

## From ‘Excellent Officer’ to ‘Little Consequence’: The Deterioration of Gates and Arnold’s Relationship at Saratoga

---

Doug Allen

In 1852, British historian Sir Edward Creasy labeled the Battle of Saratoga as one of the fifteen most influential battles of the world. No other “military event,” he argued, could “be said to have exercised more important influence on the future fortunes of mankind, than the complete defeat of Burgoyne’s” army at Saratoga.<sup>1</sup> Creasy goes on to state that in this battle Benedict Arnold “did more for his countrymen than whole battalions could have effected.”<sup>2</sup> Benedict Arnold is not primarily remembered for his contributions at the Battle of Saratoga; He is better remembered for his infamous defection and betrayal of the American cause. Benedict Arnold’s legacy is so inseparably linked with his treachery that his name has become synonymous with betrayal—so much so that Dan Gilbert, in the effort to link LeBron James’ “cowardly betrayal” of the Cleveland Cavaliers with Benedict Arnold, lowered the price of the LeBron James wall portrait to \$17.41, Arnold’s birth year.<sup>3</sup>

Arnold’s betrayal, however, is more complex than is commonly remembered or portrayed. In fact, if Dan Gilbert was more knowledgeable of the many factors, of which money may have been secondary, leading to Arnold’s betrayal, he would have probably avoided the connection altogether. Arnold’s betrayal developed from a series slights ranging from seniority and rank issues between Arnold and the Continental Congress to personal envy issues between Arnold and Horatio Gates. Ultimately, Arnold’s own superiors, like Gates, pushed him over the edge towards treason. Though Arnold and Gates began the war as friends, by the Battle of Saratoga in 1777 Arnold and Gates were engaged in a feud that contributed to Arnold’s infamous betrayal.

Even before Saratoga, Benedict Arnold and Horatio Gates developed a strange and strained relationship. Arnold proved his worth to the Continental army in 1775, at the Siege of Boston. Arnold co-commanded the force that captured Fort Ticonderoga’s arsenal of cannons without a shot. These cannons were then transported by Henry Knox to be used by Washington to feint the British army into retreating from Boston back to England. This feat caught the attention of Horatio Gates, a military veteran of the French and Indian War. After Washington acquiesced to Gates’ push for an invasion of Canada, Gates and Washington both agreed Arnold should lead the assault. Gates even helped Arnold prepare for his expedition through the Canada wilderness to capture Quebec. When Gates was selected to take over the American army in Canada, Arnold expressed happiness that Gates was on his way. Arnold even wrote Gates: “I

---

<sup>1</sup> Edward Creasy, *The Fifteen Most Decisive Battles of the World: From Marathon to Waterloo*, (Richard Bentley: London, 1852), 463.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 482.

<sup>3</sup> Ricky Doyle, “Cavs Owner Dan Gilbert Changes Price of LeBron James Fatheads to Benedict Arnold's Birth Year,” NESN.com, 9 July 2010, via <http://www.nesn.com/2010/07/cavs-owner-dan-gilbert-changes-price-of-lebron-james-fatheads-to-benedict-arnolds-birth-year.html> (05 March 2011)

shall be ever happy in your friendship.” Though the Americans failed to capture it, the expedition itself showed Arnold’s leadership and began what seemed to be an enduring friendship between Gates and Arnold.<sup>4</sup>

Gates became Arnold’s patron general during Arnold’s finest hours early in the war. In fact, it is not an overstatement to say Arnold saved the revolution at Valcour Island. Knowing that the Continental army could not withstand another British attack, Benedict Arnold suggested building a navy on Lake Champlain. Gates put Arnold in charge of the operation and made sure to praise and protect from Arnold from his critics. While Arnold raced against the British to build a fleet of ships on the shores of Lake Champlain, Gates wrote to Congress in the summer of 1776, “General Arnold, who is perfectly skilled in naval affairs, has most nobly undertaken to command our fleet.” He added that he was “convinced” Arnold would “add to the brilliant reputation he has so deservedly acquired.”<sup>5</sup>

