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Hiding Place For A Spy

The Story of John Andre's
Arrest, Salvation and Execution
By Duane V. Maxey

Introduction

I first read some of the story of John Andre written by Lowell L. Foster and published in a 1976 Church Bulletin from the Emmett, Idaho Bible Missionary Church. I am indebted to him for the title of this article, being the same title as that on his story in that 1976 bulletin, and I am also indebted to about a half-dozen other writers for the additional facts in this dramatic story.

Long decades before the story of Corrie TenBoom occurred, and more than a century and a half before her well-known book "The Hiding Place" was published, the events of this story occurred, involving another "Hiding Place" that was found and entered during another war -- the American Revolutionary War. Who was the person of whom I write who found a "Hiding Place" during that war? Major John Andre, of the British Army.

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Part 1 -- 1851-1871 -- His First 20 Years Of Life

John Andre was one of the most famous prisoners of the Revolutionary War. He was born in 1751 of Huguenot parents who had found spiritual refuge in England. He was captured on September 23, 1780 by three American Patriot soldiers, John Paulding, David Williams, and Isaac Van Wart, near Tarrytown, N.Y. and was executed as a British spy by the command of Gen. George Washington at Tappan, New York on October 2, 1780 when he was only about 29 years of age. The circumstances of his death were such that one might think that ignominy and reproach would thereafter be attached to his memory. Yet, forty-one years later, he was still so highly regarded that, in 1821, his body was exhumed and reburied in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey in England -- in a spot reserved for illustrious poets!

You see, among other things, John Andre became a poet. According to Bruce Heydt, in his article, "John Andre: Westminster's Unknown Poet," one can find the name of John Andre "in Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner, alongside monuments to the likes of Tennyson, Dryden, Spenser,

Shakespeare and Chaucer." Heydt called him "a minor poet and artist" whose monument in the Abbey is a "relatively easy monument to find," yet he goes on to state: "a more difficult task for the visitor would be to locate, or even name, any works written by this nearly forgotten gallant. Devotees of great literature pass by his monument in puzzlement. Yet his death, more than two centuries ago, caused a sensation both in England and the United States."

I have read only one of John Andre's poems, one that he wrote shortly before his execution -- one that strikes me as divinely inspired -- and, it was his dying testimony. A copy of that entire poetic testimony is found near the conclusion of this article, but first, let us fill in some of the blanks between the time of his birth in 1751 to the time of his execution at Tappan, New York in 1780.

Besides the fact that he was born in 1751 of Huguenot parents who had for spiritual refuge emigrated from their homeland to England, I have found nothing about the first 20 years of Andre's life -- not so much as even the exact place of his birth. However, the words of his final, poetic testimony do seem to indicate that he was raised in perhaps a quite devout home.

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Part 2 -- 1771-1778 -- Popular Young British Officer In America

It would be interesting to learn more of his early years and to read some of his other poetry, but I have found nothing more about him until his mind apparently turned from its focus upon the poetic to the military. According to Heydt, Andre "bought a commission in the Royal Welch Fusiliers" in 1771. And, Heydt goes on to state that he "studied military engineering in Europe until 1774, when he sailed for America to join his regiment, arriving just eight months prior to the outbreak of open warfare between Britain and its North American colonies."

So, here we have a young man of about 23 years of age, apparently quite bright, setting out upon a military career, who arrived on American shores just prior to the commencement of our Revolutionary War. Had he then realized that he had only about 6 more years to live, he might have lived differently. But, he was a handsome young man, popular among both the British Loyalists and the American Patriots, and by his own poetic testimony he was, for the next 6 years caught up in the whirl of worldly loves and pursuits. His last testimony describes his spiritual condition and state of mind during those years:

**Enwrap in thick Egyptian night,
And fond of darkness more than light,
Madly I ran the sinful race,
Secure -- without a Hiding Place!**

Between the years 1774 to 1780, Andre was at war -- not simply at war against the foes of the British Army, but at war with God -- at war, it would appear, with much that he had been raised to reverence. As an officer in the British Army, in his worldly life-style he pitted himself at the same time against the Great Creator -- again, his last testimony states:

**Against the God who built the sky
I fought with hands uplifted high--
Despised the mention of His grace,
Too proud to seek a Hiding Place.**

So, here we have a dashing and popular young British officer on American shores, hostile to God and haughty in his disdain toward the very mention of His grace! How soon would he experience the truth of Proverbs 16:18!: -- "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." During those proud years he knew nothing of the great trauma that would befall him in 1780 and the "strait gate" that was to usher him into Christ's Kingdom, first spiritually, and then eternally!

