

The American Revolution in the Hudson Valley
Lesson Plan

- Topic: **Sybil Ludington's Ride** - a poem
- Time Frame 30-40 minutes
- Grade Level: 4th Grade
- State Standard(s): **Social Studies**
1. Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live – local, national, and global – including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth's Surface.
2. Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.
- Language Arts**
Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information understanding.
Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis evaluation.
- Content Area: History/Language Arts
- Strategy/Strategies: Inquiry/Cooperative Groups
- Material(s): Braley, Berton, *Sybil Ludington's Ride* (a poem)
(included below)
*Greenbie, Marjorie Barstow, *The Ride of Sybil Ludington* (a poem)
(included below)
Teacher Note: Both poems are modeled after "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.
(included below)
- Teacher Resources: **BOOKS**
Amstel, Marsha, *Sybil Ludington's Midnight Ride*, Minneapolis, Carolrhoda Books, Inc. 2000
(a transitional chapter book)
Dacquino, V.T., *Sybil Ludington, A Call To Arms* (a non-fiction chapter book containing poems, primary documents, and a history of Sybil and her family)

Homnick, Judy, *Ride For Freedom*, New York, Silver Moon Press. 2001 (a chapter book)

Jones, Mary Elizabeth, *The Midnight Ride of Sybil Ludington* (A chapter book)

Winnick, Karen, *Sybil's Night Ride*, Honesdale, PA. Boyds Mills Press. 2000 (a picture book)

URLS's

Mahopac Library Local History Page

- http://www.mahopaclibrary.org/localhistory/sybil_ludington.htm

Danbury Historical Society

- <http://www.danburyhistorical.org/amrev/sybiludington.htm>

4th Grade Site on the American Revolution

- <http://itc.gsu.edu/sisterlibrary/cree/classwebpage.html>

- Objective(s):
- 1) Students will gain an appreciation of the role a teen from the Hudson Valley played in the American Revolution.
 - 2) Students will glean information about Sybil Ludington from the poetic form.

Procedure:

- Opening:
- 1) Make predictions about who Sybil Ludington was, and what she did during the American Revolution.
 - 2) Read the poem *The Ride of Sybil Ludington*, by Marjorie Barstow Breenbie, as a read aloud.

- Body:
- 1) Reread *The Ride of Sybil Ludington* in small groups for content.

Suggested prompts to glean content:

- 1) How old was Sybil Ludington?
- 2) Why was Danbury important?
- 3) Why was it important that Sybil make the ride?
- 4) What were some of the dangers that Sybil faced on the ride?
- 5) What qualities would Sybil have needed to make her a good choice for the ride?
- 6) How would you feel if you had to make this same ride?
- 7) How long was the ride? Can you tell how far she rode? And where did she go? Make a sketch.

- Closure:
- 2) Groups can share their findings in a variety of ways.
 - 1) Independently, students list four ideas concerning Sybil Ludington in their notebooks to be compared with later findings from additional information provided about Sybil from the links provided or the books listed on this page. One of these ideas might concern a personal response to Sybil.
 - 2). Using the map provided, compare the actual route of Sybil's \

ride to the sketch that children made previously, (see prompt #7).
How might you explain the differences?
([included below](#))

Possible Follow-Up Activities:

1. View the map of Sybil's ride and calculate the distance using the map's legend. Compare this distance to the distance given in the poem.

([included below](#))

2. Using a Venn Diagram or a Compare/Contrast Matrix, compare the two poems, *The Ride of Sybil Ludington* by Marjorie Barstow Greenbie to *Sybil Ludington's Ride* by Berton Braley

([click here for *The Ride of Sybil Ludington*](#))

([click here for *Sybil Ludington's Ride*](#))

Possible Comparisons:

1. Dangers on the ride
2. Sybil's qualities
3. The route

The Ride of Sibyl Ludington

By Marjorie Barstow Greenbie

Come and listen, good people, and you shall hear,
Of a girl who rode, like Paul Revere,
Long the borders of Connecticut and New York,
Where the Yankees stored rations of flour and pork.

We were ready to fight the redcoats to the ground,
If they came from their ships stranded out on the sound,
They, in vain, thought to keep us from being free,
And to keep us in bondage from George 'cross the sea.

