

“There was something singularly interesting to the character and fortunes of Andre ... he united a peculiar elegance of mind and manners, and the advantage of pleasing a person ... His knowledge appeared without ostentation and embellished by a difference that rarely accompanies so many talents and accomplishments, which left you to suppose more than appeared.”

-Alexander Hamilton, 1780¹

The controversial figures of British Officer John Andre and the American traitor Benedict Arnold are forever synonymously linked in American history as two of the biggest co-conspirators of the Revolutionary War. Andre was known in America during the Revolutionary War for his distinction and charm to many friends and acquaintances on the British and American front.² In October 1780, Andre’s espionage trial began in which the military tribunal sentenced him to death by hanging six days after his capture. Dr. James Thatcher, who was a military surgeon during the Revolutionary War, was an eyewitness to this event and tells of Andre’s execution in his journal. He eloquently writes:

Major Andre walked from the stone house ... no want of fortitude, but retained a complacent smile on his countenance, and politely bowed to several gentlemen whom he knew which was respectfully returned ... It was his earnest desire to be shot, as being the mode of death most comfortable to the feelings of a military man, and had indulged the hope that his request be granted ... he came into view of the gallows ... [he] made a pause. “Why this emotion, sir?” said an officer by his side. Instantly recovering his composure he said, “I am reconciled to my death, but I detest the mode.”

... [Andre] bandaged his own eyes with perfect firmness, which melted the hearts and moistened the cheeks, not only of his servant, but of the throng of spectators ... [Andre] said, "I pray you to bear me witness that I meet my fate like a brave man." ... and the spot was consecrated by the tears of thousands.³

¹ Alexander Hamilton, *The Fate of Major Andre: A Letter From Alexander Hamilton To John Laurens* (New York: Charles F. Heartman Press, 1916), 18.

² B.A. Hensch and H. K. Hensch. "Major Andre," *The Journal of General Education* 28, no. 3 (1976): 238, <http://www.jstor.org.lynx.lib.usm.edu/stable/27796580>.

³ James Thatcher, *Military Journal of the American Revolution: From the Commencement to the Disbanding of the American Army; Comprising a Detailed Account of the Principal Events and Battles of the Revolution, with Their Exact Dates, and a Biographical Sketch of the Most Prominent Generals* (Hartford, CT: Hurlbut, Williams, and Company, 1862), 228.

Dr. Thatcher is one of many that wrote with profound respect and fondness of this condemned spy. Although Andre was a spy convicted of espionage, why did many of his contemporaries have profound respect and sentiment for him?

Many interesting seminal works are written about this period. Carl Van Doren's *Secret History of the American Revolution* and Alexander Rose's *Washington's Spies* were the two works most often used in many of the books and academic articles I found. Van Doren's *Secret History of the American Revolution* is a detailed account of the Revolutionary War previously untold. Van Doren was the first author to publish many of General Clinton's papers and write about his intelligence and reports. He also correlates George Washington and the Continental Congress's reports to the British Clinton papers, so you get a detailed view on both sides. The book describes how Benedict Arnold and Andre and their attempt to give West Point to the British. Rose's *Washington Spies* goes into detail about the Culper American Spy Ring under Washington. Rose recounts the early intelligence days of George Washington in the French and Indian War to his operations as head of the American spy ring.⁴ He discusses major events and the different spies on both the British and American side. Rose continues describing spy activities and techniques used to pass information on to Washington such as 'invisible ink' which both sides actively used.⁵

Roger Kaplan's article entitled "The Hidden War: British Intelligence Operations during the American Revolution" was the third seminal work that gave insight into British intelligence

⁴ Alexander Rose, *Washington's Spies: The Story of America's First Spy Ring* (New York: Bantam Books, 2006), 16. In the French and Indian War, Washington focused on tactical information on the enemy's movements and positions.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 107.

during the war. Kaplan discussed the beginnings of General Clinton's intelligence operations and how he eventually gave the intelligence leadership role over to Andre. The article details Andre's early intelligence operations and gives insight not previously written about in other articles or books. Kaplan also writes that Andre's head of intelligence replacement was not as effective, and the spy operations decreased.