Twice it was that John Andre was taken prisoner on the American continent. He was first captured in the year 1775 by Gen. Richard Montgomery in the Quebec campaign. That time, fate seemed to smile upon the young man, for he was exchanged and shortly thereafter he became Adjutant General in the British Army under Sir Henry Clinton. In his worldly ambition and pride, this might have given him somewhat of a sense of invulnerability -- like that experienced by Goliath just prior to his destruction, and like that of many others who have one or more times had narrow escapes. This time Promotion, instead of Destruction, visited him and regardless of the exact impression this made upon him, it is apparent that it did nothing to turn him back toward God.

Heydt wrote: "During the war, Andre forged two relationships that eventually made this aspiring poet and upstart strategist internationally famous. First, he used his personal charm and command of foreign languages to obtain the position of adjutant to the British commander-in-chief, Sir Henry Clinton. On the social side, Andre spent much of the winter of 1777-1778, during the British occupation of Philadelphia, with a well-placed and attractive Philadelphia loyalist named Peggy Shippen. In contrast to his well-planned professional connections, Andre seems to have wanted nothing more out of his association with Peggy than the company of a pretty young woman."

So, in spite of all of the dangers of war, promoted by his charm into high position in the British Army, and socially popular and debonair, Major (then Adjutant) John Andre continued to "madly run the sinful race, secure, without a true Hiding Place." Another author wrote of him: "A favorite of British General Sir Henry Clinton, the handsome young major was also popular with Philadelphia 'high society;' intelligent and witty, Andre was

noted for the elaborate entertainments he wrote and designed for parties." He was still totally caught up in the whirl of the social flings of worldly Britishers and Americans, blithely marching toward what probably then appeared to him as a future of fame, honor, and worldly bliss. But, even though now he, and his social friends, were partying like Belshazzar, the time was hastening toward him when he would be stunned by a "handwriting upon the wall" that would sober him, suddenly and painfully. Albeit, the story was to have a much better ending than that of his Biblical counterpart.

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Part 3 -- Enter, Benedict Arnold

The British Army, including Major John Andre, left Philadelphia in the spring of 1778, and then Andre's friendship with Peggy Shippen took on a quite important military significance through Benedict Arnold. Since John Andre's sad fate was directly connected to the traitorous offer of Benedict Arnold, let us divert for a few paragraphs to sketch something about this man who became so odious in American memory and history. Arnold's fate and the fate of John Andre became so intertwined that to tell the full account of the latter one must say at least something of the former.

Benedict Arnold was somewhat of an inigma -- a man who became a hero to both the Americans and the British, but who died in ignominy and reproach. He was an apothecary merchant in New Haven, Connecticut and became a zealous Patriot and militia captain. Arnold was 34 years old when the fighting began at Lexington and Concord in April of 1775. And, at the time of the Boston Massacre he rallied militiamen to aid in the siege against that city. After this, he managed to get the Massachusetts Committee of Safety to make him a colonel.

Glory, fame, and selfish ends seem to have become his primary motivations early on. After one military victory, Arnold presented an inflated claim for expenses in Massachusetts currency -- and vehemently protested when the items were examined separately.

In May of 1775 he with Ethan Allen led the force that captured Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Chaplain. His heroics continued into the Fall of 1775 when he led 1,150 riflemen against the capital of British Canada, Quebec. He was a hard, but persistent military leader. Because of privations and other problems his force was reduced to 650 men by the time they reached Quebec.

Whatever may have been his driving motivation at that time, Arnold was undeterred by the heavy losses. General Richard Montgomery joined him with 300 troops after capturing Montreal. Then, Arnold's forces attacked Quebec, which was strongly fortified. The assault ended in disaster. One hundred Americans were killed, including Montgomery. Four hundred were taken captive, and many were wounded, including Benedict Arnold himself, who took a musket ball through his leg as he charged over a barricade.

