American Revolution: *A Traitor in Their Midst*

**Chapter 1:**  **American Revolution**

The AmericanRevolution.

A war that lasted from 1775-1783, between the patriots, or the to-be Americans, and great Britain. The militia for the patriots were called the minutemen, because they could be ready at a minute’s notice. Great Britain’s army was known as the Red Coats, (because they wore red coats as part of their uniform), Lobster Backs, and Tories.

It all started because Britain's 13 colonies, (Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia) didn’t want to be a part of England any more, because there were things they had to do because England was in debt from its previous war, the *French and Indian War.* To payback that debt, King George III decided to tax the colonies. He taxed them on tea, molasses, paper, glass, lead, paint, and he forced the colonists to provide living quarters for the soldiers. To make matters worse, he made a law saying that all legal documents must be stamped, and you must pay for this stamp. The colonists didn’t like these rules, and decided they would like to be their own country. The only problem? England didn’t agree.

**Chapter 2:**  **Benedict Arnold**

**Childhood**

Benedict Arnold was born on January 14, 1741 in Norwich, Connecticut.

As a young boy, his father, Benedict Arnold III, kept borrowing more and more money. Each time, he said to himself this will be the time that works out. eventually, people stopped lending him money because he never could repay them. Then he started drinking to relieve his problems. Benedict felt embarrassed when he had to lead his father home because he was drunk.

The neighbors all talked about his family behind his back, and Benedict grew tired of this. He thought that if he got rid of his cowardliness, people would stop talking about him behind his back. So, he started doing dare-devil stunts, such as walking on top of the roof of a flaming house, and creating a HUGE bonfire with his friends. His plan worked. He gained followers that way, and they stopped talking about him behind his back. But his mother kept telling him that he had to stop. One day, his mother had enough, and she sent him to her cousins, who owned a shop. The plan was that her cousins would take Benedict until he was 21, and could make his own choices about how he wanted to spend his life. Her cousins, named Daniel and Joshua Lathrop, owned a, “successful apothecary and general merchandise in Norwich, Connecticut” acording to en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedict\_Arnold. His time with Daniel and Joshua lasted 7 years. When he was 16, he joined the militia to fight against the French.

He was very close to his mother, who died in 1759. Benedict’s father drank even more after his wife’s death, and he was arrested on several occasions for drunkenness. In 1761, he died.

**Adult Life**

***On the Patriot's Side of the Revolutionary War***

Thanks to Daniel and Joshua Lathrop, Benedict Arnold sold books, and became a pharmacist in New Haven, Connecticut. He was a very successful businessman, but the Sugar and Stamp Act of 1764 and 1765 cut back on trade, including his business’s. The 2nd of the two acts I mentioned provoked him to participate in the protests against the those taxes. In fact, he also joined the Sons of Liberty, a group that uses violence to oppose the taxes I mentioned in Chapter 1. At first, he didn't take part in any public demonstrations. He would, like other merchants, act like the Stamp Act didn't exist. Effectively, he became a smuggler because of his defiance of the Stamp Act.

He married Margaret Mansfield on February 22, 1767. The next year, their first son, Benedict, was born. Two years later, in 1769, his brother Richard. In 1772, their third son, Henry, was born. Early in the Revolution, when Benedict was away at Fort Ticonderoga, his wife died, on June 19, 1775.

When Benedict was in the West Indies, on March 5, 1770, the Boston Massacre took place. According to en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedict\_Arnold, "He wrote 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' ".

Benedict proposed the idea of taking over Fort Ticonderoga, because he knew it was poorly defended. His proposal was accepted, and it was only when he was coming home from the fort, having conquered it, did he get the news his wife had died.

Twice, he asked to resign, and twice did George Washington refuse his request.

He took part in the first recorded Oath of Allegiance signifying a sign of loyalty with the United States.

When Benedict was in Philadelphia, he met Peggy Shippen, who was 18 years old, and the daughter of Judge Edward Shippen, a loyalist sympathizer who used to do business with the British. On April 8, 1779, Benedict Arnold and Peggy Shippen married. Peggy and her friends had found ways of keeping contact with the British, despite the rules about no communication with the enemy.

***Changing sides***

There were hints that Benedict was not pleased with his situation as early as 1778.

Benedict started communicating with British Spy Chief Major André.

Letters between them were to be passed with Peggy and her circle of friends, written in code, and in invisible ink.

***On the British's side of the Revolutionary War***

George Washington made Benedict Arnold in charge of the Hudson River, which was American-controlled at the time. This was good for Benedict, because he could then make American defences there weaker. He was doing this for John André, whom I mentioned earlier. John told Benedict that England wanted to take over West Point, which is why Benedict made sure needed repairs never were ordered, and that the American soldiers were distributed, but minimally at actual West Point.

