

= Benedict Arnold =

Benedict Arnold (January 14 , 1741 [O.S. January 3 , 1740] ? June 14 , 1801) was a general during the American Revolutionary War who originally fought for the American Continental Army but defected to the British Army . While a general on the American side , he obtained command of the fortifications at West Point , New York (future site of the U.S. Military Academy after 1802) , overlooking the cliffs at the Hudson River (upriver from British @-@ occupied New York City) , and planned to surrender it to the British forces . The plan was exposed in September 1780 , and he was commissioned into the British Army as a brigadier general .

Arnold was born in Connecticut and was a merchant operating ships on the Atlantic Ocean when the war broke out in 1775 . He joined the growing army outside Boston and distinguished himself through acts of intelligence and bravery . His actions included the Capture of Fort Ticonderoga in 1775 , defensive and delaying tactics at the Battle of Valcour Island on Lake Champlain in 1776 (allowing American forces time to prepare New York 's defenses) , the Battle of Ridgefield , Connecticut (after which he was promoted to major general) , operations in relief of the Siege of Fort Stanwix , and key actions during the pivotal Battles of Saratoga in 1777 , in which he suffered leg injuries that ended his combat career for several years .

Despite Arnold 's successes , he was passed over for promotion by the Continental Congress , while other officers claimed credit for some of his accomplishments . Adversaries in military and political circles brought charges of corruption or other malfeasance , but most often he was acquitted in formal inquiries . Congress investigated his accounts and found that he was indebted to Congress after having spent much of his own money on the war effort . Arnold was frustrated and bitter at this , as well as with the alliance with France and the failure of Congress to accept Britain 's 1778 proposal to grant full self @-@ governance in the colonies . He decided to change sides and opened secret negotiations with the British . In July 1780 , he was awarded command of West Point . Arnold 's scheme was to surrender the fort to the British , but it was exposed when American forces captured British Major John André carrying papers which revealed the plot . Upon learning of André 's capture , Arnold fled down the Hudson River to the British sloop @-@ of @-@ war Vulture , narrowly avoiding capture by the forces of George Washington , who had been alerted to the plot .

Arnold received a commission as a brigadier general in the British Army , an annual pension of £ 360 , and a lump sum of over £ 6 @,@ 000 . He led British forces on raids in Virginia and against New London and Groton , Connecticut before the war effectively ended with the American victory at Yorktown . In the winter of 1782 , Arnold moved to London with his second wife Margaret " Peggy " Shippen Arnold . He was well received by King George III and the Tories , but frowned upon by the Whigs . In 1787 , he returned to the merchant business with his sons Richard and Henry in Saint John , New Brunswick . He returned to London to settle permanently in 1791 , where he died ten years later .

His name quickly became a byword in the United States for treason or betrayal because he betrayed his countrymen by leading the British army in battle against the men whom he once commanded . His earlier legacy is recalled in the ambiguous nature of some of the memorials that have been placed in his honor .

= = Early life = =

Benedict was born the second of six children to Benedict Arnold (1683 ? 1761) and Hannah Waterman King in Norwich , Connecticut on January 14 , 1741 . He was named after his great @-@ grandfather Benedict Arnold , an early governor of the Colony of Rhode Island ? as were his father and grandfather , as well as an older brother who died in infancy . Only Benedict and his sister Hannah survived to adulthood ; his other siblings succumbed to yellow fever in childhood . His siblings were , in order of birth : Benedict (August 15 , 1738 ? April 30 , 1739) , Hannah (December 9 , 1742 ? August 11 , 1803) , Mary (June 4 , 1745 ? September 10 , 1753) , Absalom (April 4 , 1747 ? July 22 , 1750) , and Elizabeth (November 19 , 1749 ? September 29 , 1755) . Arnold was a descendant of John Lothrop through his maternal grandmother , an ancestor of at

least six U.S. presidents .

Arnold 's father was a successful businessman , and the family moved in the upper levels of Norwich society . When he was ten , Arnold was enrolled in a private school in nearby Canterbury , with the expectation that he would eventually attend Yale . However , the deaths of his siblings two years later may have contributed to a decline in the family fortunes , since his father took up drinking . By the time that he was fourteen , there was no money for private education . His father 's alcoholism and ill health kept him from training Arnold in the family mercantile business , but his mother 's family connections secured an apprenticeship for him with two of her cousins , brothers Daniel and Joshua Lathrop , who operated a successful apothecary and general merchandise trade in Norwich . His apprenticeship with the Lathrops lasted seven years .

