

Riding for FREEDOM

Who rode through the countryside on horseback during the American Revolution, warning the citizens, “The British are

coming”? If you answered Paul Revere, you would be only partly right. A number of girls and young women also acted as patriotic messengers, risking their own lives to serve the cause of American freedom.

One of these “riders for freedom” was 16-year-old Sybil Ludington. On a stormy night in April 1777, young Sybil bravely accepted a dangerous job: She agreed to alert the local militia that the British were burning the nearby town of Danbury, Connecticut, where a large amount of the colonial troops’ supplies were kept. Riding as fast as she could through the rainy, muddy, dark night, Sybil raced from one farmhouse to another, traveling 40 miles and calling to men across the land to come and fight the British. This was more than twice the distance that Paul Revere traveled during his famous midnight ride!



What Happened to Sybil Ludington?

Word of Sybil’s night ride got around. George Washington thanked her personally, and Alexander Hamilton wrote her a letter of appreciation. At the age of twenty-three, Sybil married and became the mother of four sons and two daughters. Sybil died in New York at the age of seventy-seven. There is a bronze statue of Sybil Ludington in Carmel, New York. In 1975, a U.S. postage stamp was issued in her honor.



Sybil brought local soldiers to her father's farmhouse that night. Then the soldiers marched to meet the British at Danbury. Although they weren't able to save the town or the supplies, they did push the British Army out of the area.

This female patriot displayed courage, persistence, and strength in the fight for independence. Sybil Ludington's heroic ride showed that girls and women could be an important part of the American Revolution.

**Adapted from an article by Julie Doyle Durway
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