



EagleVision
Productions, Inc.

Webisode '9

Winter Encampment/ Forage Wars

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Authored by Joseph "Joe" Refinski

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EAGLEVISION PRODUCTIONS, INC. PRESENTS TEACHER'S GUIDES FOR TEN EDUCATIONAL WEBISODES

INTRODUCTION TO TEN EDUCATIONAL WEBISODES

Welcome to the formative years of the American Revolution 1775 – 1777. Based on the documentary ***Road to Liberty Through Their Eyes***, the producers have developed Ten (10) Educational Webisodes with a Teacher's Guide for teachers to use in their History and Social Studies lesson plans designed to be **rigorous, adaptable, and fun!** Each of the webisodes has its own specific activities tied to the theme of the five to eight-minute webisodes and cover a variety of topics, including how the American Revolution impacted the lives of Colonists, enslaved and free Blacks, and Indigenous Peoples.

CURRICULUM WRITER: JOSEPH "JOE" REFINSKI

Now retired, Joe served as a history teacher for 48 years. During his tenure, Joe won numerous teaching awards, recognitions and Fellowships, as well as several Teacher of the Year Awards, including the 2023 Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and he was named the 2025 NJ Council for the Social Studies Lifetime Educator Award for contributions to the study of history, civics and professional development. Joe has participated in several Teaching American History Grants. He is a Case Method Instructor (Harvard Business School) and is listed in the *Who's Who In Education*.

WEBISODE TITLES

Webisode 1 – Integrated Continental Army

Webisode 2 – Fortifications + Addendum

Webisode 3 – Divided Country + Addendum

Webisode 4 – Militias vs Standing Army

Webisode 5 – Camp Followers

Webisode 6 – Impact of War

Webisode 7 – Spies and Informants

Webisode 8 – Washington Crossing Logistics + Addendum

Webisode 9 – Winter Encampment/Forage Wars

Webisode 10 – Living History/Reenactments + Addendum

EAGLEVISION PRODUCTIONS, INC. PRESENTS
WEBISODE 9 – WINTER ENCAMPMENT/FORAGE WARS TEACHER’S GUIDE

NATIONAL HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

Webisode 9 fulfills several National History Standards and Social Studies Themes including: NCSS Themes 2: Time, Continuity, and Change; 3: People, Places, and Environments; and 7: Production, Distribution, and Consumption; United States History Content Standards for Grades 5 -12 –Era 3 – Standard 2: The impact of the American Revolution on politics, economy, and society; and The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies-Grades 6-8, 9-10, and 11-12.

WEBISODE 9 SUMMARY: WINTER ENCAMPMENT/FORAGE WARS

Following the victories at the two Battles of Trenton and the Battle of Princeton, General George Washington headed to Morristown in early January 1777 to establish his winter headquarters. Along the route to Morristown, he housed some of his troops in Middlebrook and Quibbletown to protect the land and people’s property from British raids. The extended time spent at his winter headquarters in Morristown was used by Washington to recruit his 3rd Establishment Continental Army. Congress gave him full control of the army, and Washington got rid of short enlistments, requiring soldiers to enlist for at least 3 years. He also lifted the ban on free blacks. His wife, Martha, and other officers’ wives came to stay and organized social events like dinner parties and dances. This was not the case for the common soldier. Soldiers and camp followers were required to build and maintain the winter encampment, guard the camp perimeter, drill several hours a day, forage for food and supplies, repair essential equipment and resupply provisions for the next campaign; while the women washed and mended clothing and cared for the sick to earn their rations. Another duty was to patrol the area to prevent the British from raiding people’s property. Known as the Forage Wars, these skirmishes throughout the winter and spring of 1777 caused significant British casualties that forced General William Howe to evacuate all the British garrisons and ship them out of the Jerseys, which he will never control again.

HOW TO USE EACH WEBISODE AND TEACHER’S GUIDE

Webisode 9 would be useful for middle school and high school students (K6-12) studying United States History, Military History, European History, and Colonial History. Teachers may want to use all or some of the webisodes in the series over several days of history and/or social study classes to introduce their students to a variety of topics experienced during the formative years of the American Revolution. Each webisode has an individual Teacher’s Guide that provides a lesson plan with suggested classroom activities and/or applicable homework assignments. Alternatively, teachers may choose an individual webisode from this series as an overview to highlight a particular topic that occurred in the Revolutionary era for one lesson plan as outlined in that webisode’s Teacher’s Guide.

LESSON PLAN FOR WEBISODE 9 – WINTER ENCAMPMENT/FORAGE WARS (Total Lesson Plan Time – combine Webisode with #1 + #2 = 58:09.)