In 1755 , Arnold was attracted by the sound of a drummer and attempted to enlist in the provincial militia for service against the French , but his mother refused permission . In 1757 when he was sixteen , he did enlist in the Connecticut militia , which marched off toward Albany and Lake George . The French had besieged Fort William Henry in northeastern New York , and their Indian allies had committed atrocities after their victory . Word of the siege 's disastrous outcome led the company to turn around ; Arnold served for 13 days . A commonly accepted story that Arnold deserted from militia service in 1758 is based on uncertain documentary evidence .

Arnold was very close to his mother , who died in 1759 . His father 's alcoholism worsened after the death of his wife , and the youth took on the responsibility of supporting his father and younger sister . His father was arrested on several occasions for public drunkenness , was refused communion by his church , and eventually died in 1761 .

= = Businessman = =

Arnold established himself in business in 1762 as a pharmacist and bookseller in New Haven , Connecticut with the help of the Lathrops . He was hardworking and successful , and was able to rapidly expand his business . In 1763 , he repaid money borrowed from the Lathrops , repurchased the family homestead that his father had sold when deeply in debt , and re @-@ sold it a year later for a substantial profit . In 1764 , he formed a partnership with Adam Babcock , another young New Haven merchant . They bought three trading ships , using the profits from the sale of his homestead , and established a lucrative West Indies trade .

During this time , he brought his sister Hannah to New Haven and established her in his apothecary to manage the business in his absence . He traveled extensively in the course of his business throughout New England and from Quebec to the West Indies , often in command of one of his own ships . On one of his voyages , Arnold fought a duel in Honduras with a British sea captain who had called him a " damned Yankee , destitute of good manners or those of a gentleman " . The captain was wounded after the first exchange of gunfire , and apologized after Arnold threatened to aim to kill on the second .

The Sugar Act of 1764 and the Stamp Act of 1765 severely curtailed mercantile trade in the colonies . The latter act prompted Arnold to join the chorus of voices in opposition to those taxes , and also led to his entry into the Sons of Liberty , a secret organization that was not afraid to use violence to oppose implementation of those and other unpopular Parliamentary measures . Arnold initially took no part in any public demonstrations but , like many merchants , continued to trade as if the Stamp Act did not exist , in effect becoming a smuggler in defiance of the act . Arnold also faced financial ruin , falling £ 16 @,@ 000 in debt , with creditors spreading rumors of his insolvency to the point where he took legal action against them . On the night of January 28 , 1767 , Arnold and members of his crew , watched by a crowd of Sons of Liberty , roughed up a man suspected of attempting to inform authorities of Arnold 's smuggling . Arnold was convicted of a disorderly conduct charge and fined the relatively small amount of 50 shillings ; publicity of the case and widespread sympathy for his view probably contributed to the light sentence .

On February 22 , 1767 , Arnold married Margaret Mansfield , daughter of Samuel Mansfield , the sheriff of New Haven , an acquaintance that may have been made through the membership of both Mansfield and Arnold in the local Masonic Lodge . Their son Benedict was born the following year ,

and was followed by brothers Richard in 1769 and Henry in 1772 . Margaret died early in the revolution on June 19 , 1775 , while Arnold was at Fort Ticonderoga following its capture . The household , even while she lived , was dominated by Arnold 's sister Hannah . Arnold benefited from his relationship with Mansfield , who became a partner in his business and used his position as sheriff to shield Arnold from creditors .

Arnold was in the West Indies when the Boston Massacre took place on March 5 , 1770 . He wrote that he was " very much shocked " and wondered " good God , are the Americans all asleep and tamely giving up their liberties , or are they all turned philosophers , that they don 't take immediate vengeance on such miscreants ? "

= = Early Revolutionary War = =

Arnold began the war as a captain in Connecticut 's militia , a position to which he was elected in March 1775 . His company marched northeast the following month to assist in the siege of Boston that followed the outbreak of hostilities at Lexington and Concord . Arnold proposed to the Massachusetts Committee of Safety an action to seize Fort Ticonderoga in New York , which he knew was poorly defended . They issued him a colonel 's commission on May 3 , 1775 , and he immediately rode off to the west , arriving at Castleton in the disputed New Hampshire Grants (present @-@ day Vermont) in time to participate with Ethan Allen and his men in the capture of Fort Ticonderoga . He followed up that action with a bold raid on Fort Saint @-@ Jean on the Richelieu River north of Lake Champlain . A Connecticut militia force arrived at Ticonderoga in June ; Arnold had a dispute with its commander over control of the fort , and resigned his Massachusetts commission . He was on his way home from Ticonderoga when he learned that his wife had died earlier in June .