Colonel Ludington summoned his men and did say,
"Your winter service is over, not to need you I pray,
For we have new recruits who are willing and strong,
To keep the Hudson highlands you've guarded so long."

"So take up your plough and lay by your guns,
Return to your homes, to your wives and your sons,
Give thanks to the lord for this moment to seize,
To plant all your crops and to take your ease.

In Danbury now there is food, there is rum,
We've plenty to eat if the redcoats come,
There is flour, molasses and bacon in store,
To keep us as we fight them to Hell's own front door.

General Wooster at Ridgefield can stop them cold,
Give them nothing at all to have or to hold,
But at last, long sleep in the Connecticut ground,
If those redcoats should land from their ships on the sound.

Sibyl Ludington stood by her father's side,
Sixteen and lovely, the Colonel's own pride,
The eldest of twelve, she had to cook and sew, too,
And at home with her family had plenty to do.

But she often found time with the soldiers to spend,

To their joys and their sorrows a willing ear she did lend,
As they now were sent back to the homes whence they came,
She spoke to them all and called them by name.

Now Sibyl was everywhere cheering the men,
With news of their homes, their families and friends,
She gladdened their hearts with hot coffee and bread,
For the long journey home that she knew lay ahead.

That night in her room o'er a well-filled board,
She and her family gave thanks to the Lord,
For the family was safe, no Redcoats in sight,
And many fathers and sons were home safe that night.

When the rest of her family had gone to bed,
Sybil at last could rest her tired head,
She lay 'neath the quilt, with her sister, at rest,
And peacefully dozed in the family nest.

She woke with a start at a crashing noise,
At the door below she heard her father's voice,
"The Redcoats in Danbury? Did I hear you right?"
Then she heard a man saying, "They surprised us tonight."

"The people are fleeing! The Town is aflame!
I spread the alarm along the road as I came,"
Then the Colonel was saying, "Go muster the men,
We must get them together, our country to defend."

Now Sibyl was standing by her father's side,
She saw that the man was too weary to ride,
"Let me go," she said, "to call the men out,
If I get there in time, the Redcoats we'll rout."

Her father objected to this long, hard ride,
Through country where British deserters might hide.
He knew of the danger and his manner was grave,
When at last his permission to Sibyl he gave.

While she dressed and made ready, he saddled her steed,

He kissed her goodbye and bade her God-speed,
He gave her a stick to knock on their doors,
She could sound the alarm without leaving her horse.

A murky, spring mist cloaked every star,
And red, to the eastward, dim and far,
The fires of Danbury gloomed in her sight,
As Sibyl rode into the soft April night.

But the air was sweet with fresh April smells,
And the voices of peepers like tiny, gold bells,
Made vibrant the night as she skirted the pond,
And searched for the path she knew lay beyond.

She got tangled awhile in briar and bush,
And bogged in a swamp where the grasses grew lush,
But she would save all the people from suffering harm,
So onward she struggled to spread the alarm.

Out of the forest, over hill and through vale,
She raced to Mahopac by way of Carmel,
Then around to Farmer's Mills and back she flew,
Through Stormville to her home...her brave journey was
through.

Now Yankees were men not easily ruled,
By hearsay or panic they'd not be fooled,
So some of them acted a little too slow,
To pull on their boots and get ready to go.

"I've been roused to often for nothing," one said,
"Why should I leave a good, warm bed?"
"Who is it now that's raising a storm?"
"It's the Colonel's daughter Sibyl...she's sounding the alarm."

Forty miles through briars and swamps she has gone,
"So get up and get out...we march at dawn,"
They pulled on their clothes and they got on their gear,
Then joining their neighbors, gave Sibyl a cheer.

But she was too tired when she got back home,
To realize the worth of the deed she had done,
Four hundred men stood ready to fight,
Where Danbury lay charred in the dawn's early light.

General Tryon woke in the bed of a Tory,
Mission accomplished, but without any glory,
'Midst the chaos and ruin of that fateful night,
His men all lay drunk; not ten fit to fight.

They had found the food for which they had come,
Bacon, molasses, flour and rum,
The molasses ran sticky in every gutter,
They swizzled the rum; burned the bacon and butter.

