

Document 1

Evacuation of New York by the British, November 25, 1783

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At noon, on the 25th of November 1783, General Washington entered the City of New York by the Bowery, then the only road from Harlem, while, at the same time, the British evacuated the city, and entering the ships that lay anchored in the harbor, unfurled their sails and slowly sailed down the bay. The American Militia, under the command of General Knox, immediately took possession of the Fort, and the Stars and Stripes, for the first time, after a seven years' foreign occupation, were unfurled from its walls, a triumphant salute was fired by the corps of Artillery, and New York was again in possession of her citizens. The British, departing by the provisions of an honorable treaty, employed the last moments of their presence in the city in the commission of a base and unmanly outrage. Unreefing the halyards of the flagstaff at Fort George, they knocked off the cleats and greased the pole, to prevent the hoisting of the American colors. They then evacuated the Fort, sure that the Stars and Stripes would not be hoisted until they

were far out of sight if their folds. The discovery of this act excited general indignation. David van Arsdale, a sailor boy, attempted at once to climb the bare pole, but it was too slippery, and he failed in the attempt. Upon this, some of the bystanders ran precipitately to Goelet's Hardware store, in Hanover Square, and procuring hammers, nails, and other necessary tools, set to work, some to saw, some to split, and others to bore new cleats for the flag-staff. Armed with these, the sailor boy tied the halyards around his waist, nailing the cleats above him right and left, ascended, reefed the halyards, and hoisted the flag to its place; and as the American colors reached the top of the mast, a salute of thirteen guns rang its echoes in the ears of the discomfited troops, not yet out of the hearing of the triumphant shouts of the Sons of Freedom.

1. What does this image depict?
2. Look at the date that this image was created. What does that tell you about the importance of Evacuation Day at the time it was made?

Document 2

Washington's Entry into New York: On the Evacuation of the City by the British, Nov. 25th. 1783



Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

1. Why would Washington's reentry into New York have been so important at the end of the war?
2. What emotions do you think the artist hoped to elicit from the viewer?