(5 minutes) Screen Webisode Students are introduced to the topic by posing the following questions to the class and asking them to take notes that address these questions as they watch Webisode 9 – *Winter Encampment/Forage Wars* (**Running Time: 5:09**):

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS TO COMPREHEND

- Washington set up winter headquarters in Morristown, NJ in early 1777 following the Battle of Princeton and deployed militias in the Watchung Mountains to protect the local populous. How did this impact British control over East and West Jersey?
- Usually, the purpose of setting up winter quarters was to train new recruits and replenish supplies ready for the spring offensive. What are the required duties of the enlisted soldier to build and maintain the encampment over the winter?
- In early 1777, how did the continued conflict, known as the “Forage Wars,” force civilians throughout the Jerseys to choose sides?
- Washington used the Watchung Mountains as a defense against British advances. How did this terrain help state militias protect civilians from British incursions?
- What was the outcome of the “Forage Wars” and spring offensive in 1777?

SUGGESTED STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. (10 minutes) Discussion Following the screening of the webisode, students are engaged to address the essential questions about what happened in early 1777 when British General William Howe and General George Washington set up winter quarters in East and West Jersey, respectively, which escalated into the “Forage Wars.” Foraging for food and supplies by both British/Loyalist forces and American/State Militia forces was essentially seizing, buying, or stealing food, fodder, and livestock from local farmers and residents that devastated the NJ economy, forced citizens to choose sides, and led to the “neutral” zone between East and West Jersey being thoroughly pillaged. Students are asked to define terms such as foraging, skirmishes, pillaging, paper Loyalist, etc.

2. a) (25 minutes) Audio Script for Town Crier Students are asked to divide into three groups and each group creates a 2-minute “news report” for the Town Crier, who travels to towns and communities in Patriot-held West Jersey to inform the citizens of the latest news relating to the war that’s taking place on their doorsteps. Today, the Town Crier has arrived in Chatham Township to declare news of the skirmish led by General Philemon Dickinson that resulted in a Patriot victory yesterday against a British foraging party at Van Nest’s Mills and Somerset Court House (AKA Millstone). The Town Crier enthusiastically concludes his news by letting the residents know that this is how Washington’s army and the state militias will protect their homes and farms from being plundered by the British.

Contextual Notes for Writing the 2-minute Script Students are instructed on what the 5Ws and H – Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How – are and how to use them when writing a news report. The teacher distributes a chart with timeframes for each part of the news story to use as a guide. This chart is designed to help students break down the essential "5 Ws and H" of journalism while maintaining the historical perspective of the specific skirmish the Town Crier is reporting on (see below).

Date: January 20, 1777 Skirmish between the Patriots and British forces at Van Nest's Mills and Somerset Court House (AKA Millstone), near the British Garrison in Brunswick.

Source: Town Crier who travels around to towns and communities arrives in Chatham Township to impart news of the battle that took place yesterday at Van Nest's Mills and Somerset Court House (AKA Millstone) to the residents of Chatham Township.

Length of "News" Report: Approximately two (2) minutes.

Town Crier's Script With Suggested Times For Each Part Of The News Story.

(0:00 – 0:10) Town Crier rings his bell and cries out, "Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!" to attract the citizens of Chatham Township to gather outside Day's Tavern and listen to the latest news from the war front. Note: The Town Crier is a storyteller and may embellish the facts to make it more interesting and exciting for his audience.

(0:10 – 0:25) The Headline (**What**). Town Crier opens up his scroll and reads: Students in each group work together to write a 15-second catchy summary that the Town Crier will impart to the crowd, which has gathered around to hear the latest news.

(0:25 – 0:45) The Lead (**Who/When/Where**). Students write a 20-second exciting lead that captures the audience's attention about **When** exactly did the battle occur in 1777? **Where** did it take place? **Who** was involved? (Not necessarily in that order.)

(0:45 – 1:05) The Action (**What/How**). Students continue to build on the story by writing 20-seconds of the action that ensued and the bravery of the Patriot soldiers based on using the Online Resources for their research. (Note: Could use a contemporary quote here.)

(1:05 – 1:20) The Context (**Why**). Using the Online Resources to research why this skirmish erupted, the students write 15-seconds of copy to explain the context about what both sides were trying to achieve in early 1777 when they would normally be in winter camps preparing for the next campaign in the spring.

(1:20 – 1:50) Primary Source Quote. Using the Online Resources, the students have a wealth of contemporary quotes to choose from that include soldiers on both sides of the conflict, generals, including Washington, and other officers. Make sure the Town Crier names the person he's quoting. (Note: You don't have to bunch the quotes together if it makes sense to weave them throughout the story.)