The Second Continental Congress authorized an invasion of Quebec , in part on the urging of Arnold ? but he was passed over for command of the expedition . Arnold then went to Cambridge , Massachusetts and suggested to George Washington a second expedition to attack Quebec City via a wilderness route through present @-@ day Maine . Arnold received a colonel 's commission in the Continental Army for this expedition . He left Cambridge in September 1775 with 1 @,@ 100 men . Arnold arrived before Quebec City in November , after a difficult passage in which 300 men turned back and another 200 died en route . He and his men were joined by Richard Montgomery 's small army and participated in the December 31 assault on Quebec City in which Montgomery was killed and Arnold 's leg was shattered . His chaplain Rev. Samuel Spring carried him to the makeshift hospital at the Hôtel Dieu . Arnold was promoted to brigadier general for his role in reaching Quebec , and he maintained an ineffectual siege of the city until he was replaced by Major General David Wooster in April 1776 .

Arnold then traveled to Montreal where he served as military commander of the city until forced to retreat by an advancing British army that had arrived at Quebec in May . He presided over the rear of the Continental Army during its retreat from Saint @-@ Jean , where he was reported by James Wilkinson to be the last person to leave before the British arrived . He then directed the construction of a fleet to defend Lake Champlain , which was overmatched and defeated in the October 1776 Battle of Valcour Island . However , his actions at Saint @-@ Jean and Valcour Island played a notable role in delaying the British advance against Ticonderoga until 1777 .

During these actions , Arnold made a number of friends and a larger number of enemies within the army power structure and in Congress . He had established decent relationships with George Washington , commander of the army , as well as Philip Schuyler and Horatio Gates , both of whom had command of the army 's Northern Department during 1775 and 1776 . However , an acrimonious dispute with Moses Hazen , commander of the 2nd Canadian Regiment , boiled over into a court martial of Hazen at Ticonderoga during the summer of 1776 . Only action by Gates , then Arnold 's superior at Ticonderoga , prevented his own arrest on countercharges leveled by Hazen . He also had disagreements with John Brown and James Easton , two lower @-@ level officers with political connections that resulted in ongoing suggestions of improprieties on his part . Brown was particularly vicious , publishing a handbill which claimed of Arnold , " Money is this man

's God , and to get enough of it he would sacrifice his country " .

= = Saratoga and Philadelphia = =

General Washington assigned Arnold to the defense of Rhode Island following the British seizure of Newport in December 1776 , where the militia were too poorly equipped to even consider an attack on the British . Arnold took the opportunity to visit his children while near his home in New Haven , and he spent much of the winter socializing in Boston , where he unsuccessfully courted a young belle named Betsy Deblois . In February 1777 , he learned that he had been passed over by Congress for promotion to major general . Washington refused his offer to resign , and wrote to members of Congress in an attempt to correct this , noting that " two or three other very good officers " might be lost if they persisted in making politically motivated promotions .

Arnold was on his way to Philadelphia to discuss his future when he was alerted that a British force was marching toward a supply depot in Danbury , Connecticut . He organized the militia response , along with David Wooster and Connecticut militia General Gold S. Silliman . He led a small contingent of militia attempting to stop or slow the British return to the coast in the Battle of Ridgefield , and was again wounded in his left leg .

Arnold continued on to Philadelphia , where he met with members of Congress about his rank . His action at Ridgefield , coupled with the death of Wooster due to wounds sustained in the action , resulted in Arnold 's promotion to major general , although his seniority was not restored over those who had been promoted before him . Amid negotiations over that issue , Arnold wrote out a letter of resignation on July 11 , the same day that word arrived in Philadelphia that Fort Ticonderoga had fallen to the British . Washington refused his resignation and ordered him north to assist with the defense there .

Arnold arrived in Schuyler 's camp at Fort Edward , New York on July 24 . On August 13 , Schuyler dispatched him with a force of 900 to relieve the siege of Fort Stanwix , where he succeeded in the use of a ruse to lift the siege . Arnold had an Indian messenger sent into the camp of British Brigadier General Barry St. Leger with news that the approaching force was much larger and closer than it actually was ; this convinced St. Leger 's Indian support to abandon him , forcing him to give up the effort .

Arnold then returned to the Hudson , where General Gates had taken over command of the American army , which had by then retreated to a camp south of Stillwater . He then distinguished himself in both Battles of Saratoga , even though General Gates removed him from field command after the first battle , following a series of escalating disagreements and disputes that culminated in a shouting match . During the fighting in the second battle , Arnold operated against Gates ' orders and took to the battlefield to lead attacks on the British defenses . He was again severely wounded in the left leg late in the fighting . Arnold himself said that it would have been better had it been in the chest instead of the leg . Burgoyne surrendered ten days after the second battle , on October 17 , 1777 . In response to Arnold 's valor at Saratoga , Congress restored his command seniority . However , Arnold interpreted the manner in which they did so as an act of sympathy for his wounds , and not an apology or recognition that they were righting a wrong .

