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THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION INSTITUTE

**News, Events, and Commentary
from the American Revolution Institute
of the Society of the Cincinnati**

today
September 1, 2023

[Calendar of Events](#)

***This Month in Revolutionary History -
Benedict Arnold Defects to the British***



September 25 marks 243 years since the revelation of Benedict Arnold's treachery to the cause of American independence. In the first three years of the American Revolution, Connecticut-born Benedict Arnold established himself as one of the most daring, successful, and committed officers in the Continental Army. He co-led the attack and capture of Fort Ticonderoga in 1775, led an American flotilla that fought off British ships on Lake Champlain in 1776, and was a key figure in the first and second battles of Saratoga in fall 1777.

A serious injury to his left leg sustained at Saratoga forced Arnold away from field command, and George Washington appointed him military governor of Philadelphia. During his rocky tenure Arnold clashed with local leaders and was court martialled. While ultimately acquitted of the most serious charges, he received a humiliating public reprimand from Washington. A disillusioned and bitter Arnold, already feeling passed over for promotion and struggling with an increasingly dire financial situation, sent an overture to the British. After initial communication, the American general began transmitting military intelligence through his British contact, Maj. John André. With promises of financial reward in return for greater assistance, Arnold obtained a "conspicuous command" in the U.S. military in August 1780, of the key American fortification at West Point, New York.

On the night of September 21 into the early morning hours of the 22nd, after several months of communicating about Arnold's offer to turn over West Point to the British, Arnold and André met in person. On his way back to the British lines on September 23, André was captured by three American militiamen, who found on his person a series of documents that revealed the extent of the West Point plot. On the 25th, upon learning of André's capture, Arnold fled West Point, eventually making his way to British-controlled New York City. That same day, Washington was presented with the documents found with André revealing the scale of Arnold's treachery.

Our Featured Story - Saving Soldiers Exhibition Travels to South Carolina



Medical Practice in the Revolutionary War

The Institute's celebrated exhibition *Saving Soldiers: Medical Practice in the Revolutionary War* has traveled to Camden, South Carolina, where it is on display at Historic Camden through December 16. First displayed at the Institute's headquarters in 2022, *Saving Soldiers* examines medical practice in the Continental Army and the experiences of surgeons and their patients under the dire conditions of war. Few of the 1,400 Continental Army doctors had prior wartime experience, and most of them had learned medical practice through an apprenticeship, not medical school. They were not prepared for the grim realities of war, where more soldiers would die from disease and infection than would be killed on the battlefield. In meeting these challenges, this era ushered in lifesaving medical advancements that went on to shape American medical practice for the next generation. This

exhibition draws from the Institute's collections of medical treatises, portraits, Continental Army hospital registers, medical instruments used during the war, and other artifacts. The installation at Camden also features several works related specifically to South Carolina, including a rare map of the state published in 1780 by William Faden annotated with handwritten notes on the landscape and local residents.

Visit Historic Camden

EVENTS

Announcing our Fall Historical Programs



Our fall calendar of historical programs kicks off on September 5! Highlights from our programs include an author's talk by Cynthia Kierner of George Mason University discussing her new book, *The Tory's Wife: A Woman and Her Family in Revolutionary America*, on October 17; a panel discussion commemorating the 50th anniversary of our library on November 30; and a lecture by Benjamin Carp of Brooklyn College discussing the Boston Tea Party to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the event. Most programs are held in-person at Anderson House, but virtual options are available unless otherwise specified. To view our fall calendar of historical programs in its entirety, visit the [events page](#) of our website.

Explore our fall programs

LIBRARY

Library Research Fellowship Applications Open for 2024

The Institute's library is offering several week-long research fellowships to graduate students and advanced scholars of early American history for the year 2024. Our fellowship program, founded in



2007, boasts nearly eighty alumni from fifty-five domestic and international institutions. We are looking forward to continuing the tradition of welcoming scholars who will use the collections to support their work. Our collections include contemporary books, manuscripts, maps, and works of art which support the in-depth study of military history and the art of war in the Colonial and Revolutionary era.

