

Hidden Bits of American History

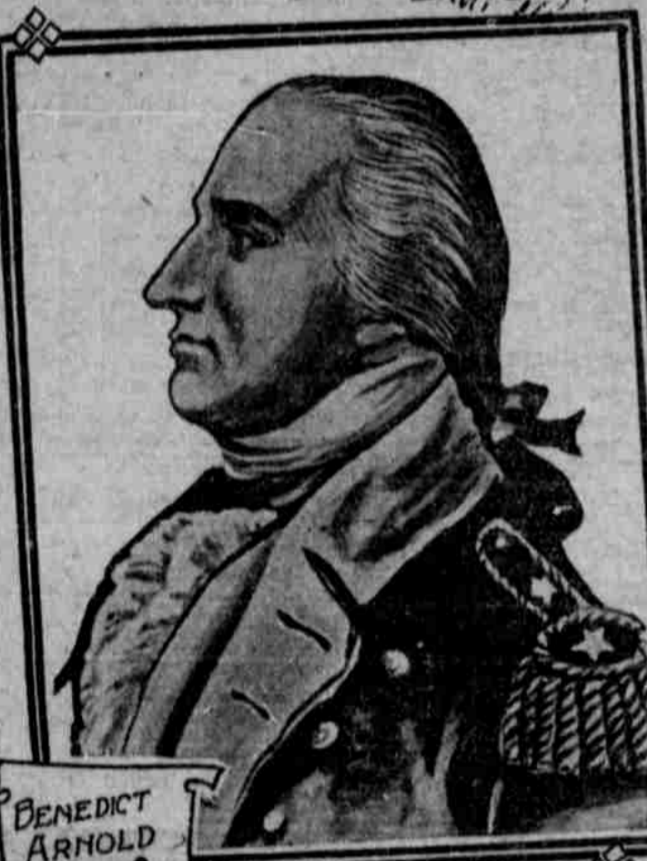
By Edward B. Clark

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THE headquarters of the Daughters of the American Revolution are situated in Washington. These women, who are engaged in the work of keeping alive patriotic memories, have in a nearly completed form, one of the most beautiful buildings in the capital city.

If the forming of the many societies in which membership is based on the having of an ancestor who fought or did something else for his country a century or so ago serves no other purpose, it at least is the means of bringing to light some more than half hidden bits of American history too interesting to be lost either to sight or memory. For the last few years the genealogy departments of the Congressional Library and of the reference libraries all over the country have been more popular with the masses than any other rooms in the buildings. There are gathered daily throngs composed of the five-sixths part of women studying away for dear life in the endeavor to find trace of some ancestor who saw the whites of the British eyes at Bunker Hill or at the Cowpens in the Carolinas.

The discoveries made by these delv-



BENEDICT ARNOLD

to his conqueror. This is the mid-night scroll and that upon it may appear a small tracing in letters of light is a matter of interest, though it may do nothing toward the redeeming of a name.

It was a Daughter of the Revolution, Mrs. Gilbert W. Warren of Iliou, N. Y., who brought attention to a well-nigh forgotten fragment of Arnold's history. Mrs. Warren, who died recently, was a descendant of Col. William Ledyard, who was killed with his own sword after he had surrendered it to an officer serving under Arnold. Naturally Mrs. Warren would not be moved by any hereditary love for Arnold to start her digging up nice things about him. It happens, however, that Mrs. Warren's husband, who survives her, is collaterally descended from Gen. Joseph Warren, who fell at Bunker Hill. This fact led to the discovery of something which was used as a sort of offset to Arnold's treatment of the unlucky Americans who met his forces along the banks of the Connecticut Thames.

Gen. Arnold had met Gen. Warren in the early spring of 1775 and had formed a strong personal liking for him. When Warren was killed it was found that he had left no means for the support and education of his four children. Arnold became deeply interested in the matter and brought the children's condition to the attention of the continental congress, which promised to do something for the little ones, but dilly-dallied over the matter. Arnold had an idea that the congress might not act quickly and so he wrote a letter of tender solicitude to Mercy Schollay, who was caring for the Warren children, their mother having died some time before. In this letter Arnold, nearly impoverished himself, sent an order for \$500 with instructions that he should be drawn upon for more as soon as it was needed. This contribution of the traitor saved Elizabeth, Joseph, Mary and Richard Warren from destitution. Arnold was not satisfied with this, but he wrote spurring letters to Sam Adams and John Hancock, of the committee which had the proposed congressional appropriation in hand. Then he sent home some money and said: "Send Richard, who is now old enough to the best school that can be found, clothe him handsomely, give him all that he needs and call upon me for any future expense."