But he appears to have been more inspired by vain glory than by sound reason. Whatever the case, he continued his intrepid military acts during the next five years, and he gained distinction in the Revolutionary War in a number of battles including the Battle of Saratoga in which he and his men made a direct assault on the center of the British line.

Had there been such a thing as a Purple Heart in those days, he would have gained another in the Battle of Saratoga, where he was again wounded in the leg. Writes one author: "No general was more imaginative than Arnold, no field officer more daring, no soldier more courageous." But the happenings of life have a way of revealing what makes a man tick, and as the same writer expressed it, "events illuminated Arnold's great strengths and fatal flaws and were prophetic of his ultimate fate. He was bold and creative, a man who sized up a situation and acted quickly. He was ambitious and extravagant, an egocentric man who craved power and the financial rewards that came with it. He was intrepid and ruthless, willing to risk his life and the lives of others to get what he wanted."

Nevertheless, the American Congress rewarded Arnold's intrepid heroics on the battlefield by making him a brigadier general. Then, after his horse was shot from under him during a battle in 1777, they made him a major general for his gallantry. But to put it in homespun terms, "he got too big for his britches." General Horatio Gates, the commander of the Battle of Saratoga, called him a "pompous little fellow," and relieved Arnold of his command. This humiliating demotion may have excited in Benedict Arnold's heart the first seeds and sentiments of his betrayal of the American cause.

General Washington appointed Arnold as the Commandant at Philadelphia in July 1778, after the British evacuation of the city, but by that time, his ego deeply wounded, Benedict Arnold had become an embittered man. With a spirit like that of the jealous Haman who wanted all to bow to his dignity, Arnold was now disdainful of his fellow Patriot officers, and resentful toward the American Congress for not promoting him to something higher.

Arnold's wife had died, and as the Commandant (or Governor) of the environs of Philadelphia, he threw himself into the same social circles of Philadelphia among which John Andre had mingled and held grand parties. No wonder then, that he met Peggy Shippen, Andre's former girlfriend, who at age 19 was half his age. His interest in her was more serious than that of Major Andre, for their acquaintance became a courtship that culminated in their marriage. But Peggy (Shippen) Arnold was a Loyalist, now married to the American Commandant of Philadelphia -- and this outraged Patriot citizens.

Embittered as he was, Benedict Arnold's sentiments had swung quite far away from the Patriot cause and toward the British and Loyalist side, and perhaps by then he no longer cared what Patriot Leaders and people thought of him, for he further enraged Philadelphian Patriots by having to

dinner the prominent Loyalists of the city and by standing up for their legal rights!

Beyond his marriage to a Loyalist and his advocacy of their rights, Arnold's profligate and prodigal extravagance caused him to fall deeply into debt. In his monetary plight, he was then drawn into shady financial schemes and finally into disrepute with the American Congress. After investigating his accounts Congress recommended a court-martial.

This may have been the last straw with Benedict Arnold. Bitterly, he complained: "Having ... become a cripple in the service of my country, I little expected to meet ungrateful returns." Demoted to a position much lower in his eyes than he felt he deserved, counted now as a heel instead of a hero, attacked by the Press, and under the threat of a court-martial, the stage was now being set for Arnold's traitorous betrayal of Patriot America. One writer described it thus: "Faced with financial ruin, uncertain of future promotion, and disgusted with congressional politics, Arnold made a fateful decision: he would seek fortune and fame in the service of Great Britain."

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Part 4 -- The Plot To Place West Point In British Hands

After the British evacuation of Philadelphia in 1778, some of Peggy (Shippen) Arnold's close friends had continued secret communication with John Andre and some of his friends. Peggy told her husband about this secret line of communication with the British Army, and the die was set. With his betrayal of the Patriot cause in mind, he asked her to send a message to Andre. It remained for the details of a plot to be worked out, but the conspiracy between Benedict Arnold and the British Army through John Andre was instigated.

One writer said: "General Benedict Arnold's decision in May of 1779 to offer his services to the British stands out as one of the more dramatic events of the Revolutionary War." But the fact is that his decision to do that dated back to the previous year, at the latest. From 1778 communications and negotiations between Benedict Arnold and John Andre and the British were in progress, regarding just what his treachery against the Patriots would betray to the British and what reward the traitor would receive from the British.