(1:50 – 2:00) Conclusion. The students should finish the script for the Town Crier by writing a 10-second impactful and enthusiastic conclusion to his story that shows how biased he is toward the brave Patriot soldiers fighting to protect their freedom.

b) (13 minutes) Town Crier Reading and Homework Assignment Each group picks a member to be their Town Crier, and the teacher invites the groups to gather around as the Chatham Township residents. For authenticity, the teacher may be able to provide a school hand bell for the Town Criers to use. Each Town Crier loudly proclaims the news. Following the reading of the news reports, the teacher points out how each group’s news reports differed slightly based on the students’ perspectives of the event. For their homework assignment and the teacher’s assessment, students are asked to write a two-page essay on what caused the “Forage Wars” to erupt in January 1777, how this impacted the military personnel on both sides of the conflict, as well as the East and West Jersey citizens who were caught in the crossfire. Aside from skirmishes with the British, describe life in a winter encampment for enlisted soldiers. Conclude the essay on the outcome of the “Forage Wars” and spring offensive that ended in mid-June 1777, listing at least three specific research facts you used in the essay and/or in your group’s news report.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM STANDARDS LINKS

[National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: Introduction | Social Studies](#)

[United States History Content Standards | Public History Initiative](#)

[English Language Arts Standards | Common Core State Standards Initiative](#) Click on History/Social Studies for the drop down menu. Then click on the Grade levels.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR *WINTER ENCAMPMENT/FORAGE WARS*

[The New Jersey Campaign, 1776-1777](#) *Center of Military History. The New Jersey Campaign, 1776–1777* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2025). This CMH publication (CMH Pub 71-45) details troop strengths, logistics, and maps relating to the Forage Wars from p.70, Forage Wars map p. 72.

[Forage War | American Revolutionary War](#) Lists several foraging skirmishes and quotes by Washington to use “aggressive Tactics, and Hessian Captain Johann Ewald’s perspective.

[The Battle of Millstone / Van Nest's Mills](#) Describes the battle and cites contemporary quotes from the Patriot soldiers, General Philamon Dickinson, and George Washington.

[Diary of the American War: A Hessian Journal by Captain Johann Ewald : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#) pp. 50 – 70 covers his time in the Forage Wars and the skirmishes he was involved in.

<https://revolutionarywar.us/year-1777/battle-millstone-van-nests-mills/> Description of the January 20, 1777 Battle of Millstone when NJ and PA militias led by Brigadier General Philemon Dickinson confronted a British foraging party. Good contemporary quotes.

[The Battle of Millstone - Journal of the American Revolution](#) See footnotes for quotes.

[Memoirs of my own times : Wilkinson, James, 1757-1825 : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#) p. 149 – 158 His time in the Jersey's during the "Forage Wars."

[George Washington to John Hancock, 17 January 1777](#) Founder Online.

[The Writings of George Washington, vol. V \(1776-1777\) | Online Library of Liberty](#) Letter to John Hancock, President of Congress, 22 January, 1777 describing the Millstone victory.

[A Connecticut Soldier Under Washington: Elisha Bostwick's Memoirs of the First Years of the Revolution | JSTOR](#) p.105 Participated in Quibbletown skirmishes – Forage Wars 1777.

[Winter at Morristown | Finding the Maryland 400](#) Excerpts from Joseph Nourse's journal.

[The Forage war and the Battle for New Jersey | Finding the Maryland 400](#)

[Proof of Service - Museum of the American Revolution](#) Lieutenant Samuel Gerock's 1776-77 wartime papers. Check out the related resources at the bottom of the page.

[Forage War - Wikipedia](#)

[Forage Wars - Crossroads of the American Revolution](#) British Colonel Allan MacLean quote.

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR WINTER ENCAMPMENT/FORAGE WARS

The Forage War, 1777: How the British Lost New Jersey edited by Linda Barth, Kathryn Ormosi, and Margaret Sullivan (The Heritage Trail Association, 2025).

Fischer, David Hackett ***Washington's Crossing*** (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). Pulitzer Prize-winning study detailing the logistics of the crossing, local geography, weather conditions, the tactical brilliance behind the operations, and impact of the Forage Wars.

Stempel, Jim ***The Enemy Harassed: Washington's New Jersey Campaign of 1777*** (Knox Press, 2023).

Lefkowitz, Arthur S. ***George Washington's Revenge: The 1777 New Jersey Campaign and How General Washington Turned Defeat into the Strategy That Won the Revolution*** (Stackpole Books, 2022).