Gates even protected Arnold from arrest at this crucial juncture. After Arnold accused Colonel Moses Hazen of incompetence for allowing supplies to be stolen during the Canadian campaign, Hazen demanded a court-martial to clear his name. During this court-martial Arnold’s key witness, a Major Scott, was barred from testifying by the court. Arnold exploded in one of his infamous angry eruptions, insulting the court to the point that they demanded he apologize. Arnold refused in a similarly explosive episode, leading the court to order Arnold’s arrest. Gates, however, came to Arnold’s rescue. Writing to Congress, Gates informed them that the “United States must not be deprived of that excellent officer’s service at this important moment.” Arnold avoided this political bullet that could have ruined his military career and Gates had been the one to pull him out of its way.<sup>6</sup>

Arnold, feeling indebted to Gates for being his patron and protector, treated Gates as a respected friend and superior. As Arnold continued to build his navy from scratch it became evident he needed more men and resources. Arnold disguised his requests for men and resources inside letters updating Gates on the status of the fleet at every turn. Arnold also asked Gates for his approval and suggestions on where to place the new American navy. Writing only a couple of weeks before the important naval battle, Arnold states he is moving the navy near Valcour Island and, in an obvious sign of respect Arnold would not have shown less than a year later, ends with “if you do not approve, will return.” These acts of tact from the tactless Arnold seem to indicate a sense of respect for Gates.<sup>7</sup> Arnold, with Gates’ support, helped save revolution at Valcour

---

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Cummins, *Great Rivals in History: When Politics Gets Personal*, (Sidney, Australia: Pier 9, 2008), 152; James Kirby Martin, *Benedict Arnold, Revolutionary Hero: An American Warrior Reconsidered*, (New York University Press: New York and London, 1997), 227; For more on the march to Quebec see: Thomas Desjardin, *Through Howling Wilderness: Benedict Arnold’s March to Quebec, 1775*, (St. Martin’s Press: New York, 2006); James Huston, “The Logistics of Arnold’s March to Quebec,” *Military Affairs*, Vol. 32, No. 3, (Dec. 1968), 110-24.

<sup>5</sup> Isaac Arnold, *The Life of Benedict Arnold: His Patriotism and His Treason*, (Jansen, McClung & Co: Chicago, 1880), 107-109.

<sup>6</sup> Willard Wallace, “Benedict Arnold: Traitorous Patriot,” in *George Washington’s Generals and Opponents: Their Exploits and Leadership*, George Billias, Ed. (First Da Capo Press, 1994), 174-175.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*; The only other letters Arnold writes that hold this level of tactfulness are the letters to Washington, whom Arnold revered like a father, and Arnold’s mentor General Schuyler, whom Arnold respected more than nearly anyone.

Island. As Arnold historian Willard Randall states, though two-thirds of the American fleet had been destroyed, “never had any force, big or small, lived to [a] better purpose.”<sup>8</sup> This victory showed the potential of Arnold and Gates when they were working together towards a single goal.

Both Arnold and Gates, however, had large egos and the situation that materialized seems like an old Western; the American officer corps was not big enough for the two of them. Due to these immense egos, Gates and Arnold’s amiable relationship dissolved after Arnold’s victorious defeat at Valcour Island. The issues between Arnold and Gates began with Gates’s usurpation of General Schuyler and culminated with a number of problems at Saratoga. A subtle shift in Arnold’s views about Gates can be seen in the closing of his letters in 1776 and 1777. Arnold signed his early 1776 letters to Gates, “I am, with real affection and esteem, dear General, your obedient, humble servant.” While this may seem like a formality of the age, for Arnold this was also used as a personal statement of respect for the recipient. Only a year later, after Gates had taken command for Schuyler, Arnold no longer signed his letters to Gates in this fashion. He simply signed, “I am, &c.” Though these two closings are essentially the same in meaning, Arnold continually signed his letters to Washington and Schuyler with a full closing while signing letters to Gates in the abbreviated form.<sup>9</sup> These closings show a quiet build-up to the explosive battle between Arnold and Gates at the Battle of Saratoga.