In the month of April 1779, John Andre was given charge of the British Secret Intelligence, and he suggested that Arnold might position himself over an army and betray that army to the British. But, because of the suspicions already resting upon him, and a crippling leg wound, Arnold thought this plan was not feasible, and it was abandoned. Following this, things stayed in limbo for a long while as Arnold continued to watch and wait for the opportunity to play the traitor.

Finally, Benedict Arnold was placed in the position to surrender something far more valuable than an American Army to the British. In 1780,

Arnold persuaded General George Washington to place him in command of West Point, at that time the most strategic fortress in America. He received that promotion in August of 1780. Then, in secret communication with Andre, he stated that he might prove his worth to the British by betraying this citadel and its 3,000 defenders into British hands. In correspondence with the British Commander, Sir Henry Clinton, he promised to turn West Point over to the British for the sum of £20,000 sterling, which amount some time back was said to be worth about \$1 Million American dollars -- maybe much more now. [As it played out, Arnold later received £6,000 from the British government and an appointment as a brigadier general.] So disenchanted and embittered was Arnold that he hoped his momentous betrayal would spark the complete collapse of the Patriot cause.

In September of 1780, Arnold moved toward the execution of his audacious plan. Arnold and Andre reached an agreement to rendezvous on the night of September 20th, 1780 in order to finalize their plot for the British capture of West Point. Arnold wanted Andre to come to that meeting in civilian clothes. But if Andre did so, and happened to be captured in civilian clothes instead of his British Army uniform, he would be subject to execution as a spy, whereas, if he were in uniform he would not be subject to that penalty, an agreement having been reached between the British and the Americans that captured officers would not be executed.

British Commander Clinton wanted to arrange for Andre and Arnold to meet openly under some pretext, ostensibly, for example, a meeting to arrange for an exchange of prisoners, or some other meeting that would appear to legitimately demand that they meet in the open, and in their military dress. In compliance with the British desire, Arnold repeatedly attempted to arrange such an ostensibly legitimate meeting, but he was never given permission by those above him to meet with a British officer, perhaps because he was even then under the eye of suspicion.

At last, Benedict Arnold convinced the British that his meeting with Andre would have to be a secret rendezvous, and a clandestine meeting was arranged. Then, as one writer put it, "from the moment that decision was made, an almost unbelievable string of bad luck sealed Andre's fate." I would not term it "bad luck," but rather a "string of painful providences" ordained by God -- that All-Wise and Sovereign Deity Who willed to thwart Arnold's perfidy and to save Andre, even at the cost of his life.

The plot was discovered and foiled, but before we relate more of the details, let us note here that in his final, poetic testimony, John Andre saw clearly that it was GOD Who thwarted that conspiracy, and GOD Who, in so doing, arrested him on his madly run sinful race so as to bring him to utter repentance and into that saving grace, the mention of which he had so long disdained. The Valley of Achor was made to him the door of Hope, for out of the ominous darkness and trauma brought upon him by his impending execution, the Angel of Mercy led him, "with beaming face, to Jesus as His Hiding place!"

But thus the eternal counsel ran:
Almighty love, arrest that man!
I felt the arrows of distress,
And found I had no Hiding Place.

Indignant Justice stood in view;
To Sinai's fiery mount I flew;
But Justice cried with frowning face,
This mountain is no Hiding Place!

Ere long a heavenly voice I heard,
And mercy's angel soon appeared:
He led me, with a beaming face,
To JESUS as a Hiding Place.

But before I preempt the entire conclusion of this dramatic story, let me pick up again the thread of this narrative that traces the "string of painful providences" that sealed Andre's fate, ushering him within a short scope of days both into Christ's spiritual Kingdom and into His Eternal Kingdom.

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Part 5 -- The Secret Meeting Between Arnold And Andre

So, a secret meeting it had to be, and with some reluctance British Commander Clinton agreed to the covert meeting, but he insisted that Andre not attend that meeting with Arnold dressed in civilian clothes, thus placing himself in danger of execution as a spy. Andre was to remain in uniform at all times, merely hiding the uniform beneath an overcoat. Clinton also decreed that Andre was not to cross behind the American lines. This "Clinton," though an enemy of the American cause at the time, seems to have been of a more noble character than a certain American "Clinton" of whom we have all heard. And, if everyone had adhered to his cautious instructions, Andre could not have been executed as a spy, even if captured.