***Benedict Arnold Revealed as a Traitor***

Sadly for Benedict Arnold, on Saturday, September 23, John André was captured close to Tarrytown by John Paulding, Isaac Van Wart, and David Williams. The papers having the plan to capture West Point were found and sent to George Washington, where Benedict Arnold’s role in the plot came to life when George looked at them. The next morning, September 24, Benedict got a letter explaining that John got captured and the papers got sent to George Washington. He wrote a letter asking George if Peggy could have a safe passage to Philadelphia, and George said yes.

John André was hanged on October 2, in Tappan, New York. Benedict, however, just barely missed capture when he changed where he lived before moving to Virginia for December.

Benedict then served openly for the British, but when he burned and raided New London, he created damage costing about $500,000, so General Sir Henry Clinton said that he couldn’t afford victories of they costed that high. Not far before then, his and Peggy’s second son was born.

He tried and failed many times to join the war among the British again, so he had to stop being in the war for at least some time.

So, he and his son Richard moved to Saint John, New Brunswick, where they made business doing trade with the West Indies. He then moved his whole family there, where he made an uproar because he was doing a lot of bad business.

Since the people of Saint John burned a model of Benedict Arnold in front of his house as his family watched, he and his family decided to move back to London in December 1791.

***His Death***

In January 1801, Benedict Arnold’s health began to drop. Arthritis, which has been attacking him since 1775, now attacked his uninjured leg to the point where he couldn’t even go out to the ocean, his other leg hurt often, and he could walk only with a cane. His doctors diagnosed him with having Dropsy, a disease which means having extra watery fluids in tissues in the body. After four days of insanity, he died at the age of 60 on June 14, 1801. He gave to Peggy a small piece of land, made smaller because of his debts.

***His Legacy***

In America, Benedict Arnold’s name got associated with the word “traitor” and in Canada he is considered a figure of relatively small importance. Is he important? Is he a traitor? What’s your opinion?

**Chapter 3: Benedict Arnold’s Diary Entry**

Dear Diary,

I am thinking of changing to be on the Tories. Is that outrageous of me? I only want the best for the colonies. I think they would do better if they would be ruled by King George lll. Plus, I have a lot of debt to pay, I has served the Patriots greatly, but they are not promoting me as fast as they should considering all I did.

All in all, my interests would be better served assisting The Tories than continuing to suffer for the ungrateful Patriots. Why should I stay with the Patriots? They clearly don't appreciate me.



, Dear Diary,

I just met British General Henry Clinton’s Spy Chief Major John Anré. I have been sending coded letters written in invisible ink through Joseph Stansbury. General George Washington gave me control over the Hudson River, and I have been strategically making it easier for the British to strike, because André told me that's what the British were going to do. But do the British appreciate me? I don’t know



**Chapter 4: Why Benedict Arnold is Important to the Revolutionary War**

What do you think of when you hear the words Revolutionary War? Revolution? Freedom? George Washington? England? Colonies? Do you think of Benedict Arnold? I do, because he's important to the Revolutionary War. Don't believe me? I'll tell you why *I* think he's important. He's important to the Revolutionary War because he helped the American side before he became a Loyalist, then after he switched sides he helped out the British a lot, and, finally, when he switched sides, he actually helped out the to-be Americans. Read on to find out more.

First, he helped the Patriots before he switched sides. He helped take over a lot of forts, cities, etc.; for example, he helped with the siege of Boston, with Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys he took Fort Ticonderoga, which was one of the first big achievements for the Patriots, he lead an attack on Quebec City, and in the Battle of Saratoga, he "led the attack on the British" according to Ducksters.com. And, he even suggested ways to siege and take over cities, forts, etc.; George Washington even considered him one of his better generals!

Next, after he traded sides, he helped out the British. For example, he told secrets to the British, he gave them a lot of information such as: locations of supplies, information on the troops, and when he got control over West Point, he never ordered needed supplies, and he sent most soldiers away so it would be easier for the British to capture. And, even after he was found out, he became a general for the British, leading attacks at New London and Richmond.

Last but not least, he actually helped the Americans when he traded sides. The Americans had been getting deeply annoyed because they were only making slow progress toward victory, and that they had a lot of defeats. However, once Benedict became a traitor, he gave them motivation to try harder.

In conclusion, Benedict Arnold was very important because he not only helped the Americans and the British, but he also gave the Americans a reason to try harder when they had none, helping them win the war.

NOTICE: These facts came from wikipedia.org, biography.com,

*Traitor: The Case Of Benedict Arnold* by: Jean Fritz, www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/benedict-arnold, ducksters.com