

Teacher Answer Key

*Below are some of the issues that will be discussed during the performance.
Feel free to use these questions as a preparation or a follow-up.*

You may wish to share this sheet with your librarian so relevant books can be displayed.

FOREMOTHERS - A Performance by Gerri Gribi
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1. What types of chores did women do on frontier farms?

Milking cows, feeding animals, plowing, cooking, cleaning, weaving and clothes-making, churning butter...anything that needed to get done!

2. Who wrote “folk songs?” How do we know them today?

Folk songs were written by many people over the years and were passed along and changed from generation to generation. We don't know the names of the people who first wrote the songs, but they represent the work of many people over time.

3. What can folk songs tell us about history?

Folk songs record the history of people who didn't or couldn't write their history down for us. They tell us about the lives of ordinary people, and about the things that were important to them. Folk songs are “oral history,” like storytelling.

4. During the American Revolution, what brave young girl made an even longer “midnight ride” than Paul Revere?

Sybil Ludington was the daughter of Henry Ludington, a New York militia officer. On April 26, 1777, a messenger arrived at the Ludington's door with news that the British were going to attack. Since the messenger was exhausted from his ride, 16-year-old Sybil volunteered to rouse her father's militia. Throughout the night she rode her horse over 40 miles of unfamiliar roads, sounding the alarm. Her daring mission covered twice the distance traveled by Paul Revere, but Revere is better remembered because of the famous poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “Paul Revere's Ride.”

5. Why are the folk songs of African Americans important to the study of history?

Because in many states, it was illegal to teach them how to read or write, so very few of them could leave behind written records. Since African history is traditionally preserved in an oral way, we can learn a lot about the lives of African Americans through their songs.

6. Who was the former slave who rescued nearly 300 people from slavery, becoming the most famous “conductor” on the Underground Railroad?

Harriet Tubman (1820?-1913). At one point, \$40,000 was offered for her capture. She also served as a Union spy during the Civil War.

7. Why would a woman want a traditionally “male” job as a soldier or sailor?

There are many reasons. Perhaps because she was patriotic, and wanted to serve her country. Or, because men’s jobs paid much more money than women’s. Or just for the adventure and excitement. Basically, a woman would want a “male” job for all the same reasons a man would want it!

8. How might she go about getting such a job?

Some, like Deborah Sampson, disguised themselves as men.

9. What amendment gave women the right to vote, and in what year?

The Nineteenth Amendment, passed August 26, 1920

10. How long did women have to fight to gain this right?

72 years. The first written demand for women’s suffrage was in 1848, at the first Women’s Rights Convention held in Seneca Falls, NY. Many viewed it as a continuation of the American Revolution: that no person should be taxed without being represented.

11. Who were some of our famous foremothers who lead this revolution?

Susan B Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Sojourner Truth, Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt are just a few names among many.