But of course, the plot played out differently. As the quaint old saying puts it, "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." In Bible times, the proud warrior, Benhadad, felt confident of victory before the battle was fought, and the king of Israel warned him of thus being overconfident before the encounter: "Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off" (1 Kings 20:11). Things didn't work out the way that proud Syrian General planned, and his drunken celebration of victory in advance of the encounter was turned by God into a great defeat and slaughter at the hands of Israel.

Heretofore, Andre's military career had been a "heady" one -- promotion after promotion, success after success, and all mixed in with a lot

of revelry perhaps a good deal like that of Benhadad, though maybe not quite so Bacchanalian. At the peak of success one can become overconfident, and think himself untouchable, and invulnerable. I know not whether this was entirely John Andre's state of mind at this time, but judging from his final testimony it might have been. Even though he was taking precautions, he may well have felt quite confident that he would "pull it off" one more time, and return to his ranks to receive the honor of having accomplished the overthrow of West Point. He may have envisioned the defeat of Washington and his rag-tag Patriot Army and his own elevation to a position among the highest in the British Army as the result. But God ordained a much different result and a much higher prize for this young son of Huguenot parents. Let us continue the story.

Andre and Arnold were to rendezvous on the west shore of the Hudson River and south of the American lines. On September 20th, Andre had gone on board the British ship "Vulture" in the Hudson off Teller's Point. Here he had waited for an American ship to pick him up and take him to Sheldon's Headquarters. On the night of the 21st, Andre was picked up by Joshua Hett Smith, and taken to meet with Arnold, and he wore his uniform* so that he could not be captured as a spy. (*perhaps covered with an overcoat)

For his transportation to the rendezvous, Arnold slyly chose some dull-witted men to row him down the Hudson River. He figured that they were men who would not suspect him. He duped them by reversing the facts, admitting that he was going to confer with a British agent, but said that the agent was a British traitor who was to give him valuable information -- quite the opposite of the real facts.

However, in choosing such men to take him downriver, he out-foxed himself. They were not only mentally "slow," but slow as well in providing the boat he needed to reach the meeting with Andre at the set time. When the time came to go downriver for his rendezvous with Andre, the boat was not ready, and for a long while Arnold was delayed. Finally, he persuaded a couple of men to row him down the Hudson, but by the time he arrived, Andre had been waiting for hours.

Arnold met Andre on the west shore of Hudson near Haverstraw, New York and they went back to Joshua Hett Smith's house, behind American lines, to talk. There, Benedict Arnold gave John Andre papers containing detailed plans of West Point, revealing the number of troops at the garrison, their placement, and the location of fortifications surrounding it -- strategic information that would make West Point vulnerable to an overthrow by the British. Their rendezvous was supposed to end well before daylight so that Andre would have the cover of darkness for his return to the Vulture with those plans to West Point.

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Part 6 -- Andre Is Stranded And Forced To Escape By Land

However, the meeting lasted until dawn, and unknown to Andre, American artillery had fired on the Vulture, forcing her captain to retreat downriver. The providential trap was being closed, for when Andre tried to return to the ship, he discovered that the Vulture had sailed away without him. Would Arnold's boatmen row him downriver to the Vulture? No! Fed up with waiting around all night, they refused to do so. Andre was stranded. He was loath to do so, but it became apparent that in order to return to the British lines he would have to travel overland.

In order to assist Andre in his attempt to reach British lines via land, Benedict Arnold wrote some passes for him, using the fictitious name of "John Anderson." Then, Arnold departed, leaving Andre with Joshua Hett Smith, who was supposed to guide him by land back to the British lines. I am not sure of Smith's exact and actual role in this whole affair. He was obviously taking part in the plot, but one writer said that he was "a double agent known to both sides," while another states that Joshua Hett Smith was "suspected by the Americans of being a Tory." If indeed he was a double agent, the true loyalty of his "double agency" seems to have been with the British, for there is nothing in the records that I have seen that shows him to have betrayed Andre.