That's how it was, you all know the rest,
Ludington's men were now at their best.
They fell on the Redcoats. The Redcoats retreated,
Their pride in the dust and their plans defeated.

The Yankees harried their rear and then,
Ludington proudly marched forth his men,
To join General Wooster and without pity or plea,
They pushed all the Redcoats back to the sea.

In that year of seventeen seventy-seven,
The people rejoiced and they all thanked heaven,
That the land lay secure in the soft summer light,
And that Sibyl Ludington had ridden that night.

Sybil Ludington's Ride

By Berton Braley

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of a lovely feminine Paul Revere
Who rode an equally famous ride
Through a different part of the countryside,
Where Sybil Ludington's name recalls
A ride as daring as that of Paul's.

In April, Seventeen Seventy-Seven,
A smoky glow in the eastern heaven
(A fiery herald of war and slaughter)
Came to the eyes of the Colonel's daughter.
"Danbury's burning," she cried aloud.
The Colonel answered, "'T is but a cloud,
A cloud reflecting the campfires' red,
So hush you, Sybil, and go to bed."

"I hear the sound of the cannon drumming"
"'T is only the wind in the treetops humming!
So go to bed, as a young lass ought,
And give the matter no further thought."
Young Sybil sighed as she turned to go,
"Still, Danbury's burning--that I know."

Sound of a horseman riding hard
Clatter of hoofs in the manoryard
Feet on the steps and a knock resounding
As a fist struck wood with a mighty pounding.
The doors flung open, a voice is heard,
"Danbury's burning--I rode with word;
Fully half of the town is gone
And the British--the British are coming on.
Send a messenger, get our men!"
His message finished the horseman then
Staggered wearily to a chair
And fell exhausted in slumber there.

The Colonel muttered, "And who, my friend,
Is the messenger I can send?
Your strength is spent and you cannot ride
And, then, you know not the countryside;
I cannot go for my duty's clear;
When my men come in they must find me here;
There's devil a man on the place tonight
To warn my troopers to come--and fight.
Then, who is my messenger to be?"
Said Sybil Ludington, "You have me."

"You!" said the Colonel, and grimly smiled,
"You!" My daughter, you're just a child!"
"Child!" cried Sybil. "Why I'm sixteen!
My mind's alert and my senses keen,
I know where the trails and the roadways are
And I can gallop as fast and as far
As any masculine rider can.
You want a messenger? I'm your man!"

The Colonel's heart was aglow with pride.
": Spoke like a soldier. Ride, girl, ride
Ride like the devil; ride like sin;
Summon my slumbering troopers in.
I know when duty is to be done
That I can depend on a Ludington!"

So over the trails to the towns and farms
Sybil delivered the call to arms.
Riding swiftly without a stop
Except to rap with a riding crop
On the soldiers' doors, with a sharp tattoo
And a high-pitched feminine halloo.
"Up! up there, soldier. You're needed, come!
The British are marching!" and the drum
Of her horse's feet as she rode apace
To bring more men to the meeting place.

Sybil grew weary and faint and drowsing,
Here limbs were aching, but still she rode
Until she finished her task of rousing
Each sleeping soldier from his abode,
Showing her father, by work well done,
That he could depend on a Ludington.

Dawn in the skies with its tints of pearl
And the lass who rode in a soldier's stead
Turned home, only a tired girl
Thinking of breakfast and then of bed
With never a dream that her ride would be
A glorious legend of history;
Nor that posterity's hand would mark
Each trail she rode through the inky dark,
Each path to figure in song and story
As a splendid, glamorous path of glory--
To prove, as long as the ages run,
That "you can depend on a Ludington."

Such is the legend of Sybil's ride
To summon the men from the countryside
A true tale, making her title clear
As a lovely feminine Paul Revere!

The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere
A poem by
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Listen my children and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,--
One if by land, and two if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said "Good-night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend through alley and street
Wanders and watches, with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry chamber overhead,

And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,--
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,

To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,--
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now he gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,

But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns.

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark

Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.
He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, black and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadow brown.

