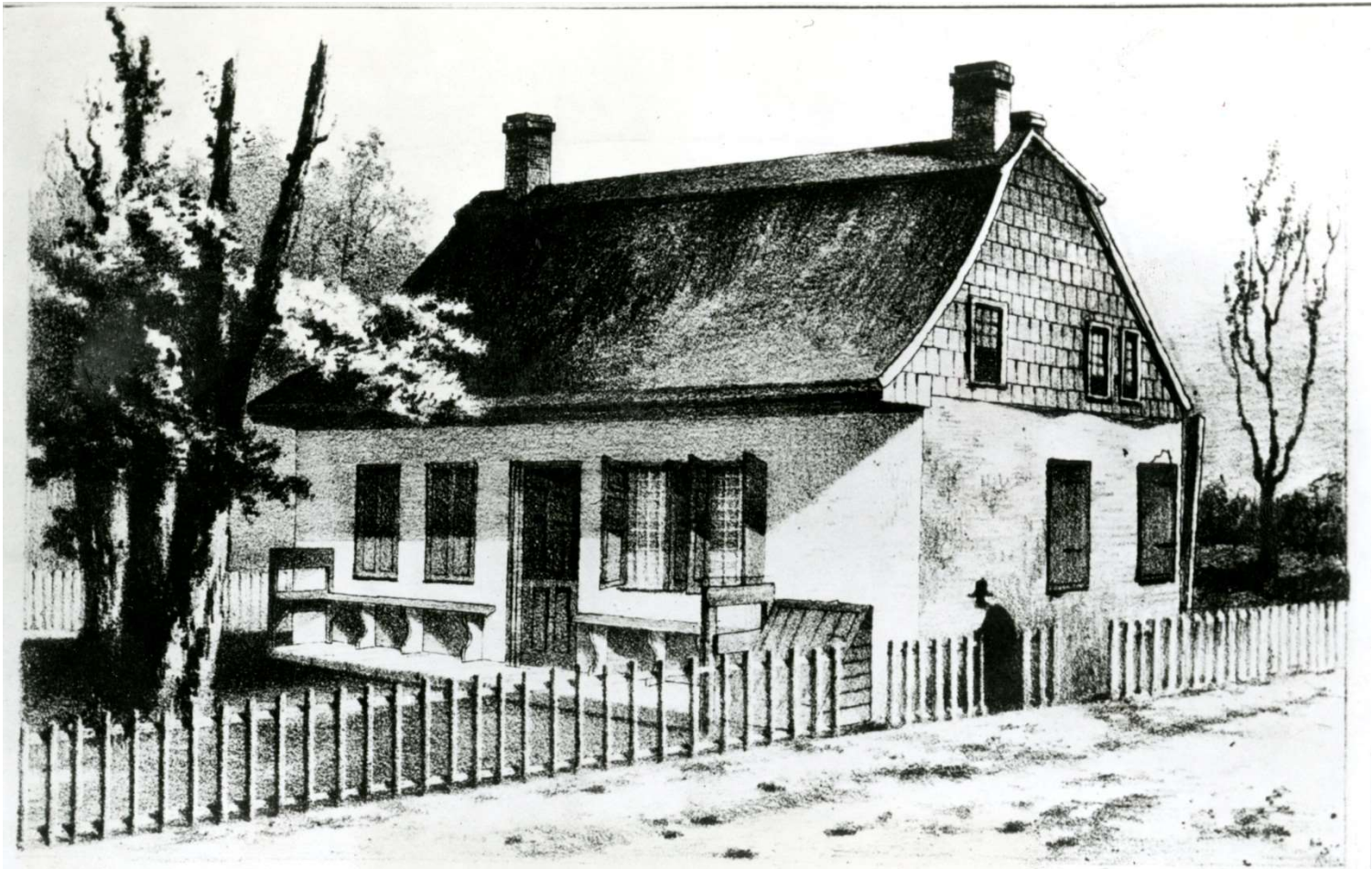
1. What happened on Wednesday night and Thursday morning? Be specific.