How much food for thought may be found in one of the letters of Benedict Arnold, traitor, written to Miss Schollay just before his treason. He had sent more money and had congratulated the children on the prospect that the money from congress would be speedily forthcoming. "A country," said Arnold, "should be ever grateful to the patriot who lays down his life in its defense. Greater love hath no man than this."

What surging thought must have whelmed this man's brain as he wrote these words. That letter was received just at the time that Arnold

began negotiations with Clinton.

School histories say that after the revolution Arnold passed all his time in England. He lived, however, for a long period in St. John, New Brunswick. There he engaged in commercial pursuits, sending out trading vessels to the West Indies. His neighbors, though, as has been said, were largely refugees; had stood by king and crown. They gave Arnold to understand that they did not like his company. They hanged him in effigy once or twice, taking care that the effigy bore the word "Traitor" in large letters. One night Arnold's place of business burned. It was heavily insured. The companies refused to pay, openly charging that either Arnold or his son had acted the incendiary. The case went into the courts and the insurance companies finally paid. Arnold pocketed the money and left the town, the occasion of his leaving being made one of tremendous rejoicing by the inhabitants throughout all the land.

It will be interesting to note whether in the new chapel which is being erected at West Point the name of Gen. William Hull will appear on the wall with the names of other officers who served in the land forces of the United States during the second war with Great Britain. Gen. Hull surrendered Detroit to the English and afterward was court-martialed for doing it.

The Society of the War of 1812, it is understood, will have charge of the work of placing the tablets in West Point's new chapel. The officers' names, like the names of those officers who served in the revolutionary war and which have a place on the walls of the old chapel, probably will appear in letters of gold upon a black basis.

School histories as a rule, in giving an account of the Detroit surrender, state simply that Gen. Hull's action was considered cowardly. The fact that he was tried and sentenced to be shot for cowardice is generally omitted. Hull was ordered to his Massachusetts home and there await the execution of his sentence. Old age "executed" him many years afterwards. It is probable that the commemorating society will content itself with simply omitting Hull's name from its list, by which Hull's conduct, characterized as cowardly by a competent court, could be made to stand as a warning to all the generations of young soldiers.

Occupying a considerable part of the wall space of the beautiful old West Point place of worship there are already many black marble memorials bearing the names of all the general officers of the revolutionary war from Artemus Ward of Connecticut to George Washington of Virginia. Upon one of these tablets the cadets as they lie in on Sunday see something which tells better than the words of trumpet-tongued eloquence of the black ignominy which attaches to the name of a traitor. On one of the slabs occupying a place between two honored names there appears a black blot. Above and below it show the tips of gold letters. Enough of the lettering is visible to let the observer know after a moment's study that which it is intended in the main to conceal. A black block of marble set in transversely across the golden capitals blots out forever from the roll of honor the name of Benedict Arnold, traitor.

Touching on the treason of Benedict Arnold, there is a little-known story which had for the scene of its action the four years of the war of secession. In response to the first call of Abraham Lincoln for troops a young man appeared at a Detroit recruiting office and enlisted. He went to the front and in the course of six months was made a commissioned officer. He was of a retiring disposition, always courteous to his fellow officers and just to his men, but he sought no close friendships. He was noted throughout the command as a man whose devotion to duty amounted to a passion. He once sought and secured a change in command in order to have a more frequent hand in the heavy fighting.

This soldier rose to the rank of a major. He was offered at one time a colonelcy. He declined. He fought in every battle of the later Richmond campaign and was in at the end at Appomattox. The major headed his battalion in the great parade of the returning victors up Pennsylvania avenue. Then there came the final mustering out of the troops. Less than a month afterward the colonel of a fighting regiment received a letter bearing a Toronto postmark: "I served all through the war under an assumed name. I trust that I did my full duty. I wish you to know that I did what I did in order that I might in some way make atonement for the deed of one of my family. Sir, I am a Canadian by birth and my name is John Benedict Arnold."