It was planned that Andre would remain in hiding with Smith until the next night, but Andre's dangerous predicament worsened. Smith, no doubt unwilling to be caught escorting a British Army officer, insisted that he remove his uniform and make the trip in civilian clothes. But, if caught by the Americans thus dressed, it exposed Andre to the penalty of execution as a spy. However, forced to this alternative, Andre complied with Smith's demand, borrowed some civilian clothes from him, and dressed himself in them for the dangerous overland trip to safety. And, he exposed himself to yet more danger of being labeled as a spy if caught by hiding the West Point plans received from Arnold in his sock. The very risks that British Commander Clinton had wanted to avoid had become risks that Andre felt compelled to take.

Thus, the night after his meeting with Arnold, Andre and Joshua Hett Smith started out overland toward the British lines. At first, all went well as they successfully passed several Patriot checkpoints. Naturally, Andre wanted to make the journey under cover of darkness on that night of September 22, 1780, and thus he wanted to travel rapidly all through the night, not stopping off anywhere along the way. But he was in for yet another delay. His scheduled rendezvous had been delayed by the tardiness of Arnold's arrival. His return to the Vulture was delayed by an extending time of talking with Arnold. His departure from Smith's house was delayed until nightfall. Now he was anxious to get out of danger, and back to the safety of British lines on the night of the 22nd as soon as possible. But, as Fate would have it -- we should say, as God ordained it -- he was in for one

more delay, and one that probably contributed greatly to his discovery and capture.

As he and Smith traveled along on horseback that night, they met some New York militiamen who "convinced" them to spend the night with them and then travel onward the next morning, September 23rd. Apparently these militiamen knew nothing about Andre being a British agent, and were unsuspectingly just trying to be hospitable. It was an offered hospitality that Andre must have desperately wanted to decline, but feared not to accept lest he arouse his would-be hosts' suspicion. If anyone in the countryside realized he was British they would have reported him. Therefore, he relented to stay for the evening, and once again his escape was delayed. Worse still, the rest of the journey to safety would have to be made in daylight!

I doubt that Andre slept well that night, and he may not have slept at all -- housed with Patriot militiamen, entertained in the house of the enemy, and facing the peril of completing his journey on the morrow in broad daylight! But, after that uneasy night at least he was unsuspected still, and he and Joshua Hett Smith set out again on the fateful morning of September 23, 1780. Smith accompanied Andre to a point near where Pine's Bridge spanned the Croton River. They both thought that beyond this point Andre would see no more Americans, and that from there on he could make it alone back to the safety of British lines. It was not meant to be.

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Part 7 -- Andre's Capture When Nearly Back To Safety

At about 9:00 a.m., in neutral territory near Tarrytown, he was spotted and stopped by three American Patriot militiamen: John Paulding, David Williams, and Isaac Van Wart. In one record, these three men were referred to as deserters, and in another it was inferred that they may have been playing the part of "highwaymen" out to shake him down and steal his money and/or his valuables. I am not at all certain these insinuations are true. One of them, John Paulding, later had a county in Georgia named after him. They may indeed have been leaving Washington's Army at the time, but even that would not necessarily mean they were "deserters" for during that conflict apparently quite a large number of the Patriot militiamen fought part time and farmed or worked at home part time. Whatever the case, these three men were not who Andre hoped they were -- Loyalists.

Paulding, Williams, and Van Wart pointed their muskets at him and ordered him to dismount. At first, Andre may have thought they were Loyalists, and let down his guard, for according to one record it appears that he either asked or said something to them about their being Loyalists. After Andre showed them his pass from General Arnold as "John Anderson," their suspicion of him increased. As one writer put it, they wondered why "someone who had hoped they were Loyalists should have a pass through

the lines from the American general commanding the area." If he "hoped they were Loyalists," and he was heading toward British lines, then he too must be someone sympathetic to the British, or a Britisher himself! Again, "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," and just a few mis-spoken words may have been what lead to Andre's undoing, capture, and execution!

With heightened suspicion, the men searched Andre's person and found the plans to West Point that he had hidden in his sock! Andre is recorded as having said of this encounter: "I was taken by three volunteers who, not satisfied with my pass, rifled me and, finding papers, made me a prisoner." (Van Doren, 340) They escorted him to the nearest American officer, Col. Jameson, and Andre's fate was sealed. Being uncertain what he should do, and likewise unaware of Arnold's complicity with Andre, Col. Jameson sent a letter to Benedict Arnold, his commander, concerning the capture of "John Anderson".