Arnold spent several months recovering from his injuries . Rather than allowing his shattered left leg to be amputated , he had it crudely set , leaving it 2 inches (5 cm) shorter than the right . He returned to the army at Valley Forge in May 1778 to the applause of men who had served under him at Saratoga . There he participated in the first recorded Oath of Allegiance along with many other soldiers , as a sign of loyalty to the United States .

The British withdrew from Philadelphia in June 1778 , and Washington appointed Arnold military commander of the city . Even before the Americans reoccupied Philadelphia , Arnold began planning to capitalize financially on the change in power there , engaging in a variety of business deals designed to profit from war @-@ related supply movements and benefiting from the protection of his authority . Such schemes were not exactly uncommon among American officers , but Arnold 's schemes were sometimes frustrated by powerful local politicians who eventually amassed enough evidence to publicly air charges against him . Arnold demanded a court martial to clear the charges ,

writing to Washington in May 1779 , " Having become a cripple in the service of my country , I little expected to meet [such] ungrateful returns " .

Arnold lived extravagantly in Philadelphia , and was a prominent figure on the social scene . During the summer of 1778 , he met Peggy Shippen , the 18 @-@ year @-@ old daughter of Judge Edward Shippen , a Loyalist sympathizer who had done business with the British while they occupied the city . Peggy had been courted by British Major John André during the British occupation of Philadelphia . Peggy and Arnold married on April 8 , 1779 . Peggy and her circle of friends had found methods of staying in contact with paramours across the battle lines , despite military bans on communication with the enemy . Some of this communication was effected through the services of Joseph Stansbury , a Philadelphia merchant .

= = Plotting to change sides = =

As early as 1778 , there were signs that Arnold was unhappy with his situation and pessimistic about the country 's future . On November 10 , 1778 , General Nathanael Greene wrote to General John Cadwalader , " I am told General Arnold is become very unpopular among you owing to his associateing too much with the Tories . " A few days later , Greene received a letter from Arnold , where Arnold lamented over the " deplorable " and " horrid " situation of the country at that particular moment , citing the depreciating currency , disaffection of the army , and internal fighting in Congress for the country 's problems , while predicting " impending ruin " if things would not soon change .

Some time early in May 1779 , Arnold met with Joseph Stansbury (whose testimony before a British commission apparently erroneously placed his meeting with Arnold in June) . Stansbury said that he then " went secretly to New York with a tender of [Arnold 's] services to Sir Henry Clinton . " Stansbury ignored instructions from Arnold to involve no one else in the plot , and crossed the British lines and went to see Jonathan Odell in New York . Odell was a Loyalist working with William Franklin , the last colonial governor of New Jersey and the son of Benjamin Franklin . On May 9 , Franklin introduced Stansbury to Major André , who had just been named the British spy chief . This was the beginning of a secret correspondence between Arnold and André , sometimes using his wife Peggy as a willing intermediary , that culminated over a year later with Arnold 's change of sides .

= = = Secret communications = = =

André conferred with General Clinton , who gave him broad authority to pursue Arnold 's offer . André then drafted instructions to Stansbury and Arnold . This initial letter opened a discussion on the types of assistance and intelligence that Arnold might provide , and included instructions for how to communicate in the future . Letters would be passed through the women 's circle that Peggy Arnold was a part of , but only Peggy would be aware that some letters contained instructions , written in both code and invisible ink , that were to be passed on to André , using Stansbury as the courier .

By July 1779 , Arnold was providing the British with troop locations and strengths , as well as the locations of supply depots , all the while negotiating over compensation . At first , he asked for indemnification of his losses and £ 10 @,@ 000 , an amount that the Continental Congress had given Charles Lee for his services in the Continental Army . General Clinton was pursuing a campaign to gain control of the Hudson River Valley , and was interested in plans and information on the defenses of West Point and other defenses on the Hudson River . He also began to insist on a face @-@ to @-@ face meeting , and suggested to Arnold that he pursue another high @-@ level command . By October 1779 , the negotiations had ground to a halt . Furthermore , Patriot mobs were scouring Philadelphia for Loyalists , and Arnold and the Shippen family were being threatened . Arnold was rebuffed by Congress and by local authorities in requests for security details for himself and his in @-@ laws .

= = = Court martial = = =

The court martial to consider the charges against Arnold began meeting on June 1 , 1779 , but was delayed until December 1779 by General Clinton 's capture of Stony Point , New York , throwing the army into a flurry of activity to react . A number of members of the panel of judges were ill @-@ disposed to Arnold over actions and disputes earlier in the war , yet Arnold was cleared of all but two minor charges on January 26 , 1780 . Arnold worked over the next few months to publicize this fact ; however , Washington published a formal rebuke of Arnold 's behavior in early April , just one week after he had congratulated Arnold on the March 19 birth of his son Edward Shippen Arnold .

The Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief would have been much happier in an occasion of bestowing commendations on an officer who had rendered such distinguished services to his country as Major General Arnold ; but in the present case , a sense of duty and a regard to candor oblige him to declare that he considers his conduct [in the convicted actions] as imprudent and improper .

Shortly after Washington 's rebuke , a Congressional inquiry into his expenditures concluded that Arnold had failed to fully account for his expenditures incurred during the Quebec invasion , and that he owed the Congress some £ 1 @,@ 000 , largely because he was unable to document them . A significant number of these documents had been lost during the retreat from Quebec . Angry and frustrated , Arnold resigned his military command of Philadelphia in late April .

= = = Offer to surrender West Point = = =

Early in April , Philip Schuyler had approached Arnold with the possibility of giving him the command at West Point . Discussions between Schuyler and Washington on the subject had not borne fruit by early June . Arnold reopened the secret channels with the British , informing them of Schuyler 's proposals and including Schuyler 's assessment of conditions at West Point . He also provided information on a proposed French @-@ American invasion of Quebec that was to go up the Connecticut River . (Arnold did not know that this proposed invasion was a ruse intended to divert British resources .) On June 16 , Arnold inspected West Point while on his way home to Connecticut to take care of personal business , and sent a highly detailed report through the secret channel . When he reached Connecticut , Arnold arranged to sell his home there , and began transferring assets to London through intermediaries in New York . By early July he was back in Philadelphia , where he wrote another secret message to Clinton on July 7 , which implied that his appointment to West Point was assured and that he might even provide a " drawing of the works ... by which you might take [West Point] without loss " .

Major André returned victorious from the Siege of Charleston on June 18 , and both he and General Clinton were immediately caught up in this news . Clinton was concerned that Washington 's army and the French fleet would join in Rhode Island , and he again fixed on West Point as a strategic point to capture . André had spies and informers keeping track of Arnold to verify his movements . Excited by the prospects , Clinton informed his superiors of his intelligence coup , but failed to respond to Arnold 's July 7 letter .

Arnold next wrote a series of letters to Clinton , even before he might have expected a response to the July 7 letter . In a July 11 letter , he complained that the British did not appear to trust him , and threatened to break off negotiations unless progress was made . On July 12 , he wrote again , making explicit the offer to surrender West Point , although his price rose to £ 20 @,@ 000 (in addition to indemnification for his losses) , with a £ 1 @,@ 000 down payment to be delivered with the response . These letters were delivered by Samuel Wallis , another Philadelphia businessman who spied for the British , rather than by Stansbury .

= = = Command at West Point = = =

On August 3 , 1780 , Arnold obtained command of West Point . On August 15 , he received a coded letter from André with Clinton 's final offer : £ 20 @,@ 000 , and no indemnification for his losses . Due to difficulties in getting the messages across the lines , neither side knew for some

days that the other was in agreement to that offer . Arnold 's letters continued to detail Washington 's troop movements and provide information about French reinforcements that were being organized . On August 25 , Peggy finally delivered to him Clinton 's agreement to the terms .

Washington , in assigning Arnold to the command at West Point , also gave him authority over the entire American @-@ controlled Hudson River , from Albany down to the British lines outside New York City . While en route to West Point , Arnold renewed an acquaintance with Joshua Hett Smith , someone whom Arnold knew had spied for both sides and who owned a house near the western bank of the Hudson about 15 miles south of West Point .

Once he established himself at West Point , Arnold began systematically weakening its defenses and military strength . Needed repairs on the chain across the Hudson were never ordered . Troops were liberally distributed within Arnold 's command area (but only minimally at West Point itself) , or furnished to Washington on request . He also peppered Washington with complaints about the lack of supplies , writing , " Everything is wanting . " At the same time , he tried to drain West Point 's supplies , so that a siege would be more likely to succeed . His subordinates , some long @-@ time associates , grumbled about Arnold 's unnecessary distribution of supplies and eventually concluded that Arnold was selling supplies on the black market for personal gain .

On August 30 , Arnold sent a letter accepting Clinton 's terms and proposing a meeting to André through yet another intermediary : William Heron , a member of the Connecticut Assembly whom he thought he could trust . Heron , in a comic twist , went into New York unaware of the significance of the letter , and offered his own services to the British as a spy . He then took the letter back to Connecticut , suspicious of Arnold 's actions , where he delivered it to the head of the Connecticut militia . General Parsons laid it aside , seeing a letter written as a coded business discussion . Four days later , Arnold sent a ciphered letter with similar content into New York through the services of the wife of a prisoner @-@ of @-@ war . Eventually , a meeting was set for September 11 near Dobb 's Ferry . This meeting was thwarted when British gunboats in the river fired on his boat , not having been informed of his impending arrival .