My paper supports Professor Carl Van Doren's idea that Andre was indeed a spy because of his intelligence activities especially in helping secure the transfer of West Point to the British. In Colonel C. DeW. Wilcox's paper "The Ethics of Andre's Mission," the author attempts to prove his point that technically he may not have been a spy, then he continues "... It is clear from the foregoing expedition that Andre was neither in intention or purpose a spy, but it is also clear that technically, at least, he falls under the connotation of the definition."⁶ My paper builds on the many historians' opinions that he was a spy, but this paper should add to the conversation as I delve into the perception people had of Andre, which may help us achieve a better understanding of who he was.

Primary Sources and Issues

A few reliable primary sources were available for research on this topic. Journals from Andre himself and from eyewitnesses that viewed the hanging of Andre were rich with information. Letters recorded the event as well, such as the one Alexander Hamilton wrote on the Andre trial, relate the feeling of empathy for Andre. The information from the Clinton Collection was a useful primary source in reading the intelligence reports and letters found in the Carl Van Doren book.

⁶ In Colonel C. De. Wilcox, "The Ethics of Andre's Mission," in *Major Andre's Journal: Operations of the British Army under the Lieutenant Generals Sir William Howe and Sir Henry Clinton June 1777 to November 1778* by John Andre (Tarrytown, NY: William Abbatt, 1930), 124.

NARRATIVE OF JOHN ANDRE

Anthony Andre was a Swiss merchant whose family dispersed across Europe for the pursuit of trading.⁷ He moved to London and became naturalized.⁸ Shortly afterwards, Anthony Andre met and married Marie Giradot, a Parisian, who was visiting her aunt locally.⁹ John Andre was born May 1750 in London and his family kept close French connections; but he was to write in English at home.¹⁰ Anthony Andre eventually purchased a manor house and “lived the life of a country gentleman, as far as possible for a newcomer who was engaged in trade.”¹¹ A local minister taught John Andre’s early education.¹² His formal education began in an elite boarding school where he learned Latin and Greek.¹³ Andre attended the University of Geneva where he was an expert mathematician; excelled in military science and military drawings; and mastered several European languages.¹⁴ Author John Thomas Flexner’s *The Traitor and the Spy* states that “... As for the pursuit on which his family prosperity was based, he considered trade demeaning. Since he was not rich enough to be a land proprietor or pious enough for the ministry, the obvious career was the army, which appealed to his romantic temperament.”¹⁵

After his father died when he was nineteen, he purchased a second lieutenant’s commission in the Royal Welch Fusiliers.¹⁶ He later transferred to another regiment headed to Quebec in 1775 and taken prisoner at the siege of the British Fort St. John’s during which the

⁷ James Thomas Flexner, *The Traitor and the Spy*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1953), 23.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Benson J. Lossing, *The Two Spies: Nathan Hale and John Andre* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1901), 37.

¹⁵ Flexner, 24.

¹⁶ Rose, 200.

Americans eventually took control of parts of the Quebec territory.¹⁷ Andre kept a journal while serving as a soldier in Quebec and being held a prisoner of war after his capture at the British fort. Later in 1776, the Americans exchanged Andre for American prisoners and his new assignment was New York under the command of General Howe.¹⁸ Andre presented this memoir of the existing war to the British Commander-in-Chief Sir William Howe in 1776.¹⁹ This gift pleased Howe and he promoted Andre to Captain in 1777.²⁰

Howe also promoted Andre as staff-officer to General Grey where he served with distinction.²¹ Andre was in the midst of the military social circle during the occupation of Philadelphia.²² He was also in charge of the social amusements of the army and created many theatrical performances.²³ Lossing's *The Two Spies* relates that "...Andre was the dramatist, actor, song-writer, and manager. He wrote the prologues and localized plays and was the chief manager of the weekly balls. In a word, he was the leader in setting on foot scenes of gaeyety [sic] extravagance that were long remembered and lamented."²⁴

British General Clinton had been overseeing the intelligence operations since 1776.²⁵ Clinton's growing responsibilities with the army units, military governorship, and peace commissioner was most likely the reason for Andre's promotion as intelligence officer over the

¹⁷ W. D. Hensel, "Major John Andre as a Prisoner of War at Lancaster, PA, 1775-6: With Some Account of a Historic House and Family" (paper presented at Donegal Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Lancaster, Pa., on April 13, 1904)

¹⁸ Lossing, 44.

¹⁹ Ibid, 44.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Roger Kaplan, "The Hidden War: British Intelligence Operations during the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1990): 118.