The deadline for applications is Friday, November 3, 2023.

[Learn more about the fellowships and apply](#)

[Learn more about our collections](#)

COLLECTIONS

A Puzzling New Acquisition



One of the most recent acquisitions for our museum collections is a small oil painting of a man in civilian clothes wearing a Society of the Cincinnati Eagle insignia. It was the generous gift of Paul Sartini, who, having identified the Eagle insignia, sought out our museum. While the subject's name is not known, the Eagle identifies him as a member of the hereditary organization formed in 1783 by veteran officers of the Revolutionary War. The painting isn't signed, and the artist is unidentified at this point. Our staff has begun researching who the man in the portrait may be, with a few clues to start with.

The man's clothing and hair style seem to date from the 1810s or early 1820s. Given his appearance, he could have been an aging veteran of the Revolutionary War at the time the portrait was painted, which would indicate he was an original member of the Society, or possibly an early honorary member from the Revolutionary generation. The Eagle insignia he wears appears to have very little enamel decoration, which is unusual for this medal. One Eagle type that's known for having little to no enamel is that commissioned by the Rhode Island branch of the Society in 1821, which may be what is depicted in this portrait—assuming the artist painted an accurate rendering of the medal the man wore. The dark blue, relatively thin ribbon on which the Eagle is suspended is also unusual and may offer clues to when and where the portrait was painted. And, while the provenance of this painting is incomplete, it has been in Connecticut for the past fifty years, which could indicate an older association with the state or New England generally.

If you recognize this painting or have ideas that might help us identify the subject, we'd love to hear from you! Contact our curator, Emily Parsons, at eparsons@societyofthecincinnati.org.

EDUCATION

Back to School Season at the American Revolution Institute!



The Institute wishes students of the American Revolution of all ages a very successful 2023-2024 school year!

Our traveling trunks are now on the road for the new academic year, starting with classrooms in Arizona, Indiana, New York, and Tennessee. Our [Revolutionary Choices](#) video game is entertaining more than 170,000 users online and through its app versions at the Apple and Google Play stores. Our [lesson plans](#), [videos](#), and [collections resources](#) await you online. And we envision the hundreds of teachers we connected with this summer hanging up our *New Game of the American Revolution* poster on their bulletin boards!

To learn more about the constructive achievements of the American Revolution—our independence, our republic, our national identity, and our highest ideals—visit the American Revolution in One Lesson online.

[The American Revolution in One Lesson](#)

EVENTS

Loyalism in Revolutionary New York City



Join us on Tuesday, September 5 at 6:30 p.m. for an author's talk featuring Dr. Christopher Minty of the University of Virginia discussing his recent book, *Unfriendly to Liberty: Loyalist Networks and the Coming of the American Revolution in New York City*, published by Cornell University Press.

Drawing from his extensive research, Dr. Minty explores the origins of loyalism in New York City between 1766 and 1776, and adds to our understanding of the coming of the American Revolution. Focusing on political culture, organization, and patterns of allegiance, Dr. Minty demonstrates how the contending allegiances of loyalists and patriots were all but locked in place by the outset of war in 1775, and that the political alignments formed during the imperial crisis of the

1760s and 1770s provided a critical platform that made New York City a center of loyalism throughout the American Revolution.

The talk will be held in-person at Anderson House and last approximately 45 minutes. Options for watching virtually are also available.

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The American Revolution secured our independence, created our republic, established our national identity, and expressed ideals of liberty, equality, natural and civil rights, and responsible citizenship that have defined our history and will define our future. The American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati promotes knowledge and appreciation of those achievements, fulfilling the aim of the Continental Army officers who founded the Society of the Cincinnati in 1783 to perpetuate the memory of that vast event. The Institute supports advanced study, presents exhibitions and other public programs, advocates effective classroom instruction, and provides resources to teachers and students to enrich understanding of the American Revolution and the principles of the men and women who secured the liberty of the American people.



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