



Molly Stark

Elizabeth Page became Molly Stark when at age 21 she married General-to-be John Stark in 1758. “Molly” may have only been her nickname, but it stuck. In fact, the name Molly Stark is probably better known today than her husband’s. It was General Stark who made Molly famous when he pledged his own life to the Patriot cause in the name of his wife back home in New Hampshire.

It wasn’t easy for the women whose husbands were often called away to fight – and sometimes to die – in the American Revolution. They were left at home with farms and families to manage while their husbands were away. Beginning the year after her marriage to John Stark, Molly Stark had 11 children; her eldest son Caleb also fought in the Battle of Bennington. She once opened the Stark home in New Hampshire as a hospital to nurse some of the General’s troops back to health. She and women like her were no less devoted to American independence than their husbands and sons. The war could not have been won without them.

Statues of General Stark were put up in the 1800s; it wasn’t until 2004 that Molly got a statue of her own, along the Molly Stark Scenic Byway (Route 9) in downtown Wilmington, Vermont. She’s shown ready to defend her home and family, one hand holding a musket and one arm cradling a child. The plaque on the base of the statue refers to the “love, courage, and self-reliance” with which she served her country.