British North American Intelligence.²⁶ Andre began keeping an “intelligence book” in 1779. He began to record the daily reports and document deserters of the British army.²⁷ Andre used the personal contacts he had made in various parts of the country to make new spies. He was successful in developing a network of spies ranging from New York to Philadelphia.²⁸ With these spies under his control, he had access to more military intelligence and surveillance like never before. Andre had many advantages using his own spies which enabled him to get more critical data on “locations and strengths of rebel units; identities of rebel commanders; the placement and construction of supply depots, locations of general officers and militia post; activities near British lines, troop movements, enemy intensions, and standing orders.”²⁹ In *Secret History of the American Revolutionary War*, Carl Van Doren published several intelligence letters found in the vast Sir Henry Clinton military collection archived at the University of Michigan. A spy named Stansbury sent a letter to Andre in November 1779 and it is an example of the intelligence on the Continental Army Andre received. The letter states that Washington’s army had vast supplies at the Continental camps and have provisions for one thousand five hundred horses. This spy estimated twenty-three to twenty-four thousand soldiers as the whole force of the Continental Army.³⁰

²⁶ Ibid., 123.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 124.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Carl Van Doren, Henry Clinton, and John André, *Secret History of the American Revolution; an Account of the Conspiracies of Benedict Arnold and Numerous Others, Drawn from the Secret Service Papers of the British Headquarters in North America, Now for the First Time Examined and Made Public* (New York: The Viking Press, 1951), 449.

CAPTURE AND MILITARY TRIAL OF ANDRE

In 1779, General Clinton asked Andre to negotiate with American General Benedict Arnold, who was commander of West Point. Arnold felt mistreated and underpaid by the Continental Congress and many historians agree that greed was his downfall. Arnold would turn over West Point and the capture of George Washington for fifty thousand dollars in gold and a commission of brigadier-general in the royal army.³¹ West Point was the only access the Americans had to the Great Lakes region. Arnold and Andre had several secret meetings, but the last meeting proved to be fatal for Andre. At this last meeting, Arnold gave Andre several documents pertaining to the security of West Point that Andre placed between his stockings and feet.³² As Andre was waiting to board the British ship to return to New York, “American artillery had cannonaded the Vulture, which retreated downriver forcing Andre to return to New York City by land.³³ Arnold furnished Andre with a horse, regular clothes, and a military pass when he realized that Andre had missed the ship.³⁴ As Andre was traveling back, he ran into three men in neutral territory and assumed they were British because of their clothing.³⁵ Andre identified himself as a British Officer and said that he was on official business.³⁶ Then he realized that these men were American soldiers (some historians believe they were robbers) and he was taken hostage. When the men searched Andre, they discovered Arnold’s West Point military documents inside his stocking.³⁷ He was taken to a commanding officer in the American lines

³¹ Lossing, 84.

³² Reynolds, 60.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 61.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

and that is when the realization of plot to overtake West Point became known and Arnold was forever etched in history as the most famous traitor on the American front.³⁸

After his capture, while awaiting trial Andre wrote a letter to Washington where he gave a full confession of his rank and of the events of his capture on 24 September 1780:

... I beg your Excellency will be persuaded, that no alteration in the temper of my mind, or apprehension for my safety, induces me to take the step of addressing you, but that it is to rescue myself from an imputation of having assumed a mean character for treacherous purposes or self-interest; a conduct incompatible with the principles that actuate me, as well as with my condition in life.

... The person in your possession is Major John André, adjutant-general to the British army.

... I agreed to meet upon ground not within the posts of either army, a person who was to give me intelligence ... Having avowed myself a British officer, I have nothing to reveal but what relates to myself, which is true on the honor of an officer and a gentleman ...³⁹

The military tribunal court consisted of six major generals and six brigadier generals that included Major General Nathaniel Greene and Major General Marquis de Lafayette. While on trial, Andre when shown the papers Arnold gave him for General Clinton “confessed to the board that they were found on him when he was taken, and said they were concealed in his boot.”⁴⁰ Andre recounted his meeting with Arnold as he preceded to tell the story of how he encountered his captors. Andre regarded himself as a gentleman to the truest sense. He assumed that if he acted with honor and respect toward other gentleman that the behavior would be reciprocated. He perceived his captors through “a class filter, disdainful of their character.”⁴¹ Then Andre related how two of his captors had “ransacked his possessions, demanding he strip off his

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Lossing, 91-93.

