

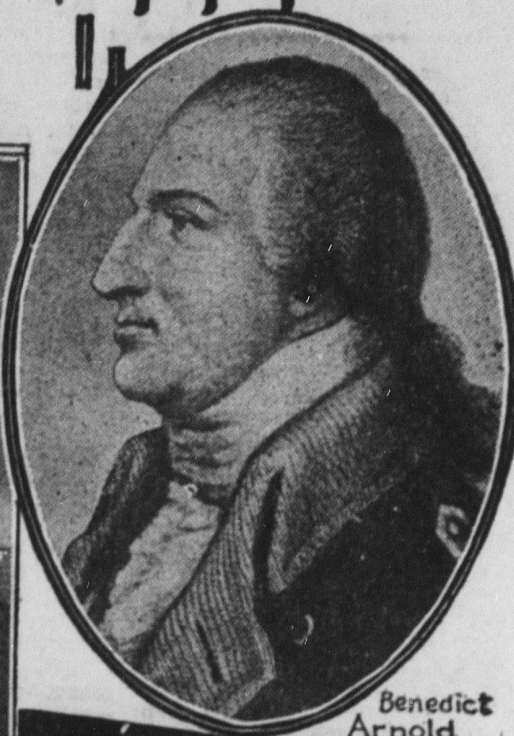
The Tragedy of Peggy Shippen Arnold



Major John Andre



The Conspirators—Arnold and Andre



Benedict Arnold

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

ON JUNE 11, 1760, Edward Shippen, a prominent attorney and judge of the vice-admiralty court of Philadelphia, sat him down at his desk and to his father wrote a letter in which occurs this significant sentence: "My Peggy this morning made me a present of a fine Baby, which tho' of the worst Sex, is yet heartily welcome." Could Judge Shippen have looked into the future one wonders if he might not have struck out those words "is yet heartily welcome," for, according to some historians, this "fine Baby" was destined to prove herself, in the Judge's strangely prophetic words, "of the worst Sex" indeed and it is not unlikely that there came times when the Judge wished she had never been born.

For this baby, who was given her mother's name of Margaret, was to become one of the most glamorous figures in American history, was to be a belle of colonial days, the toast of both British and Continental officers during the Revolution, the young wife of a distinguished American general and a participant in the chain of events which was to blacken his name with infamy among his countrymen for all time and to besmirch her name as well.

Was Peggy Shippen Arnold an innocent victim of the treason of her husband, Benedict Arnold, or was she the arch-conspirator who used her wiles to lead him into the mire of that unforgivable crime? Did she really love him for himself and prove her devotion to him by voluntarily sharing his disgrace and exile from his native land, or did she marry him while she was in love with another man and because of her infatuation aid that other man in carrying forward the plot which was to ruin the man whose name she bore? Those are the questions that have been brought up by research into documents of the Revolutionary war period which have recently become available to the historians and it seems impossible to give conclusive answers because the historians themselves do not agree. The traditional view of Peggy Shippen Arnold is that she was an innocent victim.

A recent biographer of Arnold, Charles Coleman Sellers, in his "Benedict Arnold, the Proud Warrior," declares: "I know of no evidence sufficient to implicate Peggy Shippen Arnold in the Arnold treason plot. I do not attach any importance to her correspondence with Major Andre, for she was writing to other British friends also. Her letters to Andre seem harmless. It is true she was under suspicion after the plot was exposed and had to leave Philadelphia. I think it is rather far-fetched, though, to accuse her of being a traitor."

Just as positive on the other side is E. Irvine Haines, author of two articles on this subject in the New York Times Magazine last year. He says "A careful study of evidence heretofore unknown or overlooked leads to the conviction that she was not only guilty but, even more than her husband, one of the arch-conspirators. Recent discoveries in the private correspondence of Sir Henry Clinton, in an almost unknown diary of Aaron Burr, and in Peggy's own letters, some of them addressed in code to Major Andre himself furnish testimony too damning for Peggy to controvert were she alive and on trial.