Arnold set the stage for the Battle of Saratoga, the combination of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> battles of Freeman’s Farm, when he chose Bemis Heights as the site of the contest in early September of 1777. Gates then ordered the area around Bemis Heights, about ten miles south of the town of Saratoga, to be fortified in preparation of an attack. For about a week the American forces traded their muskets for shovels and dug themselves in at Bemis Heights. When the British, under command of British general John Burgoyne, finally arrived at Saratoga, the Americans were firmly entrenched at Bemis Heights. To the British the Americans must have looked like a cohesive unit prepared to stick together through a long battle. If this is what the British believed, though, they would have been wrong as disagreements between Arnold and Gates had already begun.<sup>10</sup>

This feud between the former friends began even before the British and American forces met on the field of battle and began primarily because of military politics. General Horatio Gates and his partisans had been maneuvering to overtake General Philip Schuyler, an even closer friend of Arnold than Gates, as commander of the Northern Army. Gates’ maneuvering ended in triumph when Schuyler turned over his command to Gates on August 19, 1777, at the behest of Congress. While Gates received the command of the Northern Army, Arnold received word from

---

<sup>8</sup> For more on the Battle of Valcour Island see: James L. Nelson, *Benedict Arnold’s Navy: The Ragtag Fleet that Lost the Battle of Lake Champlain but Won the American Revolution*, (McGraw Hill: Ohio, 2006); Quote, Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Major Operations of the Navies*, (Little, Brown, and Company: Boston, 1913); Quote found in Willard Sterne Randall, *Benedict Arnold: Patriot and Traitor*, (Quill: New York, 1990), 317.

<sup>9</sup> Benedict Arnold to Horatio Gates, 31 August 1776; Benedict Arnold to Horatio Gates, 28 August 1777; Benedict Arnold to Philip Schuyler, 24 October 1776; Benedict Arnold to George Washington, 6 March 1780, found at Familytales, via <http://www.familytales.org/results.php?tla=bea> (6 March 2011)

<sup>10</sup> Willard Sterne Randall, *Benedict Arnold: Patriot and Traitor*, (Quill: New York, 1990), 350-52.

Congress that they would not restore his seniority. This put Arnold in a “defiant mood,” and he retaliated against Gates and Congress by naming Colonel Livingston and Richard Varick, former Schuyler aides, to his own staff. Livingston and Varick were unabashed Schuyler partisans and acted as constant reminders that Schuyler’s influence had not totally been purged. Arnold, thus, fired the first shot in this feud, but it quickly became mutually hostile during the Saratoga Campaign.<sup>11</sup>

Arnold’s placement of Livingston and Varick on his staff was a slap in the face to Gates, and Gates retaliated in kind. Gates had been given the power to “suspend any officers for misconduct.”<sup>12</sup> With this knowledge, Gates attempted to goad the quick-tempered Arnold into defying orders. This would allow Gates to either suspend Arnold or force him into getting rid of the rest of Schuyler’s staff. Gates’ attempt to goad Arnold took the form of a routine camp duty. As was customary of the second-in-command, Arnold had the duty to assign incoming militia units to their respective commands. He fulfilled this duty of assigning the New York and Connecticut militia units to their brigades only to wake up on the morning of September 10<sup>th</sup> to find his orders countermanded in the days general orders.<sup>13</sup> The general orders for September 10<sup>th</sup> were posted around the camp for all to see. Gates had overridden Arnold’s orders publically and, in an added insult, did not tell Arnold beforehand. Even worse, according to Arnold, was having the orders countermanded by Deputy Adjutant Wilkinson, the officer actually signing and authorizing the general orders. To have his orders reversed by a camp aid was the highest insult of all. Arnold, though within walking distance of Gates’ tent, became so angered that he scratched out a letter to Gates late in September exclaiming his resentment at being placed in the “ridiculous light of presuming to give orders I had no right to do and having them publicly contradicted.”<sup>14</sup> Gates’ posting of these general orders angered Arnold like never before and ratcheted up the Gates-Arnold feud.