2. Washington describes “some skirmishing” between two groups. Who are the two groups?

3. Which group had a post at Judge Lefferts’ house?

4. Describe what happened at Judge Lefferts’ House. Who do you think “won” the fight?

Document 4 - Washington, George. Letter to General Schuyler. 24 Aug. 1776. *Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society*. Vol. II. Brooklyn: Long Island Historical Society, 1869. 363-64.



SUYDAM HOUSE.

of Barry M. Closter's Manual of 1846.

built by Leffert Lefferts on Bushwick Lane about 1700, occupied by a Company of Hessians in the Revolution

Document 5 - "The Suydam House." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1946.

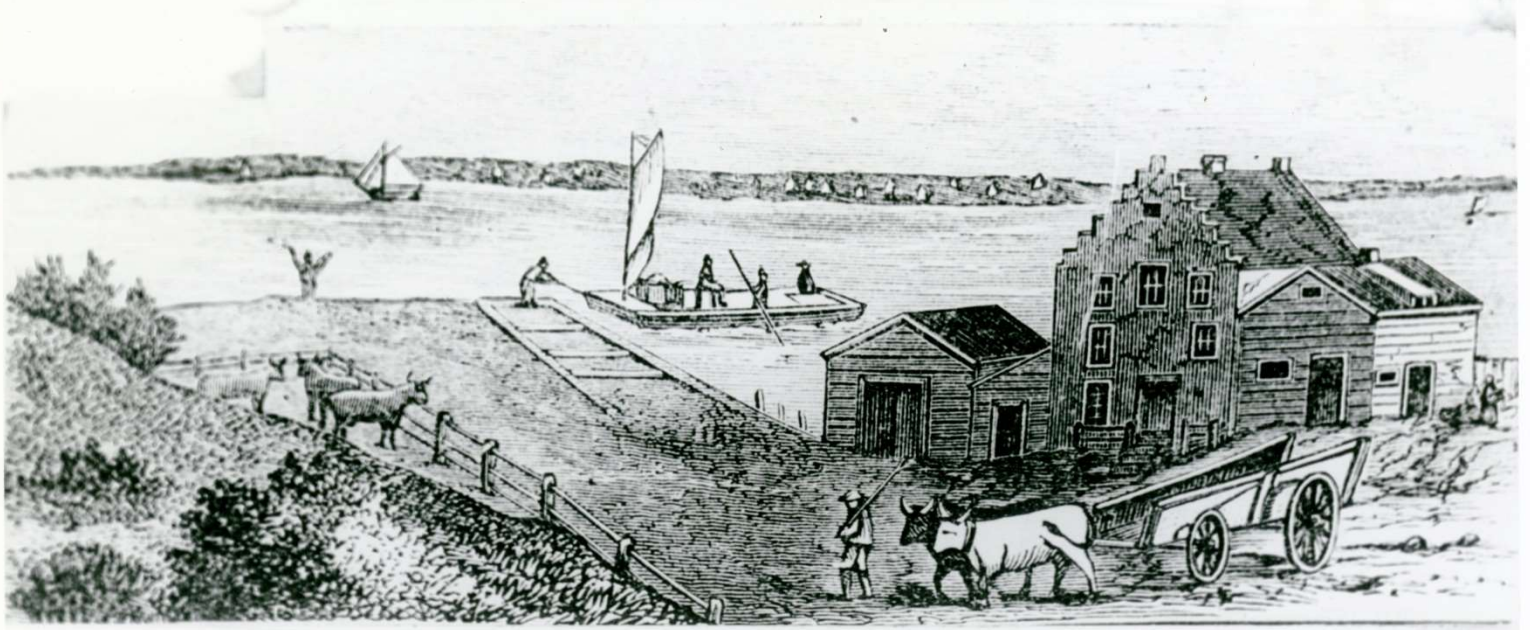
1. Where was The Suydam House located? When was it built?

2. Who occupied the house during the Revolution? Do you think this group was on the side of the British or the Americans? Explain your answer.

