

UNIT 4 WORKSHEET

VIEWS OF CAMP FOLLOWERS

Read the following primary source accounts and summarize in your own words.

"Many of the Americans have sickened and died of the dysentery, brought upon them in a great measure through an inattention to cleanliness. When at home, their female relations put them upon washing their hands and faces, and keeping themselves neat and clean; but, being absent from such monitors, through an indolent, heedless turn of mind, they have neglected the means of health, have grown filthy, and poisoned their constitution by nastiness."

- unknown author October 27, 1775

"the multitude of women in particular, especially those who are pregnant, or have children, are a clog upon every movement. The Commander in Chief therefore earnestly recommends it to the officers commanding brigades and corps, to use every reasonable method in their power to get rid of all such as are not absolutely necessary..."

- General Orders, George Washington, August 4, 1777

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"Last thursday, which was a very stormy day, a large number of British Troops came softly thro the Town via Watertown to Prospect hill, on Friday we heard the Hessians were to make a Procession in the same rout; we thot we should have nothing to do with them, but View them as they Passt. To be sure, the sight was truly astonishing, I never had the least Idea that the Creation produced such a sordid set of creatures in human Figure – poor, dirty, emaciated men, great numbers of women, who seemd to be the beasts of burthen , having a bushel basket on their back, by which they were bent double, the contents seemd to be Pots & kettles, various sorts of Furniture, children peeping thro the gridirons & other utensils, Some very young Infants who were born on the road; the women with bare feet, cloathd in dirty raggs such Effluvia filld the air while they were passing, had they not been smoaking all the time, I should have been apprehensive of being contaminated by them."

- Hannah Winthrop letter to Mercy Otis Warren, November 11, 1777

The above primary source (Hannah Winthrop letter to Mercy Otis Warren) was used by Don Troiani in researching the Figure Study: Brunswick Camp Follower. Analyze how Troiani used the primary source below in portraying the *Brunswick Camp Follower*. What similarities do you see between the letter and the figure study?

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"The Cries of the Women—the sufferings of their children—and the complaints of the Husbands would admit of no alternative. The latter with too much justice remarked "If pay is with-held from us, and Provisions from our Wives & Children we must all starve together; or commit Acts which may involve us in ruin"—Our Wives add they "could earn their Rations, but the Soldier—nay the officer—for whom they wash has nought to pay them." In a word I was obliged to give Provisions to the extra women in these Regiments or loose by Desertion—perhaps to the Enemy—some of the oldest and best Soldiers in the Service."

- George Washington letter to Robert Morris, 29 January 1783

"had an opportunity to see the baggage of the army pass. When that of the middle states passed us, it was truly amusing to see the number and habiliments of those attending it; of all specimens of human beings, this group capped the whole. A caravan of wild beasts could bear no comparison with it. There was "Tag Rag and Bobtail"; "some in rags and some in jags," but none "in velvet gowns. Some with two eyes, some with one, and some, I believe, with none at all ... their dialect, too, was as confused as their bodily appearance was odd and disgusting. There was the Irish and Scotch brogue, murdered English, flat insipid Dutch and some lingoies which would puzzle a philosopher ... I was glad to see the tail end of the train ..."

- Joseph Plumb Martin, Private Yankee Doodle: A Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dangers and Sufferings of a Revolutionary Soldier, 1962

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"We were two days in crossing the Green Mountains ... the roads ... were almost impassable, and to add to the difficulty when we had got half over, there came on a heavy fall of snow ... in the midst of the heavy snow-storm, upon a baggage cart, and nothing to shelter her from the inclemency of the weather but a bit of an old oil-cloth, a [British] soldier's wife was delivered of a child, she and the infant are both well ... It may be said, that women who follow a camp are of such a masculine nature, they are able to bear all hardships; this woman was quite the reverse, being small, and of a very delicate constitution."

- Thomas Anburey, *Travels Through the Interior Parts of America*, 1789

"A woman whose husband belonged to the Artillery, and who was attached to a piece in the engagement, attended with her husband at the piece the whole time; while in the act of reaching a cartridge and having one of her feet as far before the other as she could step, a cannon shot from the enemy passed directly between her legs without doing any other damage than carrying away all the lower part of her petticoat."

- Joseph Plumb Martin, *Private Yankee Doodle: A Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dangers and Sufferings of a Revolutionary Soldier*, 1962