= = = Plot exposed = = =

Arnold and André finally met on September 21 at the Joshua Hett Smith House . On the morning of September 22 , James Livingston , the colonel in charge of the outpost at Verplanck 's Point , fired on HMS Vulture , the ship that was intended to carry André back to New York . This action did sufficient damage that she retreated downriver , forcing André to return to New York overland . Arnold wrote out passes for André so that he would be able to pass through the lines , and also gave him plans for West Point .

André was captured near Tarrytown on Saturday , September 23 by three Westchester militiamen named John Paulding , Isaac Van Wart , and David Williams . The papers exposing the plot to capture West Point were found and sent to Washington , where Arnold 's intentions came to light after Washington examined them . Meanwhile , André convinced the unsuspecting commanding officer to whom he was delivered , Colonel John Jameson , to send him back to Arnold at West Point . However , Major Benjamin Tallmadge , a member of Washington 's secret service , insisted that Jameson order the prisoner to be intercepted and brought back . Jameson reluctantly recalled the lieutenant who had been delivering André into Arnold 's custody , but then sent the same lieutenant as a messenger to notify Arnold of André 's arrest .

Arnold learned of André 's capture the following morning , September 24 , when he received Jameson 's message that André was in his custody and that the papers that André was carrying had been sent to General Washington . Arnold received Jameson 's letter while waiting for Washington , with whom he had planned to have breakfast .

He hastened to the shore and ordered bargemen to row him downriver to where HMS Vulture was anchored , which then took him to New York . From the ship , Arnold wrote a letter to Washington , requesting that Peggy be given safe passage to her family in Philadelphia , a request that Washington granted .

When presented with evidence of Arnold 's activities , it is reported that Washington remained calm

. He did , however , investigate its extent , and suggested in negotiations with General Clinton over the fate of Major André that he was willing to exchange André for Arnold . This suggestion Clinton refused ; after a military tribunal , André was hanged at Tappan , New York on October 2 . Washington also infiltrated men into New York in an attempt to capture Arnold . This plan very nearly succeeded , but failed when Arnold changed living quarters prior to sailing for Virginia in December .

Arnold justified his actions in an open letter titled To the Inhabitants of America , published in newspapers in October 1780 . In the letter to Washington requesting safe passage for Peggy , he wrote , " Love to my country actuates my present conduct , however it may appear inconsistent to the world , who very seldom judge right of any man 's actions . "

= = After switching sides = =

= = = British Army service = = =

The British gave Arnold a brigadier general 's commission with an annual income of several hundred pounds , but paid him only £ 6 @, @ 315 plus an annual pension of £ 360 because his plot had failed . In December 1780 , Arnold led a force of 1 @, @ 600 troops into Virginia under orders from Clinton , where he captured Richmond by surprise and then went on a rampage through Virginia , destroying supply houses , foundries , and mills . This activity brought out Virginia 's militia , led by Colonel Sampson Mathews , and Arnold eventually retreated to Portsmouth to either be evacuated or reinforced .

The pursuing American army included the Marquis de Lafayette , who was under orders from Washington to hang Arnold summarily if he was captured . Reinforcements arrived in late March led by William Phillips (who served under Burgoyne at Saratoga) , and Phillips led further raids across Virginia , including a defeat of Baron von Steuben at Petersburg , until his death of fever on May 12 , 1781 . Arnold commanded the army only until May 20 , when Lord Cornwallis arrived with the southern army and took over . One colonel wrote to Clinton of Arnold , " there are many officers who must wish some other general in command . " Cornwallis ignored advice proffered by Arnold to locate a permanent base away from the coast , advice that might have averted Cornwallis 's later surrender at Yorktown .

On his return to New York in June , Arnold made a variety of proposals for attacks on economic targets to force the Americans to end the war . Clinton was uninterested in most of Arnold 's aggressive ideas , but finally authorized Arnold to raid the port of New London , Connecticut . On September 4 , not long after the birth of his and Peggy 's second son , Arnold 's force of over 1 @, @ 700 men raided and burned New London and captured Fort Griswold , causing damage estimated at \$ 500 @, @ 000 . British casualties were high ; nearly one quarter of the force was killed or wounded . Clinton declared that he could ill afford any more such victories .

Even before Cornwallis ' surrender in October , Arnold had requested permission from Clinton to go to England to give Lord George Germain his thoughts on the war in person . When word of the surrender reached New York , Arnold renewed the request , which Clinton then granted . On December 8 , 1781 , Arnold and his family left New York for England .

In London , he aligned himself with the Tories , advising Germain and King George III to renew the fight against the Americans . In the House of Commons , Edmund Burke expressed the hope that the government would not put Arnold " at the head of a part of a British army " lest " the sentiments of true honor , which every British officer [holds] dearer than life , should be afflicted . " To Arnold 's detriment , the anti @-@ war Whigs had gotten the upper hand in Parliament , and Germain was forced to resign , with the government of Lord North falling not long after .