At this juncture, Benjamin Tallmadge returned to North Castle from a scouting venture. He was very suspicious of the matter involving Andre and along with a letter, he sent the discovered West Point papers to General Washington. In the meantime, Benedict Arnold, who was to have had breakfast with Washington, received the letter that had been sent to him by Jameson. This message tipped him off to the fact that the conspiracy had been discovered and gave him time to escape being arrested also by fleeing on his official barge to the British ship Vulture which had returned to the area.

As the news of Benedict Arnold's treason spread abroad, he became an odious pariah in the minds of Patriot Americans -- a one-time hero turned into the most despised man in the country! And, he was privately scorned by the British also for his treachery, even though they stood to gain from his defection.

In contrast to the universal disdain and scorn heaped upon Benedict Arnold, John Andre seemed to be the recipient of pity and sympathy from both friends and foes alike. Arnold was perceived to be the real villain, and the real culprit in the conspiracy, and the one who should have died for his treason. Andre was perceived to have been one who was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, and the Americans wanted to exchange him for Arnold, but that was something the British were unwilling to do because of their commitment to Arnold to protect him.

Nevertheless, General Washington pressed Clinton to make the exchange. In a letter to Clinton, he wrote: "Major Andre's character and situation seem to demand this of your justice and friendship. Arnold appears to have been the guilty author of the mischief and ought more properly to be the victim." Apparently everyone involved in the conspiracy, except the Arnolds, would have been happy to make the exchange, but British Commander Clinton had guaranteed Arnold's safety, and felt himself bound to keep his word to Benedict Arnold.

Because of the great seriousness of the uncovered plot to place West Point in the hands of the British, it seemed that somebody "had to be" executed, and Alexander Hamilton, Washington's aid, wrote regarding the impossibility of sparing Andre: "There was, in truth, no way of saving him, Arnold or he must have been the victim, and Arnold was out of our power." Before his part in the conspiracy was discovered, Benedict Arnold was already safe in British-occupied New York.* [See Endnote]

George Washington was in a quandry. He did not want to execute Andre, but the seriousness of the conspiracy seemed to demand that someone die for the crime. What could he do to get off of the horns of this dilemma? Perhaps in hope that Andre might yet escape being the scapegoat by a legal finding that he was not acting as a spy, Washington asked a Court of Inquiry to study the incident and decide whether or not Andre was acting as a spy when he was captured. On their part, beyond their commitment to protect Arnold, the British thought that the Americans would not dare to execute Andre, a British Adjunct General, because of a mutual trust between both sides that generals would be taken prisoner, but not executed.

As the matter of how his actions should be interpreted was being mulled over by the Court of Inquiry, Andre was moved from headquarters to West Point, and then to Tappan, New York where he was imprisoned in a tavern. General Washington was probably hoping that the Court of Inquiry would find that Andre had acted as a Military officer and not as a civilian, meaning that he could spare his life, but without such a compelling reason for so doing the bestowal of clemency upon Andre would appear that Washington was caving in to British threats. Andre's destiny swung in the balance of the the decision by the Court of Inquiry, but their determination was not long in coming.

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Part 8 -- Andre's Salvation, Execution And Final, Poetic Testimony

While Andre was held prisoner in Tappan, the verdict was decided that he was acting as a spy when captured, and must therefore be executed. Andre wrote a courageous letter to his Commander, Henry Clinton, dated September 29, 1780, but nothing availed to bring about his exchange or release to the British. Men on both sides of this dramatic "tug of war" regarding Andre's fate were amazed at the turn of events. Americans admired his gallantry, and the British his leadership. None wanted him to die, but both Washington and Clinton held firm to their respective positions, neither side backing down. Therefore, since the American proffered exchange of Andre for Arnold was not accepted, after delaying for a week, General Washington, trembling as he did so, ordered Andre's execution.