"If we re-read the story of the Revolution's greatest personal tragedy in the light of what we know now, it becomes a drama of ambitious femininity unique in American annals. It was not the game-legged, hot-tempered, disgruntled hero of Quebec and Saratoga who was the real mover in the plot on the Continental side, but the ambitious Tory girl, the spy and tool of Clinton, who schemed so cleverly that she deceived such astute politicians as John Hancock, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton and even Washington himself. It was Clinton acting on the suggestion of Lord George Germain, the British colonial secretary, who conceived the conspiracy, but it was Peggy Shippen, with a skill and effrontery amazing in one so young, who carried it out."

A more moderate view—one which takes a somewhat middle ground between these two extremes—is that of Randolph G. Adams, custodian of the William L. Clements library of American History at the University of Michigan, which acquired the military papers of Sir Henry Clinton a few years ago. From these papers Mr. Adams has pieced together the "inside story" of Arnold's treason and he says: "Historians have usually acquitted Peggy Shippen of any complicity in her husband's treason, but the Clinton papers give many indications of another story. It is difficult now to avoid the conclusion that Mrs. Arnold certainly handled some of the secret dispatches, and that the same spies who carried the dispatches to Andre and the other British officers she had known in Philadelphia."

In telling the story of the tragedy of Peggy Shippen Arnold one only has available a few—a very few, albeit—known facts over which there can be no dispute and a larger number of other facts which are capable of different interpretations depending upon the writer's point of view towards the different actors in the drama



Sketch of Peggy Shippen by Major Andre



Mrs. Benedict Arnold and her Son

of Arnold's treason. We know the date of her birth, something of her activities as a belle of Philadelphia society immediately before and during the early years of the Revolution, and the date of her marriage to Arnold, something of her career as his wife in this country and while sharing his exile in England and the date of her death. But as to her motives, her real character and the actual part she played in the conspiracy of her husband to betray his country the evidence is extremely contradictory.

Haines makes out an exceedingly strong case against her as the arch-conspirator, the villainess of the piece. Briefly, his story is this: As the daughter of a prominent colonial family, strongly Tory in its sympathies, Peggy Shippen has been reared in an atmosphere of luxury, had been taught to admire the British military caste, had dreamed of marrying into that caste and of becoming a great lady in the courts of Europe.

She first met John Andre, then a lieutenant in the Royal English Fusiliers, in 1774 when Sir Guy Carleton, governor-general of Canada, sent him to Philadelphia as a secret agent, going under the name of John Anderson, to spy on the First Continental Congress then in session in the Pennsylvania capital. She was then only fourteen years old but already possessed of great beauty, and Andre, himself only twenty-four years old, fell in love with her and she with him. After he left Philadelphia she corresponded with him but she did not see him again until 1777 when she visited in New York city, where he was now a captain on the staff of Sir Henry Clinton, the British commander's protégé and his secret agent as he had been for Sir Guy Carleton. Their love affair progressed and returning to Philadelphia, which was at this time held by the Continental forces, she continued her correspondence with Andre.

Then Washington lost the battles of Brandywine and Germantown and the British took possession of Philadelphia, bringing Peggy and Andre together again. She helped him organize the series of pageants, called the "Miscellanæ," given by the British officers on the eve of the departure of General Howe, British commander in Philadelphia, for England and she was chosen, as the most beautiful girl in Philadelphia, to preside over them as queen.

But in June, 1778, the British evacuated Philadelphia and Andre and Peggy were separated once more. In the meantime the British ministry, realizing that the rebellious colonies could not be defeated by force, resorted to treachery to accomplish its ends. It was the idea of Lord Germain, British secretary of war, that some of the American leaders could be bought and Clinton fell in with the scheme.