The relationship between Gates and Arnold may have still been salvageable at this point but events that followed at the Battle of Freeman’s Farm and the Battle of Bemis Heights would drive a permanent wedge between them.<sup>15</sup> On the morning of September 19, 1777, Burgoyne, pressured by dwindling supplies, ordered his men to march towards the American position at Bemis Heights. Gates, an especially cautious commander, thought the best course of action was to wait behind the Bemis Heights fortifications for Burgoyne. Arnold, however, urged Gates to take a much more aggressive strategy. The two engaged in a heated argument about which course of action to take, even though Gates was never going to acquiesce to Arnold’s plan. Finally, in a mutually disagreeable compromise, Gates agreed to allow Arnold to send Daniel Morgan’s riflemen and Henry Dearborn’s light infantry on a reconnaissance mission; Arnold,

---

<sup>11</sup> James Kirby Martin, *Benedict Arnold, Revolutionary Hero: An American Warrior Reconsidered*, (New York University Press: New York and London, 1997), 364-68.

<sup>12</sup> President of Congress to Horatio Gates, August 14, 1777, Mss., Gates Papers, N-YHS, found in Randall, 354.

<sup>13</sup> Randall, 354.

<sup>14</sup> Benedict Arnold to Horatio Gates, September 22, 1777, Mss., Gates Papers, N-YHS, found in Randall, 354.

<sup>15</sup> Randall, 354-355.

however, would have to remain in the camp.<sup>16</sup> Though Gates had made this concession to Arnold, Gates began to exclude Arnold from offering his plans and stopped inviting Arnold to staff meetings. This only further insulted and angered Arnold's large, yet fragile, ego.<sup>17</sup> Morgan's Riflemen, meanwhile, reached the farm of loyalist John Freeman at the same time as Burgoyne's main army. Morgan and his men took aim at the British, specifically the British officers, and fired a couple volleys. Though the Battle of Freeman's Farm had begun, it was still the Gates-Arnold battle that offered the greatest threat to the Americans.<sup>18</sup>

Arnold, the official commanding officer of the American troops engaged in the battle, ordered out a number of the remaining troops from his left flank, but as the battle continued it became clear to Arnold that he could rout and possibly destroy Burgoyne's army with a larger portion of the American army. Repeatedly he asked for more troops from Gates, though considering Arnold's infamous lack of tact Gates most likely viewed these pleas for more troops as demands rather than requests. Gates denied Arnold's requests believing it would pull too many men away from the defense of Bemis Heights. In addition, Gates had a "healthy respect for the British soldier's skill with the bayonet," coupled with "little faith in [the American troops] fighting competence."<sup>19</sup> As a result, Gates looked to avoid an open field battle with the British. The predictably cautious Gates most likely had "little faith" in these troops ability to rout the powerful British army no matter the general in charge, but this would have been lost on Arnold. Arnold saw everything in personal terms and Gates' refusal to send more troops, as far as Arnold was concerned, was part of the ongoing feud between them.

While Gates sat in his tent with his aides and friends, Arnold frantically sent orders to the front lines. Arnold, apparently fed up with being out of the action, eventually rode to the front to personally lead an attack against British general Fraser. Though now engaged personally in leading men in battle, Arnold still returned to Gates a number of times to request more troops with which to defeat the British. Still, Gates refused, even calling back one of Arnold's regiments to guard his headquarters.<sup>20</sup> Finally, after Arnold had ridden back yet again to request more troops, Gates succumbed to Arnold's request, but Gates, fed up with his insubordinate underling, had to show Arnold his place. Instead of sending Arnold with more troops, Gates sent Larned's Brigade. This brigade got lost in the woods on the way to battle, which certainly would not have happened if Arnold, who had ridden this trail numerous times to request troops, been allowed to lead them.

With the delay of these troops and the loss of Arnold's leadership, the battle began to tilt in favor of the British. As Arnold paced in front of Gates' tent, Colonel Morgan Lewis rode up and told Gates the battle was not going well. Arnold, furious at *his* signature victory slipping away, immediately rode off towards the battle only to be given a direct order to return to camp

---

<sup>16</sup> James Lunt, *John Burgoyne of Saratoga*, (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York and London, 1975), 209-29.

<sup>17</sup> Randall, 355.

<sup>18</sup> Lunt, 209-29.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 209; Martin, 370.

