

## **New York City and the American Revolution**

### **A) The Story of Nathan Hale (1755 - 1776)**

1. I was born June 6, 1755, in Coventry, Connecticut, to a family with 12 children! I was good at athletics and scholarship. I entered Yale at 14 with the intent of being a schoolteacher. I graduated in 1773 and taught school for two years. On July 6, 1775, I was commissioned a lieutenant in the Seventh Connecticut militia and later joined the Continental Army in the Nineteenth Continental Regiment. I was stationed in Boston.

2. I became a captain and came to New York City with my regiment on April 30, 1776. I was selected by Lt. Col. Thomas Knowlton to lead a company of the famous Knowlton Rangers. Later that summer General Washington asked Lt. Col. Knowlton for a volunteer from his rangers to spy on the British troops on Long Island. Many tried to talk me out of it, but I knew I had to do this for our cause, for our country. Sometimes you have to take a stand, even at personal risk, if you know the cause is just and true. American Independence was such a cause, and I couldn't turn my back on it.

3. Armed with my Yale degree and under cover as a Dutch schoolmaster, I went behind British lines and proceeded to collect information. Other than my cover, I wasn't well trained in the art of spying. I was captured by the British and hanged on September 22, 1776. Before I died I asked for a Bible, but my request was refused. I was marched out by a guard and hanged upon an apple-tree in Rutgers's orchard. The place was near the present intersection of East Broadway and Market Streets.

4. The British executioner asked if I had any final words, and I told him, "I only regret I have but one life to lose for my country." I was the first American captured and executed for spying. My story has served as an inspiration for other patriots who have entered the profession of intelligence gathering and as an example of the highest degree of commitment, honor, and the willingness to sacrifice for what you believe in.

1. Where was Nathan Hale born?
2. What was his occupation (job) after he finished school?
3. Why was Nathan Hale executed?
4. Why have Nathan Hale's last words become famous?
5. If you were in his position, would you have done what he did? Explain.

### **B) Captain Alexander Graydon**

1. At the start of the War for Independence I commanded a company of the 3rd Pennsylvania Regiment at Ft. Washington in Manhattan. While on picket duty on the night of September 20-21, 1776, I looked south over Harlem Creek, where "the heavens appeared in flames." It was New York City, nine miles distant, burning down, five days after its capture by Gen. Howe.

2. Ft. Washington was my first and last battle. I directed raw troops against the British 42nd Highlanders, the famous Black Watch Regiment. I was captured with my regiment on November 16, 1776. A British lieutenant told me the reason Washington was leading a rebellion was that he had gambled away his fortune and this was the only way to win it back. I responded that this was mere British propaganda.

1. What happened to Manhattan on the night of September 20-21, 1776?
2. Why was this Captain Alexander Graydon's last battle?
3. If you were a young man or woman in 1776, would you have joined the Revolutionary army? Why?