But the British plan to seduce American leaders was getting nowhere until June, 1778, when the Continental forces again occupied Philadelphia and Gen. Benedict Arnold was made military governor of the city. Then, says Haines: "By this time Peggy Shippen was deep in the Tory conspiracy. At least three times during the winter of 1777-78 she had carried important letters from spies in Philadelphia to British agents in New York. Galloway and Germain determined to use her to break down Arnold. A patriot by early conviction, Arnold soon was led to favor Peggy's family and their Tory friends. A man originally of simple tastes, he was lured into extravagance by the pace set by the Shippen entertainments. A widower, twenty years older than Peggy, he was flattered by her apparent preference for him."

"In April, 1778, Arnold and Peggy were married. That she could have preferred this lame, middle-aged Continental general to Andre is not conceivable. There is evidence that it was Andre, not Arnold, whom she loved, and that she pre-

ently wished to escape from the web which she herself had helped to spin. Her family and relations brought tremendous pressure to bear upon her, as their letters show. Elizabeth Tilghman, writing to Peggy's sister, Elizabeth, says that "poor Peggy was Burgoyne'd into marrying Arnold."

"In April, 1779 (the very month and year in which the unhappy marriage took place) Sir Henry Clinton was sure for the first time that Arnold had become so deeply enmeshed in the net of intrigue that the conspirators had woven about him that the great climax of the conspiracy was at hand."

Arnold, influenced by his wife (according to some historians), sought and, after being refused once, obtained command at West Point, the key to the whole Continental defense system. He corresponded in code with both Andre and Clinton. His wife also continued to write to Andre and to receive letters from him.

Haines declares that the "military letters" which passed between Peggy and Andre, having to do with the purchase of various articles of clothing, were code messages relating to the plans for handing West Point over to the British. Randolph Adams, from his researches among the Clinton papers in the University of Michigan library, says of this: "A son had been born to Arnold and Peggy Shippen just before the treason. We have actual evidence of her desire to buy baby's clothing in New York, for there were no shops in West Point like those in lower Manhattan. Her list of demands for 'pink ribbon' and 'diaper clotting' is among the other papers, sent by one of the British spies to New York. "The spectacle of the rejected suitor, Major Andre, buying these articles for Benedict Arnold's baby does not usually figure in history. Yet the number of times that the wants of the Arnold baby figure in the correspondence is significant of some knowledge on Mrs. Arnold's part that her husband was engaging in a rather familiar correspondence with the British headquarters."

Adams also declares that "An examination of Andre's papers in the Clinton collection serves only to blacken yet more the character of Benedict Arnold." But Haines, who is convinced of Peggy Shippen's guilt, says of Arnold: "Traitor he was; but he was also betrayed, and by means of an influence to which many of the great of the earth have been susceptible—the lure of a beautiful woman."

But whatever Peggy Shippen's part in the conspiracy, she paid bitterly for it in the end. When a series of blunders resulted in the premature exposure of the plot she found herself left behind by her husband when he fled to the British; she soon learned that Andre, her lover (if he was her lover), was to die on the scaffold; and she went back to Philadelphia, only to be expelled from her native city as "dangerous to the public safety." During the remaining years of the war she lived in New York with British and Tory friends while her husband fought with the British against his former comrades.

When the Revolution ended she went with him to England and there she had a brief taste of the glory she had hoped for. She was welcomed as a national heroine, publicly thanked at the court of King George and given a pension of 500 pounds a year and a bonus of 350 pounds for "meritorious services." But even though the Arnolds won the gratitude of the British officials, the English public would have none of them. They were slighted and insulted in society and Peggy's triumph was short-lived. "The final chapter is the dead ashes of disillusionment," writes Haines. "Arnold died in poverty. Yet after his death, as she herself wrote, Peggy paid off all his debt, 'within four or five hundred pounds' and still had left 'property and investments of her own.' She lived three years longer than he, dying in 1804 at the early age of forty-four—too soon, by some decades, to sit to Thackeray, as she might well have done, for his portrait of Becky Sharp."

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TWIN SOULS

"When the Judge ruled that Bjones had to pay alimony, how did he feel about it?"

"Chagrined."
"And how did his wife feel about it?"
"She grinned."—Pathfinder Magazine.

Not in His Line

The company director shook his head.