<sup>20</sup> Barry Wilson, *Benedict Arnold: A Traitor in Our Midst*, (McGill-Queen's University Press: Quebec City, 2001) 139-40.

by Gates. Arnold, being a man concerned with military honor, could not ignore or defy a direct order from a superior, at least at this point.<sup>21</sup> The American forces were eventually forced to retreat to their defenses at Bemis Heights, but they had delivered an important blow to Burgoyne's army thanks to the command of Arnold, the field leadership of Morgan, and the marksmanship of Morgan's Riflemen.

This marked only the beginning of the Arnold-Gates feud. After the 1<sup>st</sup> Battle of Freeman's Farm Gates wrote the official report to Congress, but he did not even mention Arnold by name in the report despite the nearly universal agreement by the field commanders that Arnold deserved most of the credit for the successes of the battle. Arnold, already angry at Gates' refusal to give him the troops he needed to defeat Burgoyne, now became even more infuriated at the insult dealt him when Gates' refusal to give him or his men credit for their part in the Battle of Freeman's Farm. To add injury to insult, Gates removed Morgan's Riflemen from Arnold's command and put them under his own. Since Gates commanded the center of the American forces and Arnold had command of the left flank, this move made no military strategic sense. The move simply served as a political move to humiliate Arnold by stripping him of his best troops and his friend Daniel Morgan. Arnold stormed to Gates' tent to demand an explanation. The two could be heard shouting "high words and gross language" at each other from outside the tent. In the end, "Arnold retired in rage" because Gates had informed Arnold that when General Lincoln arrived in camp, only about one or two days away, Arnold would be relieved of divisional command. In addition, Gates told Arnold he was "of little consequence to the army," and would gladly give Arnold a pass to leave.<sup>22</sup>

Arnold took Gates' offer and requested to "join General Washington." Arnold, though, could not ignore a chance to take a shot at Gates, stating he would "serve my country, although I am thought of no consequence in this department."<sup>23</sup> This remark was especially insulting to Gates considering he had been suspected by Nathanael Greene of attempting to conspire with Congressman Thomas Mifflin to "supplant His Excellency from the command of the Army and get General Gates at the head of it."<sup>24</sup> This remark, in essence, told Gates he had made a mistake believing Arnold was not valuable to the army and Washington would not make such an ignorant mistake.

However, when Arnold's men and the officers in Gates' army heard he might leave, or the even worse rumor that he might quit the army altogether, they took action. Arnold's aide Colonel Livingston wrote to Philip Schuyler that "When the general officers and soldiers heard of [Arnold's leaving], they were greatly alarmed." They then took action by writing a letter to Arnold, "signed by all the general officers, excepting Lincoln, urging him to remain."<sup>25</sup> Arnold, enamored with the support of his troops and anticipating another confrontation with Burgoyne's

---

<sup>21</sup> Randall, 358-59

<sup>22</sup> James Wilkinson, *Memoirs of My Own Times*, Vol., 1, (Abraham Small: Philadelphia, 1816), 254-256.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Terry Golway, *Washington's General: Nathanael Greene and the Triumph of the American Revolution*, (Owl Books: New York, 2006), 156-57.

<sup>25</sup> Livingston to Schuyler, September 23, 1777, found in Isaac Arnold, *Life of Benedict Arnold: His Patriotism and His Treason*, (Jansen, McClurg, and Co.: Chicago, 1880), 178.

army, requested Gates to reinstate him to a command, an act that must have pained Arnold to make. Gates, again seeking to put Arnold in his place, refused to give Arnold back his command unless he relieved his aide Colonel Livingston. Arnold, intensely loyal to those loyal to him, ardently refused, but Livingston and Varick resigned on their own rather than be liabilities for their friend.<sup>26</sup> Things seemed to be looking up for Arnold, Gates, and the American army. Arnold had his command and the support of the majority in Gates' army. Gates had put Arnold in his place again and had successfully exculpated the last remnants of Schuyler's command. The American army had withstood Burgoyne's first attack and survived, for the moment, the larger battle going on inside its own officer's ranks.