3. Make two claims about life during the 1700's based on your observations of this drawing.

4. Analyze the citation for this drawing. Why do you think this house was featured in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in 1946?

Document 5 - "The Suydam House." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1946.



Document 6A - Print of the Fulton Ferry. No Date. The Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.



Document 6B - *Battle of Brooklyn Stamp*. 1951. Smithsonian National Postal Museum, Washington, DC. By Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

1. Observe the scene in Document 6A. Describe what you think life was like for the people in this image.

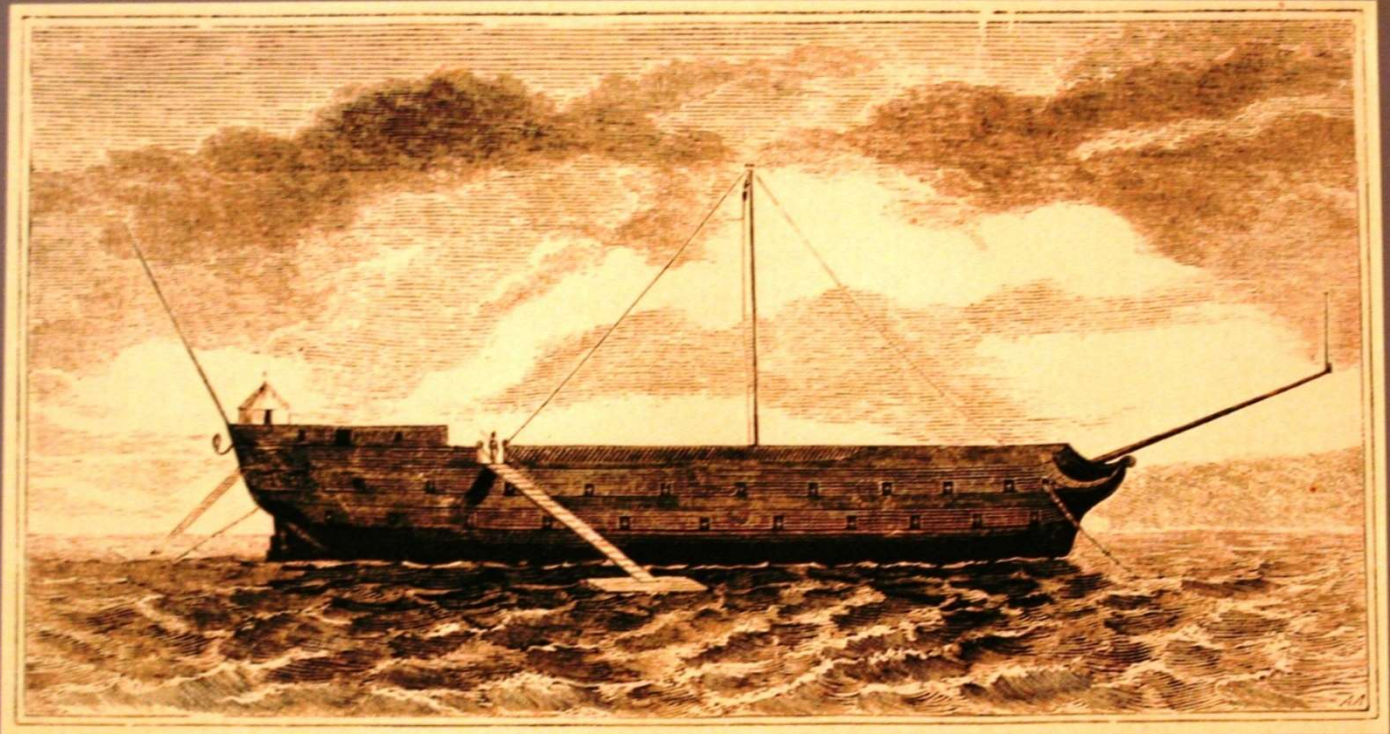
2. Identify two similarities and two differences between Document 6A and Document 6B:

3. The caption in Document 6B reads “Washington saves his army at Brooklyn.” How did he save his army? (HINT: What are the soldiers doing?) Use evidence from the image to support your answer.