"My dear man," he said, "there are hundreds of ways of making money, but only one that's honest."
The company promoter looked puzzled.

"What's that?" he asked.
"Ah," smiled the other, "I thought you wouldn't know!"

Shade

"Was there any shade in the desert?"

"Yes, but I couldn't get in it."
"Why not?"
"Have you ever tried to sit in your own shadow?"

The System

"You advertise that you make suits while customers wait. Is that so?"

"Yes, you order a suit, pay a deposit, and go home and wait until it is ready."—Vart Hem.

Comforting

Passenger—Porter, two of my trunk's contents are missing.

Porter—Yes, lady, but don't worry your head about 'em—this ain't a dressy place.—Omaha World-Herald.

WASTED EFFORT

Tommy had been caught red-handed in the pantry.

"My son," said his father, sadly, "you have acted very wrongly. It may seem a small offense, but it has for its foundations one of the prime causes of the world's unhappiness—disobedience. I am more than angry. I am deeply grieved. I want my son to grow up a fine, honorable man. I want him—." He paused for breath.

Little Tommy turned and looked up to his mother.

"Mum," he said, "isn't dad most frightfully interesting?"—London Answers.

Her Own Difficulties

The teacher was having her trials and finally wrote the mother: "Your son is the brightest boy in my class, but he is also the most mischievous. What shall I do?"

The reply came duly: "Do as you please. I am having my own troubles with his father."—Royal Arcanum Bulletin.

WONDERFUL CURE



"I understand the voyage has cured you of insomnia."

"Yes. Completely."
"It must be a great relief."
"Relief! I should say so. Why I lay awake half the night thinking how I used to suffer with it."

Came?

"I understand that your wife came from a fine old family."

"'Came' is hardly the word—she brought it with her."—Laughs.



Earned What He Got
Jones—I did not marry beauty, my boy; I did not marry wealth or position; I married for sympathy.
Brown—Well, you have mine.—Stray Stories.

Something Missing
New Stenographer (after employer has dictated a letter)—I'm sorry, Mr. Jones—what did you say between "Dear sir" and "yours faithfully"?
—London Tit-Bits.

A Quicker Way To Ease Headaches

HERE I AM... A BIG DINNER PARTY ON HAND... AND ANOTHER OF MY BAD HEADACHES. WHAT CAN I DO?

EVER TRY BAYER ASPIRIN? TAKE 2 TABLETS AND YOUR HEADACHE WILL BE GONE IN A JIFFY!



2 BEFORE THE DINNER. THAT BAYER ASPIRIN YOU SUGGESTED IS SIMPLY WONDERFUL! MY HEADACHE WAS ENTIRELY GONE IN A FEW MINUTES—

I KNEW IT WOULD BE... BAYER ASPIRIN WORKS SO FAST!



A Discovery that's Bringing Fast Relief to Millions

Now comes amazingly quick relief from headaches, rheumatism, neuritis, neuralgia... the fastest safe relief, it is said, yet discovered.

Those results are due to a scientific discovery by which a Bayer Aspirin Tablet begins to dissolve, or disintegrate, in the amazing space of two seconds after touching moisture. And hence to start "taking hold" of pain a few minutes after taking.

The illustration of the glass, here, tells the story. A Bayer Tablet starts to disintegrate almost instantly you swallow it. And thus is ready to go to work almost instantly.

When you buy, though, see that you get the Genuine BAYER Aspirin. For Bayer Aspirin's quick relief always say "BAYER Aspirin."

WHY BAYER ASPIRIN WORKS SO FAST

Drop a Bayer Tablet in a glass of water. Note that BEFORE it touches bottom, it has started to disintegrate.

What it does in this glass it does in your stomach. Hence its fast action.



Does Not Harm the Heart

It is the Dollars

... that circulate among ourselves, in our own community, that in the end build our schools and churches, pave our streets, lay our sidewalks, increase our farm values, attract more people to this section. Buying our merchandise in our local stores means keeping our dollars at home to work for all of us.