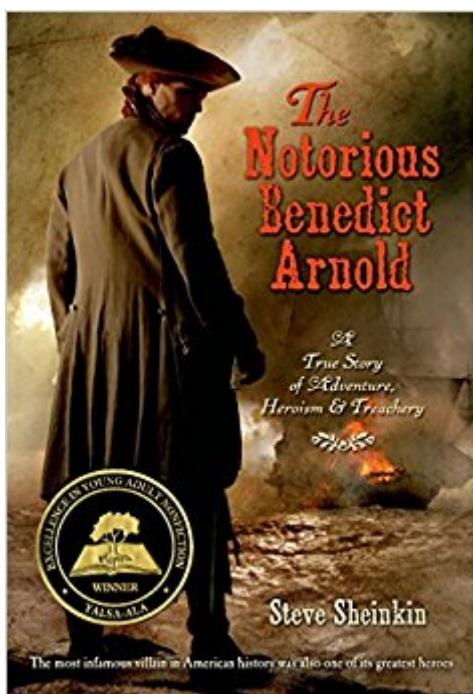


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The Notorious Benedict Arnold: A True Story Of Adventure, Heroism & Treachery



Synopsis

Most people know that Benedict Arnold was America's first, most notorious traitor. Few know that he was also one of its greatest Revolutionary War heroes. Steve Sheinkin's accessible biography, *The Notorious Benedict Arnold*, introduces young readers to the real Arnold: reckless, heroic, and driven. Packed with first-person accounts, astonishing American Revolution battle scenes, and surprising twists, this is a gripping and true adventure tale from history.

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Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up—American history is brought to life in this engaging story of revolution and treason. Most people know very little about Benedict Arnold—only that he was a traitor during the American War of Independence. Sheinkin recounts the tale of a larger-than-life persona, from his uncertain boyhood to his immense popularity as an unpredictable, yet brilliant, commander in the American army, and finally, to his end days, living in London, despised and disgraced. The story of Arnold's bravery and his rise in the esteem of the colonists is played out against the political squabbling and fears the Continental Congress had about military figures becoming too powerful and upsetting the delicate democracy they were busy creating. Through letters, journals, historic accounts, and other resources, Sheinkin keeps readers wanting to know what will happen next. Short, episodic chapters titled with relevant dates are an effective way to pace various battles—on the field and off—and understand their place in the larger picture of the war. Other key figures are well developed in the narrative. Seeing a glimpse of these personalities makes their subsequent actions believable and meaningful. The Notorious Benedict Arnold is likely

to make readers want to learn more about the American Revolution and its players, great and small. Source notes at the end of the book allow them to do just that. ©Karen Elliott, Grafton High School, WI © Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

History junkies are in for a treat when they pick up this lively, highly readable biography of the U.S. most vilified traitor. Emphasizing Arnold's reckless, adventurous side, Sheinkin, who admits to being a longtime admirer of the infamous figure, makes a good case for why Americans have cause to embrace the general's early incarnation as a heroic icon of the Revolution. Without his impetuous personality and willingness to hurl himself into a fray, the war might well have been lost before the French directed their might our way. Arnold's fall also becomes understandable, if inexcusable, in Sheinkin's hands. How much did his wounds, colossal ego, and need for money sway him to become a potential betrayer? Weaving in the story of John André, Arnold's British contact, creates an atmosphere of suspense. When will they finally meet? How close will they come to throwing the war? Copious source notes and quotation notes will lead both report writers and avid enthusiasts to additional materials. A worthy addition to all libraries. Grades 6-9. --Karen Cruze --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book was amazing! I thought I knew the story of Benedict Arnold. I did not! This well-researched, well-written book tells the dramatic life story of a man from a once-great family destroyed by an alcoholic father who struggled with tragedies in family and love and was determined to regain the family's name and status. He was also a great patriot -- brave, daring and cunning, risking his life many times for our country. It is this heroic Benedict Arnold that makes his betrayal of his country all the more shocking. (And it is so shocking!! We see how even people on the same side of a greater issue can clash bitterly over egos, money and fame.) This story is action-packed and full of famous people, too. It sheds light not only on Arnold but the American Revolution, which was not a sterile war of muskets and powdered wigs but a war of grit, blood and tremendous sacrifice for all people. It was a very dangerous time and the politics and politicians of that day will remind you much of today. A REALLY good book for students in middle school and up who want to know more about Benedict Arnold and about American history.

This book is actually written for young adults BUT it answered the question that I have always had about one of the worst traitors in U.S. history. It may be bad Karma but I wanted to be sure that the man suffered after his betrayal of our fledgling country as it struggled for existence. I won't spoil the ending and tell what I found out BUT it was just amazing how different the outcomes in history might have been if certain people had not done what they did. It's very entertaining, although a tad lightweight for a heavy duty reader of Our History.

