

Text Features: Deborah Sampson



In non-fiction writing, you will often find different text features. Subheadings are used to divide long passages into smaller pieces. Subheadings are usually bold. Footnotes give extra information about something within a passage. A small number or mark will show that there is a footnote at the bottom of the page.

Read the biography of Deborah Sampson and highlight or circle the subheadings and footnotes.

Early Life

Deborah Sampson was born on December 17th, 1760 in Plympton, Massachusetts. She was one of seven children, and was part of a family that had sailed to Plymouth in the Mayflower. At the age of ten, she was sent away to work on a farm. On the farm, she did a lot of hard work all day.

Deborah in Disguise

In Deborah Sampson's time, only men were allowed to be soldiers. When the United States went to war with Britain, Deborah wanted to help her country. She disguised herself as a man and joined the army. She fought alongside men for months and no one knew her secret, until she was hurt and had to see a doctor. The doctor found out her true identity, but he kept her secret. Shortly after, she received an honorable discharge¹ and was sent home.

The Fight's Not Over

After being sent home, she did not receive her pay. Male soldiers were paid a pension², but she was not paid at all. She wrote a complaint that was heard by the Senate. Founding fathers like Paul Revere and John Hancock supported her, and helped convince their colleagues that she deserved to be paid the same amount as her fellow soldiers. She won, and was given the money she was owed.

A Lasting Legacy

Deborah's actions changed peoples' minds about what women can do both on and off the battlefield. Now, both men and women serve side-by-side in the armed forces.

1: When a good soldier is allowed to leave service, it is called an honorable discharge.

2: A payment that is given every month.