Arnold then applied to accompany General Carleton , who was going to New York to replace Clinton as commander @-@ in @-@ chief ; this request went nowhere . Other attempts all failed to gain positions within the government or the British East India Company over the next few years , and he was forced to subsist on the reduced pay of non @-@ wartime service . His reputation also

came under criticism in the British press , especially when compared to that of Major André , who was celebrated for his patriotism .

One particularly harsh critic said that he was a " mean mercenary , who , having adopted a cause for the sake of plunder , quits it when convicted of that charge . " In turning him down for an East India Company posting , George Johnstone wrote , " Although I am satisfied with the purity of your conduct , the generality do not think so . While this is the case , no power in this country could suddenly place you in the situation you aim at under the East India Company . "

= = = New business opportunities = = =

In 1785 , Arnold and his son Richard moved to Saint John , New Brunswick , where they speculated in land and established a business doing trade with the West Indies . Arnold purchased large tracts of land in the Maugerville area , and acquired city lots in Saint John and Fredericton . Delivery of his first ship the Lord Sheffield was accompanied by accusations from the builder that Arnold had cheated him ; Arnold claimed that he had merely deducted the contractually agreed amount when the ship was delivered late . After her first voyage , Arnold returned to London in 1786 to bring his family to Saint John . While there , he disentangled himself from a lawsuit over an unpaid debt that Peggy had been fighting while he was away , paying £ 900 to settle a £ 12 @, @ 000 loan that he had taken while living in Philadelphia . The family moved to Saint John in 1787 , where Arnold created an uproar with a series of bad business deals and petty lawsuits . The most serious of these was a slander suit which he won against a former business partner ; and following this , townspeople burned him in effigy in front of his house , as Peggy and the children watched . The family left Saint John to return to London in December 1791 .

In July 1792 , Arnold fought a bloodless duel with the Earl of Lauderdale after the Earl impugned his honor in the House of Lords . With the outbreak of the French Revolution , Arnold outfitted a privateer , while continuing to do business in the West Indies , even though the hostilities increased the risk . He was imprisoned by French authorities on Guadeloupe amid accusations of spying for the British , and narrowly eluded hanging by escaping to the blockading British fleet after bribing his guards . He helped organize militia forces on British @-@ held islands , receiving praise from the landowners for his efforts on their behalf . He hoped that this work would earn him wider respect and a new command ; instead , it earned him and his sons a land @-@ grant of 15 @, @ 000 acres (6 @, @ 100 ha) in Upper Canada , near present @-@ day Renfrew , Ontario .

= = Death = =

In January 1801 , Arnold 's health began to decline . He had suffered from gout since 1775 , and the condition attacked his unwounded leg to the point where he was unable to go to sea . The other leg ached constantly , and he walked only with a cane . His physicians diagnosed him as having dropsy , and a visit to the countryside only temporarily improved his condition . He died after four days of delirium on June 14 , 1801 , at the age of 60 . Legend has it that , when he was on his deathbed , he said , " Let me die in this old uniform in which I fought my battles . May God forgive me for ever having put on another , " but this story may be apocryphal . Arnold was buried at St. Mary 's Church , Battersea in London , England . As a result of a clerical error in the parish records , his remains were removed to an unmarked mass grave during church renovations a century later . His funeral procession boasted " seven mourning coaches and four state carriages " ; the funeral was without military honors .

He left a small estate , reduced in size by his debts , which Peggy undertook to clear . Among his bequests were considerable gifts to one John Sage , perhaps an illegitimate son or grandson .

= = Legacy = =

= = = Infamy in the United States = = =

Arnold 's contributions to American independence are largely underrepresented in popular culture , while his name became synonymous with traitor in the 19th century . The demonization of Arnold began immediately after his betrayal became public . Biblical themes were often invoked ; Benjamin Franklin wrote that " Judas sold only one man , Arnold three millions " , and Alexander Scammell described Arnold 's actions as " black as hell " .

Early biographers attempted to describe Arnold 's entire life in terms of treacherous or morally questionable behavior . The first major biography of Arnold was *The Life and Treason of Benedict Arnold* , published in 1832 by historian Jared Sparks ; it was particularly harsh in showing how Arnold 's treacherous character was allegedly formed out of childhood experiences . George Canning Hill authored a series of moralistic biographies in the mid @-@ 19th century , and began his 1865 biography of Arnold : " Benedict , the Traitor , was born ... " .

