

## Valley Forge

## Nonfiction

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The United States today has been a country for more than 200 years. But in 1777 many people did not think the United States would become a country. George Washington was a great leader. He was leading the army. The army was fighting for independence.

That winter was a time of challenge. George Washington and his army were living in a camp. It was a Valley Forge. That was a good location. It was near trees so they could get wood to make fires to keep warm. And they could see far from a hill. That way they could see if the other army was coming to fight them.

That other army was the British. They had many more guns and supplies than Washington's army. Washington's army had little food. They had some blankets. But many of the soldiers did not even have shoes or coats.

George Washington kept encouraging the soldiers. He told them to be brave, that they were fighting for freedom. Some days it was so cold and snowy he himself worried. But he did not tell the soldiers that. He was very brave.

The soldiers were not well trained. Many had been farmers before. They did not know much about fighting. Washington used the time at Valley Forge to train them. He got help.

A soldier from Germany came to Valley Forge. He was named von Steuben. He wanted to help. He organized a group of 120 leaders. He showed them how to fight well. He showed the soldiers how to fight with guns. He showed them how to win a battle with the British. They trained other soldiers. Soon, the army was much better prepared.

When spring came, some soldiers had died. The others were ready to fight. They fought for their freedom. George Washington led them to win the war. And the soldier who helped them, von Steuben, helped, them to that victory.

Today, Americans remember von Steuben with statues in many places. In Chicago, there is a high school named after that brave soldier.