Not a long book - gives a great background of B.A. as a youth and early military as well as his later life. I had no knowledge of him really and I found this fascinating. He was mentioned in "Drums along the Mohawk" (book) and he stood out as a strong military man. I had always thought of him as a cowardly traitor. It piqued my interest and I found this book. I don't think he was right to betray his country but he was not treated fairly either. Congress has not changed much, eh?

Good nonfiction for young adult readers is harder to come by than good fiction. Like cavalry over the hill, then, rides The Notorious Benedict Arnold, a book whose ending we know before we start -- but will the kids? I suppose it depends on the curriculum, when they get American history, and to what extent. But even for veterans like me, the book offers details either forgotten or never known. Benedict Arnold couldn't get out of his own personality's way. His father of the same name, a drunken disgrace, lit the fire of ambition and shame in his son at a young age. Conveniently enough, the Revolutionary War would provide the backdrop Benedict needed to show his mettle. And mettle he showed, at Saratoga and in Quebec, where he came this close to making Canada our 14th colony. During actions at Quebec and Saratoga, Arnold was dealt serious injuries from gunfire. And though he lost a lot of blood, he sadly did not lose his life, missing two golden opportunities to go down among the Giants of the Revolution like Lafayette, Von Steuben, Ethan Allen, and Washington. Instead, he would outlive his heroic chances and allow his sullen, jealous, angry temperament a chance to win notoriety for quite another reputation, one driven by money and relentless ambition. The lesser star (and fall guy) of the book is concurrent story of Major John André. He played spy to Arnold's traitor, and their tango ended badly for him. Author Sheinkin tells us that André was one of those singularly handsome men who charmed women and men alike with his personality and intelligence. Unfortunately, this intelligence would forsake him in a few key seconds that would seal his fate. After meeting Arnold behind enemy lines near West Point, he was fleeing south toward the British-held city of New York. Alas, he did not think through the actions he would take if he were stopped by Americans. He foolishly said he was British by assuming he

was far enough south and already among Loyalists. In retrospect, this made no sense. Had he said he was American, the outcome would have worked to his advantage no matter what. That is, if his interceptors were Americans (which they were), they would have let him by with the handwritten pass he held from Arnold. And even if they were British, they would have seized him and taken him as a "prisoner" to General Clinton -- the very man who sent him out on the mission -- down in New York. At age 29, the dashing Major AndrÃƒÂ© had written the opening lines to his own final act. Some might say he was luckier than Arnold, who would survive and escape Washington's frantic attempts to capture and make an example of him. Arnold made a few forays wearing a redcoat -- burning New London, CT, for one -- but the war soon ended and he spent the remainder of his years in England and Canada with ignominy and Peggy Shippen as his mates. Even the side he defected to held him in low esteem after the war. Washington had offered AndrÃƒÂ©'s life in exchange for Arnold's, but General Clinton, as much as he loved AndrÃƒÂ©, could not pull the trigger on this tempting deal because of the unwritten rule: You never, but NEVER, turn over a turncoat. When all is said and done, you will learn a lot more about Benedict Arnold's character and personality, his military genius and derring do, and his innate ability to annoy superiors in the military (where, quite frankly, many men on both sides acted like middle school children in their endless bickering, resentments, intrigues, and calculated slander and libel of each other's character). You will enjoy some military strategizing, take in some battle-day narratives, and learn just how close the colonies came to losing this war. And yes, you will see the major role of irony and chance, and just how comfortable both of these things are in the fertile grounds of history. An awful lot of things had to go wrong for Benedict Arnold's plan to fail. Sheinkin shows just how lucky the Americans got with a series of wild coincidences on the fateful day the West Point trap was set to spring. He also provides the perfect coda for the book by describing a most curious monument made in Arnold's "honor" at Saratoga. Curious and symbolically appropriate, I'd say. Recommended for young readers in need of some bracing nonfiction, for a change.

The word 'traitor' is just about synonymous with Benedict Arnold in American history courses. Steve Sheinkin's book, however, would suggest that there is a lot more to the story than betrayal of one's country. Benedict Arnold is at turns heroic, brave, greedy, and reckless. Here is a man who would do anything to save his country even if it means becoming a traitor, something he never thought himself to be. Think you don't like nonfiction? This book is full of interesting historical nuggets told in a gripping novel fashion. The author did plenty of research to back up any and all claims made in the book as well as uncover the truth behind the real man Benedict Arnold. I could not put this book

down. It's fast paced and thrilling, slowing down just enough to give the reader a sense of place and time and then moving on to the next event. In other words, The Notorious Benedict Arnold makes history enjoyable, fun, and above all else, entertaining on top of being accessible to both younger readers and those who enjoy a good biography. Get this book even if you hate history. It's so good you'll find yourself siding with Arnold from time to time even when you feel you shouldn't.

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