An Embarrassment of Riches

By MARY C. PADEN

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The student gazed with bewildered blue eyes at the lawyer. The lawyer repeated: "Eighteen hundred thousand dollars in your own, unlimited right. You lucky dog!"

The student seemed to be weighing the literary value of the phrase "lucky dog." Personal application of anything seemed out of his line, so the impatient lawyer began to think. The idea of a young man taking such an announcement in such a way!

"I should not know what to do with it," the student said slowly, with almost a frightened look, which mollified the lawyer.

"That wouldn't worry most young men; it wouldn't worry me."

"What would you do with it?"

"Why, I'd—oh, I'd have a good time." It really was not so easy to specify, at a breath's notice, what one would do with eighteen hundred thousand. He felt nearer to the dreamy youth.

"But would that mean the same to any two people—having a good time?"

Really, the young man had a way of asking questions when he was awakened.

"No-o," said the lawyer doubtfully. "To old Boozie over there, it would mean all the bad whisky he could pour in; to young Snob yonder, a card to the Millionaires' club, and London fashions; to Miss Mincing, sealskins, diamonds and her coach; to me, perhaps, after I had had a little ordinary fling and had let the good wife burn a few greenbacks, the professional honors I have missed; to you, I suppose," glancing from the general shabbiness of things to the few books that even he, a Philistine, could not but see were rare and precious of date, binding and authorship—"more books."

"What would books be to me that I merely bought with my uncle's grudging money? Adopted children, dear perhaps for their merit; but the books I have are flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone, blood of my blood!"

"But he didn't grudge it. Only for his last words, they would never have guessed your existence."

"What did he say?"

This was, at least, human curiosity; the lawyer grew confidential.

"He said: 'No, no will. I've had the good of my money in my way; let my fool of a nephew, Searle Kynett, have it in his. He'll spend it patently a new way to bind books or in digging up Billy Shakespeare's rent receipts, perhaps; but if there is any blood in those watery veins of his, it is my own brother's. Let him have it! Not very complimentary, but you probably knew his way. I mention it for the hint' it gave his administrators of a relative. They traced you to this city, and the odd name and hint at your tastes did the rest, I having the honor of bringing the search to this—ah—happy conclusion."

"Yes," the student mused. "I knew his way. He wanted to help me, but we could not agree. He sent for me to order his library. I would have given him one fit for Solomon, but what he wanted was binding to match the cases and furniture of a barbaric modern chamber of upholstered horrors, and he wished the 'popular' authors: 'Didn't care for freaks, in books or persons,' he said."

The lawyer sighed.

The student intuitively answered: "You find me a troublesome client. I realize that I am unlike other young men. I don't say that in a Pharisaical manner," he hastened to add, "I'm not better, but I suppose I'm—queer." Then he, too, sighed.

After ten days of fruitless thought, the problem was but little nearer solution. The student cried despairingly: "I cannot simply invest that amount and have a preposterous income tumbling upon me in successive shocks, like Tarpeia's bracelets. I cannot have my solitude and study broken by specious pleaders with their worldly schemes, of which I have little understanding, even were they most practical. I shall be forced to leave even these obscure lodgings, since there is but one way of egress and no escape from these harpies."

The lawyer grinned. There was a chance for his assistance, after all. "Send them to me, my dear boy."

"Find me a place, a retired place yet safe, with many doors and windows; a place suitable for—books."

Jones found the place and reported to his client.

"But, do I understand that the woman sells to me outright, or—"

"She is a widow of 60 and over," said the lawyer deprecatingly. "She is attached to her home. You would be obliged to have a housekeeper. All she seeks is a little suite of rooms that you would not need, rent-free, and she will undertake to keep things clean, and, if you wish, to prepare your meals and do anything necessary. She understands that you require solitude and quiet, and will not obtrude. You have each an entrance and staircase, separated by the screen partition, and you need know nothing of her presence."