4. What kind of document is Document 6B (photograph, drawing, newspaper article, something else)? Why do you think this image is shown this way?

Document 6A - Print of the Fulton Ferry. No Date. The Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.
Document 6B - *Battle of Brooklyn Stamp*. 1951. Smithsonian National Postal Museum, Washington, DC. By Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

“The Hell”



The prison ship Jersey was one of 16 prison ships anchored in Wallabout Bay, now known as NY's East River. By the end of 1776, Americans captured numbered 5,000 and New York, controlled by the British received these prisoners. With inadequate building space, the British ships were converted to prisons. The first ship anchored was the Whitby, to be followed by 15 more. By 1779 the ships Prince of Wales and Good Hope joined. Following destruction by fire, the Prince of Wales was then joined by the Stomboli, the Scorpion and the Hunter. Many older hulks were also converted: the Jersey, the John, the Falmouth, the Chatham, the Kitty, the Frederick, the Glasgow, the Woodlands, the Scheldt and the Clyde. The most notorious was the Jersey, or "Hell" as she was christened by her prisoners. The Jersey, anchored 300 yards from the shore in Wallabout Bay, was an old 64-gun British warship. Her portholes were nailed closed. Four holes, twenty inches square were cut for ventilation, secured by iron cross-bars. The conditions were deplorable. Originally, a 400-man ship, the Jersey was crammed with over

1,000 prisoners at a time. Medical care, proper food, basic sanitary conditions and adequate breathable air were almost nonexistent. British guards would yell out: "Rebels, turn out your dead" as nearly 10 deaths a day occurred. It has been estimated that nearly 11,000 prisoners died on the Jersey alone. After the end of the war in 1783, the remaining prisoners were freed. Only 1400 remained alive when the prisoners were freed in 1783. For years, after the war, bones of the dead prisoners would be exposed, along the shifting tides of the Wallabout Bay. Nothing happened until 1808 when, through Tammany Hall, a vault was built to hold the bones collected by John Jackson, owner of the property that held the graves. The vault was eventually bought by Benjamin Romaine, a survivor of the Sugar House prison and treasure of the fund of 1808. In 1873, the martyrs' bones were removed from their now dilapidated vault and placed in another structure constructed on a hill in Fort Greene. But a monument still was not built.

Document 7 - "The Hell." Courtesy of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

1. What is the Wallabout Bay called today?

2. What was the HMS Jersey's nickname? Who came up with the name?

3. What can we learn from Document 7 about what life was like on the Jersey prison ship?

4. Why do you think the British held their American prisoners on sea rather than on land? List two possible reasons:

Document 7 - "The Hell." Courtesy of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Account of the Massacre by a British officer.

[Extract of a letter from an officer in General Frazier's Battalion.]

Dated September 3d, 1776.

Rejoice, my friend, that we have given the Rebels a d—d crush. We landed on *Long-Island* the 22d ult., without opposition. On the 27th we had a very warm action, in which the *Scots* regiments behaved with the greatest bravery, and carried the day after an obstinate resistance on the Rebel side. But we flanked and overpowered them with numbers. The *Hessians* and our brave *Highlanders* gave no quarters, and it was a fine sight to see with what alacrity they dispatched the Rebels with their bayonets after we had surrounded them so that they could not resist. Multitudes were drowned and suffocated in

morasses — a proper punishment for all Rebels. Our battalion outmarched all the rest, and was always first up with the Rebel fugitives. A fellow they call Lord *Stirling*, one of their Generals, with two others, is prisoner, and a great many of their officers, men, artillery, and stores. It was a glorious achievement, my friend, and will immortalize us and crush the Rebel Colonies. Our loss was nothing. We took care to tell the *Hessians* that the Rebels had resolved to give no quarters to them in particular, which made them fight desperately, and put all to death that fell into their hands. You know all stratagems are lawful in war, especially against such vile enemies to their King and country. The Island is all ours, and we shall soon take *New-York*, for the Rebels dare not look us in the face. I expect the affair will be over this campaign, and we shall all return covered with *American* laurels, and have the cream of *American* lands allotted us for our services.