⁴⁰ Van Doren, 357.

⁴¹ Robert E. Cray, Jr., “Major John Andre and the Three Captors: Class Dynamics and Revolutionary Memory Wars in the Early Republic,” 1780-1831, *Journal of the Early Republic* 17, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 377.

clothes.”⁴² Later Andre assailed his captors character because they had laid claim to his horse, saddle, and watch.⁴³ Major Tallmadge, who befriended Andre in his last days, judged these men that captured Andre as mercenaries, “that class of people who passed between both armies as often in one camp as to the other.”⁴⁴

Several friends and acquaintances described the injustice they perceived Andre experienced as I will further show in this paper. Consistently, he was referred to as a ‘gentleman’ and through his impeccable behavior seen as a man of honor. Across the Atlantic Ocean, there was British outrage. British Army Lieutenant Colonel John Graves Simcoe, who was the leader of the Queen’s Rangers, considered Andre’s execution “as a barbarous and ungenerous act of power in the American general [Washington], and who had certain and satisfactory intelligence that ... M. [Marquis] Fayette in particular, who sat upon his trial, urged Mr. Washington to the unnecessary deed.”⁴⁵ Simcoe told the regiment of Queen’s Rangers that those who ‘personally knew and esteemed’ Andre should wear black and white feathers for mourning Andre. He continues to praise Andre:

... [Andre] an officer who superior integrity and uncommon ability did the honour [sic] to his country, and to human nature ... and [regiment] will strike with reluctance at their unhappy fellow subjects, who ... have been seduced from their allegiance, and disciplined to revolt ... it will be the regiment’s fortune to secure the murderers of Major Andre, for the vengeance due to an injured nation, and an insulted army.⁴⁶

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ John Graves Simcoe, *Simcoe's Military Journal: a history of the operations of a partisan corps, called the Queen's Rangers commanded by Lieut. Col. J. G. Simcoe, during the war of the American Revolution*, (New York: Bartlett & Welford, 1844), 152.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 152-153.

While Andre was waiting for his execution after his conviction of espionage, Alexander Hamilton writes of one of the visits he had with Andre. During the time spend with Andre, Hamilton recounts the conversation, "I foresee my fate [Andre said] and, though I pretend not to play the hero or to be indifferent about life, yet I am reconciled to whatever may happen, conscious that misfortune not guilt had brought upon me."⁴⁷ Hamilton stated that that Andre saw his fate and accepted it. Hamilton then continues:

Never perhaps did any man suffer death with more justice, or deserve it less. The first step he took after his capture was to write a letter to General Washington conceived in terms of dignity without insolence and apology without meanness. The scope of it was to vindicate himself from the imputation of having assumed a mean character for treacherous or interested purpose; asserting that he had been involuntarily an impostor, that contrary to his intentions, which was to meet a person for intelligence on neutral ground, he had been betrayed within our posts and forced into the vile condition of an enemy in disguise, soliciting only that to whatever rigor policy might devote him a decency of treatment might be observed, due to a person who though unfortunate had been guilty of nothing dishonorable.⁴⁸

After Andre's sentence of death by hanging, he wrote to Washington to have the mode of his death changed to a firing squad rather than the gallows like a criminal. Washington never acknowledged this letter and Andre's wish of an honorable death was denied. In William Abbott's *The Crisis of the Revolution: Being the Story of Arnold and Andre* book, Andre wrote a letter to a friend in the 22nd Regiment in New York before his execution, Andre asserts "... the manner in which I am to die at first gave me some slight uneasiness; but I instantly recollected that it is the crime alone that makes any mode of punishment ignominious ... and to stop the

⁴⁷ James Thomas Flexner, *The Traitor and the Spy: Benedict Arnold and John André*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1953.), 385,

⁴⁸ Hamilton, 14-15.

effusion of human blood, a crime.”⁴⁹ The officers assigned to Andre said they “were very much impressed by his genteel manner, speech, and demeanor.”⁵⁰ It was imperative to Andre that he be seen as a man of “honor and showed considerable concern about securing clothes suitable to his station in life.”⁵¹ An unnamed soldier detailed Andre’s manner of dress and appearance as he walked to the gallows, they recount:

He was dressed in what I should call complete British uniform; his coat was of the brightest scarlet, faced or trimmed with the most beautiful green. His underclothes, or vest and breeches [sic], were bright buff... He had a long and beautiful head of hair; which agreeably to fashion, was wound with a black ribband [sic], and hung down his back. All eyes were upon him; and it is not believed that any British officer of the British Army, placed in his situation, would have appeared better than this unfortunate man.⁵²

Sargent well documented as the American soldiers led Andre to his execution. According to various officers present at the time, Andre appeared “pale as death, but tranquil and calm.”⁵³

When the music of the drums and fifes began to play, Andre remarked to American officer John Van Dyk that “I am very much surprised to find your troops under so good discipline, and your music is excellent.”⁵⁴

I found another account of Andre’s execution with more information. This source documented fact was that the hangman was a Tory, who was under arrest and promised freedom after completing this execution. This man disguised himself with black polish on his face to hide

⁴⁹ William Abbatt, *The Crisis of the Revolution: Being The Story Of Arnold And Andre Now For The First Time Collected From All Sources, and Illustrated With Views Of All Places Identified With It*, (New York: William Abbatt, 1899), 68.

⁵⁰ Larry J. Reynolds, “Patriot and Criminals, Criminal and Patriots: Representations of the Case of Major André,” *South Central Review* 9, no. 1 (1992): 61, https://www-jstor-org.lynx.lib.usm.edu/stable/3189387seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵² Winthrop Sargent, *The Life And Career of Major John Andre, Adjunct-General of the British Army In America*, (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1861), 397.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

his identity. When Andre noticed the disguise of this man as he was about to place the noose around his neck, he “commanded: Take off your black hands.”⁵⁵ Andre then removed his hat and watch- giving it to his servant.⁵⁶ Afterwards, he took off his neck-cloth and placed it in his pocket then Andre unbuttoned his shirt while turning it down.⁵⁷ After taking the noose from the Tory hangman, he placed the noose around his neck, then tightening it. Finally, Andre took “a handkerchief from his pocket, he bandaged his eyes and stood awaiting death.”⁵⁸

American officer Benjamin Tallmadge, whom George Washington promoted him to director of military intelligence, knew Andre before his capture. In his diary he writes:

I became so deeply attached to Major Andre, that I can remember no instance where my affections were so fully absorbed in any man. When I saw him swinging under the gibbet, it seemed for a time as if I could not support it. All the spectators seem to be so overwhelmed by the affecting spectacle, and many more were suffused in tears. There did not appear to be hardened or indifferent spectator in all the multitude.⁵⁹

A member of the board panel that convicted Andre found it difficult to judge him. Years before, they had shared a bedroom together and were immersed in conversation for hours into the night.⁶⁰

Author Colonel C. De Wilcox who wrote “The Ethics of Andre’s Mission,” believes the definition of a spy is a person who under false pretenses obtains and seeks information to report it to the other side. Wilcox also believes that since Andre admitted who he was before he was captured, that he was not acting as a spy. Another factor was that the three men captured Andre outside the American lines on neutral grounds, therefor may not have had the right to even bring

⁵⁵ Abbatt, 75.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 75.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Benjamin Tallmadge, *Memoirs of Col. Benjamin Tallmadge*, (New York: Thomas Holman, 1858), 10.

⁶⁰ Reynolds, 240.

him in.⁶¹ Reynold's "Patriot and Criminals, Criminal and Patriots: Representations of the Case of Major André" refers to Andre's mistakes in carrying out this mission by pointing out he disobeyed General Clinton's orders to "not take off his uniform, not to go behind enemy lines, and not to carry any papers on his person, all of which he disobeyed."⁶² Reynolds also goes on to suggest that had he shown his military pass from Arnold to travel between American lines that he wouldn't have been searched or detained.⁶³

After Andre's sentence of execution, Clinton wrote to Washington detailing how he assumed Andre was under a flag of truce when captured:

... [Andre] is detained a prisoner in your Excellency's army, I have the honour to inform you, Sir, that I permitted Major Andre to go to Major General Arnold, at the particular request of that General Officer ... that a flag of truce was sent to receive Major Andre, and passports granted for his return, I therefore can have no doubt but your Excellency will immediately direct, that this officer has permission to return to my orders at New-York. - H. CLINTON⁶⁴

Washington, after receiving the letter from Clinton answered his letter by stating according to him, there was no 'flag of truce:'