"Very good. Women are—are trying, you know," recalling a thin, shrill, scolding voice that had punctuated his childhood into unhappy periods. His only other experience of them was of a few ruffled and perfumed creatures who had brushed by him in his eager overturning of treasure-trove on book-counters, to order shallow, effusive, much beglit and crimsoned book-personalities.

He turned suddenly on poor Jones with a desperation that startled that good man:

"Find me a good, genuine use for this money within 30 days; or, after paying you for your trouble and setting aside barely enough to secure me bread and water, a quiet roof and decent disposal of my body, I swear I shall convert this pile into greenbacks, and, not in the vulgar idiom of the day, but actually—burn them, and sit down to peaceful study without this nightmare of responsibility!"

Then Lawyer Jones found it was not easy to place one million odd in just the right place. Lawyer Jones began to feel a vicarious irritation. He, too, wished to slush the Gordian knot. Mrs. Jones thought she saw the simplest end to pull, unraveling it all.

"If he would just marry!" she said oracularly.

One particular evening Kynett had enjoyed extraordinarily a dainty tea awaiting him, served as invisibly as a prisoner's when his back was turned or he was in another room; also, an extra handful of coals in the yawning grate.

"This won't do!" he said, suddenly, recalling himself. "I shall turn gourmet and avarite. I caught myself several times to-day turning from my book and pen to wonder what dainty would be served me this night, and what delicate mending, as of a hand worthy to tool a delicate cover, I should find in my hitherto neglected clothes-basket."

"O, Granny, what a wizard old Geoffrey is!" this with familiar love, not irreverence. "How he knows the spirit of spring that stirs the restless heart in all of us and makes us long to go and grow and be and do and enjoy!"

Was that what asked him, too—the restless spring? asked Kynett. And had he needed a girlish voice to translate one of his Masters?

An older voice answered: "That is the way of youth, dearies. To us it brings memories."

"But it stirs you, too!" This impulsively. "I saw it in your eyes; it thrilled in your voice."

"You are restless to-night, dearies. What ails you?"

"Oh, I want—"

She threw her fair arms over her head, the soft laces falling away from them.

What ethereal boon did this angelic soul crave? Something angels alone could grant, surely!

"I want—money!"

The hidden door creaked again behind the portiere.

"Fie! What to do with it?"

"Do! I'd never stop doing. I'd never stop to think what I'd do. I wouldn't trouble to plan; just start a river of good and keep it going. Do? Well, to start, I'd see that those hands of yours rested eight hours a day. I wouldn't slave in that bindery but spend—oh, all the time I could spare from doing good—in a book-shop. I'd see that poor Mr. Kynett had three good meals a day and a few pair of socks that were not pepper-boxes for holes, and—other things. I'd even buy silly little Mimette 100 yards of ribbon of all colors, since she loves ribbons. I'd—"

But Searle guiltily slid the door into place and retired to his dull quarters.

One morning he remembered what it was Lawyer Jones had said women liked. He had thought it trivial at the time, but was delighted to recall now—sealskin, diamonds, a coach.

He went to the great furriers and selecting a small saleswoman, ordered the most magnificent coat they had, to fit one of her build, and ordered it sent, spite of the season. Where? He gravely dictated, amid the smiles of the saleswomen:

Dearie, care of Widow Gray.

There was amazement on the other side of the curio-house that night, since there was no clew to the sender of the magnificent gift.

Next morning, a grave coachman stopped a fine pair of horses, with an irreproachable turnout, at the Gray door, and he and the footman reported to "Miss Dearie."

The widow questioned to some purpose, in the confusion following her announcement that there was no stable. She went to Mr. Kynett.

"Let one be built," he decreed, as Haroun might.

Then the widow declared she must send for Lawyer Jones. The grave coachman suggested a commission of lunacy aside, but Dearie spoke up blushing:

"The poor fellow is only overworked and undernourished. We will take care of him and bring him through."

Searle submitted to this role until the two good souls thought they had effected a cure and Grannie consented to be mother to him, and Dearie to roam the fields of higher literature with him, when his socks did not need footing.

Then, alas! he had a relapse, and the diamonds came for Dearie. But the method in his madness was soon made clear to all, and, at the happy wedding, Mother Jones said:

"I told you it would all come right if he would only marry!"