Social historian Brian Carso notes that , as the 19th century progressed , the story of Arnold 's betrayal was portrayed with near @-@ mythical proportions as a part of the national creation story . It was invoked again as sectional conflicts increased in the years before the American Civil War . Washington Irving used it as part of an argument against dismemberment of the union in his 1857 *Life of George Washington* , pointing out that the unity of New England and the southern states which led to independence was made possible in part by holding West Point . Jefferson Davis and other southern secessionist leaders were unfavorably compared to Arnold , implicitly and explicitly likening the idea of secession to treason . Harper 's Weekly published an article in 1861 describing Confederate leaders as " a few men directing this colossal treason , by whose side Benedict Arnold shines white as a saint . "

Fictional invocations of Arnold 's name also carried strongly negative overtones . A moralistic children 's tale entitled " *The Cruel Boy* " was widely circulated in the 19th century . It described a boy who stole eggs from birds ' nests , pulled wings off insects , and engaged in other sorts of wanton cruelty , who then grew up to become a traitor to his country . The boy is not identified until the end of the story , when his place of birth is given as Norwich , Connecticut , and his name is given as Benedict Arnold . However , not all depictions of Arnold were so negative . Some theatrical treatments of the 19th century explored his duplicity , seeking to understand rather than demonize it .

The connection between Arnold and treason continued into the 20th and 21st centuries . On an episode of *The Brady Bunch* , " *Everyone Can 't Be George Washington* " , Peter is assigned the role of Arnold in the school play , and is ostracized . On one of *The Simpsons* ' Halloween specials , *Treehouse of Horror IV* , Arnold is included in a " jury of the damned " ? along with other figures like John Wilkes Booth and Richard Nixon ? deliberating the ownership of Homer Simpson 's soul .

Dan Gilbert , owner of the National Basketball Association 's Cleveland Cavaliers , subtly invoked Arnold in 2010 , upset over LeBron James 's announcement of leaving the team . Gilbert 's company lowered the price of posters bearing James 's likeness to \$ 17 @.@ 41 , referring to the year of Arnold 's birth .

Novels related to the American Revolutionary war sometimes feature Arnold as a character . Kenneth Roberts ' *Arundel* series treats him more positively , covering his military campaigns .

= = = Canada = = =

Canadian historians have treated Arnold as a relatively minor figure . His difficult time in New Brunswick led historians to summarize it as full of " controversy , resentment , and legal entanglements " and to conclude that he was disliked by both Americans and Loyalists . Historian Barry Wilson points out that Arnold 's descendants ended up establishing deep roots in the country , becoming leading settlers in Upper Canada and later in lands further west , where they established settlements in Saskatchewan . His descendants who adopted the Arnold surname are spread across Canada , most of all those of John Sage . His long woollen British scarlet military jacket with a buff lining continues to be owned by descendants ; as of 2001 , it was held in Saskatchewan . It has reportedly been passed in each generation to the eldest male of the family .

= = Family = =

During his marriage to Margaret Mansfield , Arnold had three sons , all of whom later served in the British Army :

Benedict Arnold (1768 ? 1795) (Captain)

Richard Arnold (1769 ? 1847) (Lieutenant)

Henry Arnold (1772 ? 1826)

and with Peggy Shippen , he raised a family also active in the British Army :

Edward Shippen Arnold (1780 ? 1813) (Lieutenant)

James Robertson Arnold (1781 ? 1854) (Lieutenant General , Royal Engineers)

George Arnold (1787 ? 1828) (Lieutenant colonel)

Sophia Matilda Arnold (1785 ? 1828)

William Fitch Arnold (1794 ? 1846) (Captain)

= = Tributes = =

There is a memorial to Arnold on the Saratoga battlefield , now preserved within Saratoga National Historical Park , that does not mention his name . Donated by Civil War General John Watts DePeyster , the inscription on the Boot Monument reads : " In memory of the most brilliant soldier of the Continental army , who was desperately wounded on this spot , winning for his countrymen the decisive battle of the American Revolution , and for himself the rank of Major General . " The victory monument at Saratoga has four niches , three of which are occupied by statues of Generals Gates , Schuyler , and Morgan . The fourth niche is empty .

On the grounds of the United States Military Academy at West Point there are plaques commemorating all of the generals that served in the Revolution . One plaque bears only a rank and a date (" major general ... born 1740 ") but no name .

A historical marker in Danvers , Massachusetts commemorates Arnold 's 1775 expedition to Quebec . There are also historical markers bearing Arnold 's name in Moscow , Maine , on the western bank of Lake Champlain , New York , and two in Skowhegan , Maine .

The house where Arnold lived at 62 Gloucester Place in central London bears a plaque describing Arnold as an " American Patriot . " The church where Arnold was buried , St Mary 's Church , Battersea , England , has a commemorative stained @-@ glass window , added between 1976 and 1982 . The faculty club at the University of New Brunswick , Fredericton , has a Benedict Arnold Room , in which framed original letters written by Arnold hang on the walls .