In answer to your Excellency's Letter ... I am to inform you that Major Andre was taken under such circumstances as would have justified the most summary proceedings against him. I determined however to refer his case to the examination and decision of a board of General Officers, who have ... reported, "First, That he came on shore ... on an interview with General Arnold, in a private and secret manner ... Secondly, That he changed his dress within our lines, and under a feigned name, and in a disguised habit ... being then on his way to New-York; and when taken he had in his possession several papers which contained intelligence for the enemy ... that Major Andre ... ought to be considered as a spy from the enemy; and that, agreeable to the law and usage of nations, it is their opinion he ought to suffer death." From these proceedings it is evident Major Andre was employed in the execution of measures very foreign to

⁶¹ Colonel C. De. Wilcox, "The Ethics of Andre's Mission," in *Major Andre's Journal: Operations of the British Army under the Lieutenant Generals Sir William Howe and Sir Henry Clinton June 1777 to November 1778* by John Andre (Tarrytown, NY: William Abbatt, 1930), 124.

⁶² Reynolds, 61.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ *Trial of Major John Andre*, 20.

the objects of flags of truce ... and this gentleman confessed with the greatest candor ... that it was impossible for him to suppose he came on shore under the sanction of a flag. - G. WASHINGTON⁶⁵

British General Henry Clinton wrote George Washington in response to the sentence of death for Andre pleading that he was innocent of being a spy:

He visited no posts, made no plans, held no conversation with any person, except Major General Arnold; and the papers found upon him were written in that General Officer's own hand-writing, who directed Major Andre to receive and deliver them to me. From these circumstances ... [hope] you will see this matter in the same point of view with me ... for a speedy release of Major Andre, who, I am free to own, is an officer ... a Gentleman I very sincerely regard.

Washington wrote of his admiration for John Andre to a letter to Clinton:

The Commander in Chief does with infinite Regret inform the Army of the Death of the Adjutant General Major Andre. This unfortunate Fate of this Officer calls upon the Commander in Chief to declare his Opinion, that he ever considered Major Andre as a Gentleman as well as in the Line of the military Profession of the highest. Integrity and Honor, and incapable of any base Action or unworthy conduct. Major Andre's Death is very sincerely felt by the Commander in Chief ... and must prove a real Loss to his Country and to His Majesty's Service.⁶⁶

In Washington's personal writings a few days after the execution, he characterized Andre:

Andre has met his fate and with all that fortitude which was expected from an accomplished man and gallant officer ... The circumstances under which he was taken justified it, and the policy required a sacrifice; but as he was more unfortunate than criminal, and as there was much in his character to interest, while we yielded to the necessary of rigor, we could not lament it.^{67 68}

⁶⁵ Ibid., 22-23.

⁶⁶ Van Doren, 494.

⁶⁷ Sargent, 400.

⁶⁸ Washington confidential attendants reported to have never referred to Andre trial or fate after the execution. (From Sargent book, page 400)

It is said that Washington did not want to condemn Andre and approve the tribunal punishment and he could “scarcely command the pen he subscribed to the fatal warrant.”⁶⁹ One of the American officers present when Washington heard Andre had died “asserted that our General shed tears on the execution.”⁷⁰

Conclusion

Andre was a respected British gentleman unlike any other documented in this war. The firsthand accounts of Andre from friends and acquaintances that knew him tell of their admiration of his exemplary character and of being a gentleman. He was a talented man with the gift for socializing and had had a successful military career. Andre was a well-known friend to the British and Americans alike. During his trial and execution, the American officers guarding him had nothing but praises for Andre’s disposition and distinction. Secretary of War Hamilton and Officer Tallmadge told of their admiration of Andre and lamented their sympathies of injustice. Documented sources have shown that Washington also admired Andre and thought his death was a great loss. On the other hand, Washington reiterated that Andre’s actions demanded the proper punishment, although his behavior was more ‘unfortunate than criminal.’

Clearly from the evidence presented in this paper, Andre was greatly respected, and mourned by people on both sides of the war. He had a way of charming and impressing people that was inherent in his nature according to the people that knew him best. Dr. Thatcher wrote how many in the crowd felt sympathy and grieved for Andre. The public was unaware of Andre’s success as a spy and intelligence head of the British spy network. Had this knowledge become public, the trial and death of Andre may have impelled the opposite feeling.

⁶⁹ Sargent, 399.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Nevertheless, it does not make him less of a gentleman with dignity and character. The way he faced death showed great fortitude and the courage of a true gentleman.

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