[Lest any of those persons who affect not to believe anything against the *British* soldiers, and will pretend to say that the above letter, which exactly tallies with their conduct as heretofore represented is an *American* forgery, we would inform them that the *English* paper from whence the above is taken may be seen in the hands of the printers in *Hartford—Mass. Spy.*]

[*American Archives*, vol. I, 5th Series, fol. 1259.]**Document 8** - *Account of the Massacre by a British Officer*. 3 Sep. 1776.*Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society*. Vol. II. Brooklyn: Long Island Historical Society, 1869. 402-03

1. Is the person who wrote Document 8 American or British? How do you know?

2. What event is the officer describing in his letter?

3. Describe the officer's reaction to the situation. How does he seem to feel about the event? Give two examples to support your claim.

4. Imagine a letter written from the point of view of his opponent in the battle. Write three sentences of that letter here:

Document 8 - *Account of the Massacre by a British Officer*. 3 Sep. 1776.
Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society. Vol. II. Brooklyn: Long Island Historical Society, 1869. 402-03



Caption: "The monument, a stately granite shaft ... was constructed in 1908, from plans by architect Stanford White, as a memorial to more than 1,200 Revolutionary patriots who died on board the British prison ships anchored in Wallabout Bay and whose bones are now preserved in a vault at its base."

Document 9 - "Prison Ship Martyr's Monument." *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1936-1949.

MARTYRS.

The Men who Died in the Prison Ships.

A Memorial to Congress Asking for an
Appropriation of Fifty Thousand Dol-
lars to Pay for a Monument on Fort
Greene.

IGNORANT AND THOUGHTLESS DESECRATION, when at length the authorities of Brooklyn, in June, 1873, caused the remains to be removed to a neighboring spot on the beautiful slopes of Fort Greene, appropriated and maintained as a public park and overlooking the waters of the bay, a scene of so much horror and suffering, and where so many lives were offered up on the altar of their country. No monument marks this last resting place. That, it is conceived, is the duty of the nation to erect. The wrongs of these martyrs were the nation's wrongs. These patriots belonged to every State, the North and the sunny South equally contributing their sons to the sacrifice. They died side by side. The story of their devotion to the cause of freedom and of their cruel death has been often told, and though a century has elapsed since they met their fate, it is still familiar to all. It is spread upon the records of the proceedings of your Honorable Body; it has been the theme of historians and orators; it cannot be effaced from memory or gainsayed. The overcrowding of the prison ship by the British, with American prisoners, became the subject of consideration by the Continental Congress, on the 3d of August, 1781, and General Washington was instructed to remonstrate to the proper officers, within the enemy's lines, on their unjustifiable treatment of our men. The Commander in Chief promptly did so, but could affect no change in the proceeding.

1. Make three observations about the monument in Document 9. Why do you think it was designed to look this way?

2. Explain why the American prisoners who died on the prison ships are being remembered as “martyrs” in Document 10.

3. What is the author of Document 10 arguing for in Congress?

4. On what date was this article written? Why is this date important? (Hint: how long is a century?).

Document 9 - “Martyrs: The Men who Died in the Prison Ships.” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. 22 January 1877: 4.
Document 10 - “Prison Ship Martyr’s Monument.” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1936-1949.

GLOSSARY

Colonies: areas ruled by another country

Colonists: people living in the colonies

French and Indian War: a war between Britain and France in North America

General: high-rn

Inference: a guess backed up by fact and knowledge

Martyr: someone who sacrifices everything for a cause or belief

Mercenary: a soldier hired to serve in a foreign army

Pacific: peaceful; calm

Post: a position from which to look out for enemies or seek safety

Retreat: to move back; to withdraw

Skirmish: a fight or battle

Subordination: the act of placing in a lower rank or position

Surrender: to stop fighting and give up

Taxes: money people must pay to the government