The Arnold-Gates feud was not over though; it was not even declining in ferocity. Although Gates had offered to give Arnold back a command if he relieved Livingston, Gates still excluded Arnold from staff meetings. Worse, he gave Lincoln full command of the right flank and took the left flank, Arnold's previous command, under himself. He also declared if Arnold was caught objecting to this arrangement or issuing his own orders Arnold would be arrested for insubordination.<sup>27</sup> Gates was very effectively undercutting Arnold's authority and influence with the army. Arnold, not to be outdone in this feud, continued to send Gates advice by letter despite Gates obvious disregard for Arnold's opinion.<sup>28</sup> On October 1, Arnold, probably sensing the coming battle, wrote to Gates, "Conscious of my own innocency and integrity, I am determined to sacrifice my feelings and continue in the army at this critical juncture, when my country needs every support."<sup>29</sup> Gates had no intention of letting Arnold back into any part of the army. Gates saw Arnold not only as an impetuous, risky commander but also a true threat and rival for his authority with the soldiers, perhaps displacing him just as he had displaced Schuyler.<sup>30</sup>

On the morning of October 7, Burgoyne personally led a reconnaissance force towards Bemis Heights. As Gates sat in his tent with his aides Wilkinson, the pickets reported the advance of Burgoyne's force. Gates seemed as if he would do nothing until he suddenly requested Morgan to attack, probably at the behest of Morgan himself, maybe even acting on Arnold's behalf. Whatever the reason, Gates ordered Morgan to advance on Burgoyne's army and attack much as Arnold would have liked. Arnold, however, was under a quasi-house arrest and acted as surprised as anyone when the battle began.<sup>31</sup>

Arnold would not sit idly in his tent as the battle continued though. As the apocryphal story goes, Arnold heard the gunfire as Morgan's Riflemen opened fire on the British. He walked out and paced back and forth in front of his tent as the sounds of battle rang in the air. Eventually, no longer patient enough to wait for news, Arnold rode to Gates' tent. There he grew even more impatient when he saw Gates sitting outside his tent while his division, the one he was supposed to be commanding, was in battle. Arnold, his impatience tested to its limits, jumped on

---

<sup>26</sup> Randall, 362.

<sup>27</sup> Martin, 391.

<sup>28</sup> Randall, 362-63.

<sup>29</sup> Issac Arnold, 194.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Martin, 395.

his horse, dug in his spurs, and galloped full speed towards the sound of battle to the cheers of the soldiers in the camp. Gates watched Arnold gallop off with what must have been extreme shock and rage. He immediately sent an aide to order Arnold back, but the aide had no hope of catching the determined Arnold. When Arnold decided on a course of action, especially the rebellious type, there was no turning back.<sup>32</sup>

As Arnold rode towards the front lines, he rallied Americans retreating from the battle, and ultimately he became the catalyst for the monumental American victory. When Arnold arrived at the battlefield, so the story goes, he saw British general Simon Fraser leading his troops effectively against the Americans. Arnold then turned to Daniel Morgan and ordered, "That officer upon the gray horse is of himself a host, and must be disposed of; direct the attention of some of the sharpshooters among your riflemen, to him."<sup>33</sup> Moments later General Fraser had been mortally wounded and Arnold led the Americans in another charge. He charged between the two lines, bullets flying around him from both directions, forcing the British to retreat further. Arnold's leadership had given the Americans the upper hand in a battle that had been a stalemate.

However, just as Arnold had Burgoyne on the run, a bullet struck Arnold's horse and another struck his leg. Arnold's horse collapsed, pinning his unwounded leg under it. An American soldier came to help the fallen general and asked him where he had been shot. Arnold replied, "In the same leg...I wish it had been my heart."<sup>34</sup> At the time Arnold probably wished this because he knew the extent of the wound to his leg and knew that the surgeon would want to amputate it. However, his words, if truly spoken, would take on a much different meaning later in his life.

