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Benedict Arnold

Benedict Arnold was born in 1741. He grew up in Norwich, CT. His family were very successful merchants. Arnold had 5 siblings but only he and one of his sisters lived to adulthood.

Even though the Arnolds were wealthy business people, they got into financial trouble. Benedict Arnold’s father, Benedict Arnold III, got into alcoholism. This forced Arnold to become an apprentice for an apothecary. An apothecary is similar to a pharmacist.

As an adult Benedict Arnold had 2 wives and 8 children between them. He decided to join the Continental Army when the Revolutionary War began in 1775. This war was between England and its 13 colonies. “He partnered with Ethan Allen and Allen’s Green Mountain Boys to capture the British army at Fort Ticonderoga in NY in 1775” (History.com editors Benedict Arnold: Arnold at Fort Ticonderoga). Later that year, Arnold and his troops were trying to rally people that lived in Canada behind the patriot cause. This was an unlucky expedition. During the Battle of Quebec, Arnold got shot in his leg. It was so bad that he had to be carried to the back of the battlefield.

The Battle of Quebec was a failure, and many American soldiers were killed. Canada was still a British territory. By the end of 1776, Arnold was healed and was able to fight in the war once again. “He played a crucial role in delaying a British invasion from Canada to New York in the fall of that year” (History.com editors Benedict Arnold: Battle of Quebec). Although he had a lot of success in the military, Arnold felt that he didn’t get enough recognition for all he had done. “Many of his fellow officers reportedly found Arnold to be vain, emotional, and greedy. One officer said that “Money is this man’s God, and to get enough of it he would sacrifice his country” (History.com editors Benedict Arnold: Valcour Island). Arnold resigned from the Continental Army in 1777.

Two years later in 1779 Benedict Arnold was chosen as the commander of the American fort at West Point. Later that year, he made secret negotiations with the British army to be a commander and also for money. “Arnold’s negotiator, British Major John André was captured crossing between British and American lines disguised in average person clothing” (History.com editors Benedict Arnold: What did Benedict Arnold do?). They found documents on Major André that helped prove Arnold committed treason. When Arnold heard about Andre’s capture he fled to British territory before the Americans could arrest him.

Benedict Arnold became one of the most shamed people in United States history. “Amusingly, Arnold’s treason was his last service to the patriot cause” (History.com editors Benedict Arnold: What did Benedict Arnold do?). When Americans heard about Arnold’s treason they were angry. He was on the British side of the Revolution for the last 4 years of the war. After the war, Arnold was a businessman in Canada and England. He eventually died in England in 1801 at the age of 60. The British questioned his motives. The Americans hated him. “Benjamin Franklin said,”Judas only sold one man, Arnold three million” (History.com editors Benedict Arnold: What happened to Benedict Arnold?).

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