And, it was while the previously cavalier young John Andre came under the dark and ominous cloud of impending physical death that God brought him face to face with the folly of his sinful life and the imminent

eternal peril of his soul. More than arrested by men, he came under the Divine arrest -- more than condemned by men, he found himself condemned before God. Far beyond the trauma of passing through the ugly and frightening process that would ultimate in his physical death on a gallows, he was facing as well the endless agony of eternal death in the Lake of Fire! The "arrows of distress" pierced his imperiled soul. He had been unable to hide from the Americans who were now about to hang him. Was there any way that he could hide from the wrath of God!!? Was there any hope for him beyond that gallows!!? He was brought into an utter sense of his eternal lostness and of his urgent need for a Hiding Place that would protect him from the fast approaching prospect of eternal damnation!

Then, out of the midst of the utter doom shrouding his fearful, but penitent heart and mind, John Andre found that Blessed Hiding Place! He penned his dying testimony in accordance with his poetic turn of mind as a poem that was found in his pocket after he was hanged. It was entitled, "MY HIDING PLACE," and its dramatic lines better and more powerfully describe how he was saved than perhaps anyone else could portray that traumatic but finally happy story. I dare say that it was probably by far the best poem that he ever wrote. Here it is in its entirety, his dying testimony:

* * * * *

My Hiding Place

By Major John Andre

**Hail, sovereign love, which first began
The scheme to rescue fallen man!
Hail, matchless, free, eternal grace,
Which gave my soul a Hiding Place!**

**Against the God who built the sky
I fought with hands uplifted high--
Despised the mention of His grace,
Too proud to seek a Hiding Place.**

**Enwrap in thick Egyptian night,
And fond of darkness more than light,
Madly I ran the sinful race,
Secure -- without a Hiding Place!**

**But thus the eternal counsel ran:
Almighty love, arrest that man!
I felt the arrows of distress,
And found I had no Hiding Place.**

Indignant Justice stood in view;
To Sinai's fiery mount I flew;
But Justice cried with frowning face,
This mountain is no Hiding Place!

Ere long a heavenly voice I heard,
And mercy's angel soon appeared:
He led me, with a beaming face,
To JESUS as a Hiding Place.

On Him almighty vengeance fell,
Which must have sunk a world to hell!
He bore it for a sinful race,
And thus became our Hiding Place.

Should sevenfold storms of thunder roll,
And shake this globe from pole to pole,
No thunderbolt shall daunt my face,
For Jesus is my Hiding Place.

A few more setting suns at most
Shall land me on that glorious coast,
Where I shall sing the song of grace,
And see my glorious Hiding Place!

Those "few more suns" ended for the mercifully and wonderfully saved young British Poet and Army Officer on October 2, 1780 when John Andre was hanged at Tappan, New York. Freed from the fear of both physical and eternal death, as he walked to the gallows, John Andre asked everyone present to "bear witness that I meet my fate like a brave man" -- something he could not have done without the sweet inward assurance of his everlasting safety in JESUS, HIS HIDING PLACE!

As the valiant young redeemed British Army officer died, many Americans who had gathered to watch his execution wept, but even as he was being mourned by them, he was safely "landed on the glorious coast," and joyfully hidden in JESUS, HIS ETERNAL HIDING PLACE!

"Sing it softly through the gloom,
When the heart for mercy craves,
Sing in triumph o'er the tomb,
JESUS SAVES! JESUS SAVES!"

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Endnote

*What became of Benedict Arnold? After some not very successful military exploits as a British Brigadier-General, and after a number of failed commercial ventures, Arnold sailed to London, England where he died in 1801. In contrast to the "sweet-smelling savor" left by John Andre at his departure from this life, Benedict Arnold's legacy to mankind was the foul aroma of a self-promoting traitor. For generations, Americans have regarded the name of Benedict Arnold as synonymous with treason. No doubt most Americans who know of his treachery would shrink from naming a son after "Benedict Arnold" with nearly, if not as much, repulsion as they would have for naming him after "Judas Iscariot"!

Even if some might strangely desire to enshrine Arnold's memory at his tomb, it is not possible. He was buried in the Church of St. Mary's, Battersea, but by mistake a clerk entered his name incorrectly into the church records. Then, when the church was renovated a century later, the workers, unaware of whose grave they had opened, disinterred Arnold's body and cast it into an unmarked common grave along with dozens of other anonymous remains.

Proverbs 10:7 "The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot." -- Selah.

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The End