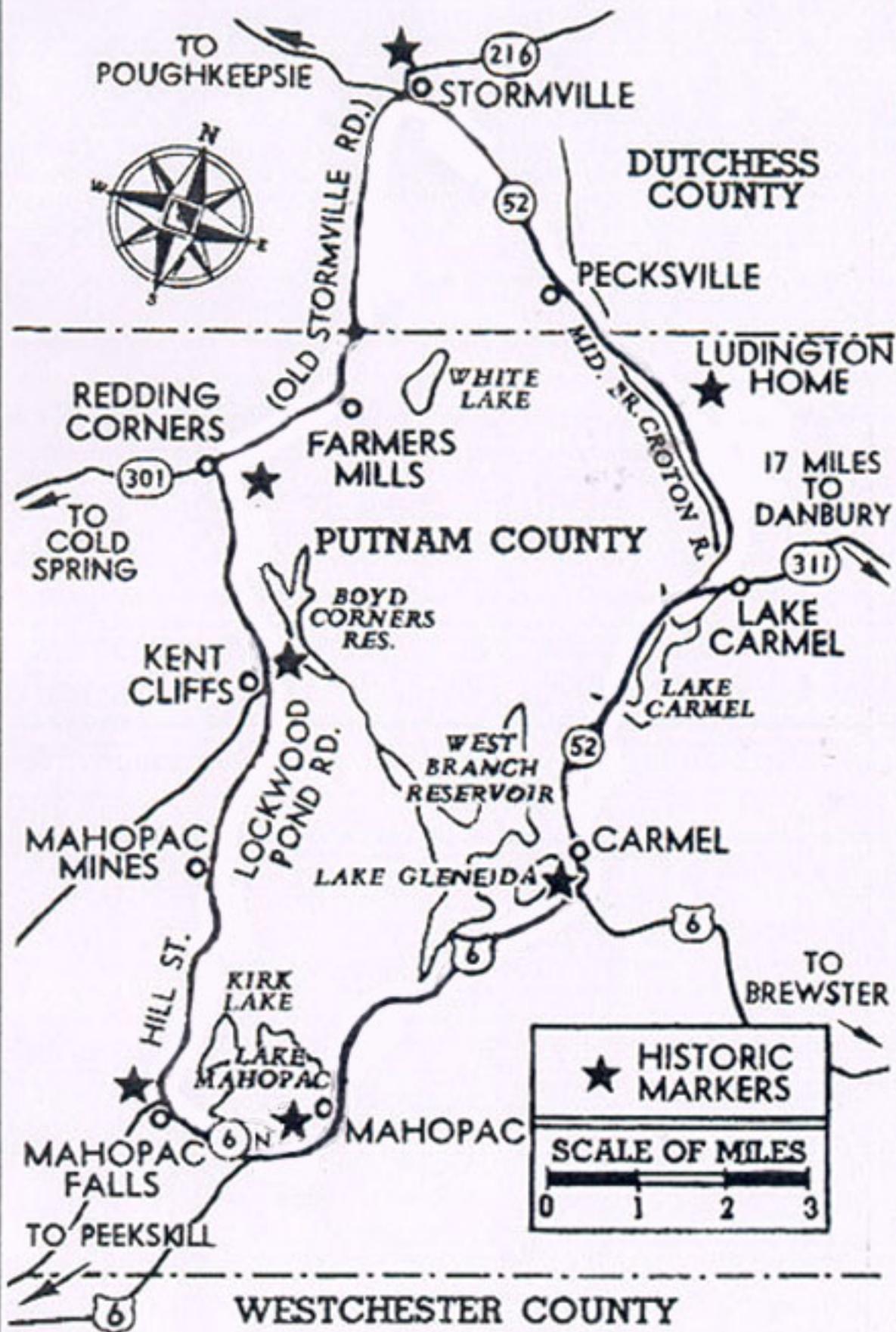
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read
How the British Regulars fired and fled,---

How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farmyard wall,
Chasing the redcoats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,---
A cry of defiance, and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo for evermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.





Map B. Route of Sybil Ludington's Ride

This was the circuitous route of Sybil Ludington's ride to arouse militiamen in Putnam County, N.Y., to march to burning Danbury.