Arnold lay on the surgeons table demanding the surgeon not cut-off his leg. Had it been anyone else the surgeon would not have even waited before amputating the leg, but Arnold's reputation and personality helped his demands win over the doctors. Arnold even insisted that he would rather die than be a cripple for the rest of his life. In the meantime, while Arnold lay in the hospital slipping in and out of consciousness, Gates reported back to Congress the news of the battle. Burgoyne had surrendered his entire army, 6,000 soldiers, in a monumental victory. Gates, as he did in Freeman's Farm, failed to give Arnold credit in the report, only mentioning that he had been wounded.<sup>35</sup> Also, while Arnold fought for his life, Gates, who spent most of the battle in his tent arguing with British prisoner Sir Francis Clarke, accepted Burgoyne's sword that Arnold had fought so hard to attain for the Americans.<sup>36</sup>

After three arduous months recovering from his leg wound, Arnold's fortunes seemed to be improving. He had survived a second wound to his leg while leading the Americans to their most important victory in the war; Congress had restored his seniority; Middletown, where his children attended school, hailed him as an American hero; and after being restored to active duty,

---

<sup>32</sup> Randall, 365-66.

<sup>33</sup> Isaac Arnold, 200.

<sup>34</sup> Randall, 368.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 371-72

<sup>36</sup> Lunt, 249.

Washington wasted no time in giving Arnold the prestigious appointment as military governor of Philadelphia. The city had been retaken after the victory at Saratoga, and Washington needed a trustworthy general to govern the fledgling nation's most important city. Washington, though, had dropped Arnold into a city irreparably divided by radical revolutionaries and Loyalists. As historian Willard Randall states, "It was probably the worst mistake either man ever made, placing Arnold in the middle of a murderous...political crossfire."<sup>37</sup>

While in Philadelphia Arnold would turn from the consummate patriot to a despised traitor, and if not for the fortuitous capture of Major John Andre', he would have succeeded in not only handing the British the important fort at West Point but also handing over the top military leaders of the Continental Army, including Washington himself. Arnold's name became synonymous with traitor, "to be forever associated with the absence of light."<sup>38</sup> Congress even passed a resolution directing the "Board of War to erase Arnold's name from the register United States army officers."<sup>39</sup> Arnold went home after the war a broken, defamed, and poor man. He died June 14, 1801, leaving his family with overwhelming debt. His obituary in a Massachusetts newspaper illustrates his legacy in America. It simply reads, "Died—In England, Brigadier-General Benedict Arnold; notorious throughout the world."<sup>40</sup> Arnold's life went into a steep decline after Saratoga that ended with his death in poverty and obscurity.

Saratoga is the place when Arnold lost two of his largest patrons during time on the American side, Philip Schulyer to his institutional nemesis Congress and Gates to a short but intense feud. It is impossible to know if Arnold would have defected if he had not been entangled in a feud with his former friend Horatio Gates, but it is known that one of Arnold's many complex reasons for his defection was he felt unwanted, disrespected, and unfairly treated by Gates and Congress. The Gates-Arnold feud prevented Arnold from destroying Burgoyne in September of 1777. The feud also led to Gates not heeding Arnold's advice to deploy his troops in an attack, which forced Arnold to disobey Gates and lead an attack himself. This ended in Arnold leading the Americans to victory at Saratoga but also getting shot in the leg. Because Arnold could not ride a horse due to the crippling effects of his wound, Washington sent his best field general to be military governor of Philadelphia, a city rife with political partisanship between radicals and Loyalists. While in Philadelphia Arnold courted and married Peggy Shippen, the daughter of a Loyalist and a woman with British connections. Arnold was also persecuted and pushed further and further from the patriot cause by the radicals in Philadelphia led by Joseph Reed.

Eventually this led to Arnold betraying the American cause and the deterioration of Gates and Arnold's relationship was pivotal to this incredible course of events. As mentioned before, Dan Gilbert would not have made the connection between Benedict Arnold and LeBron James had he been more knowledgeable. The insinuation to an acute observer is that a mutually

---

<sup>37</sup> Randall, 407.

<sup>38</sup> Martin, 6.

<sup>39</sup> Benjamin H. Irvin, *Clothed in the Robes of Sovereignty: The Continental Congress and the People Out of Doors*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2011), 258.

<sup>40</sup> *Columbian Centinel* August 1, 1801.

disagreeable feud ensued between Gilbert and James, contributing to James' decision leave Cleveland. With the uproar in Cleveland over James' betrayal, any connection indicating Gilbert's ego contributed to a feud that ended in James leaving the Cavaliers would not be taken kindly.