

General George Washington and the bulk of his Main Army, comprising the Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire Lines, faced the onset of winter in December 1780 from their huts and tents in the Hudson Highlands. General Sir Henry Clinton's British, Loyalist, and Hessian troops likewise manned their posts protecting Manhattan. Surgeon James Thacher wrote in his diary that the conditions at West Point were terrible: "Twelve or fourteen months' pay are now due to us, and we are destitute of clothing and the necessaries of life. The weather is remarkably cold, and our tents are comfortless." On the 10th he reported that the troops were "threatened with starvation" and on the 12th noted that for "the last ten days we have experienced almost continued storms of rain, high winds, and disagreeable fogs." The weather would not be quite as disagreeable for now British Brigadier General Benedict Arnold. The year in which he had committed "Treason of the blackest dye" would end with him and his force of 1,500 of Loyalists and regulars on the James River in Virginia. British, American, and French armies would find themselves by stages on the road to Yorktown in the new year.

The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and the Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College commemorated the 225th Anniversary of the Benedict Arnold-John André Conspiracy with Patriots' Weekend, 2005 from September 29th to October 2nd. Some 300 people attended the opening conference, "Treason!: Benedict Arnold, John André, and the Plot to Betray West Point" at Marist on September 29th to learn from seven historians and biographers why Major General Benedict Arnold turned from Revolutionary hero to traitor and about the roles played by Major John André and three volunteer militiamen, John Paulding, Isaac Van Wart, and David Williams. On the 30th Dr. James Kirby Martin, Distinguished University Professor of History at the University of Houston, delved into Arnold's disillusionment in his lecture to some 125 guests, faculty, and cadets at the United States Military Academy, and Professor Willard Sterne Randall, Historical Scholar in Residence at Champlain College, explored Arnold's career and treason in his lecture at the Tarrytown Music Hall sponsored by the Historical Society, Inc, serving Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown.

On October 1st the Van Cortlandtville Historical Society hosted a wreath-laying ceremony at the Old Cemetery at Van Cortlandtville honoring André captor, John Paulding, and the Village of Elmsford also laid a wreath at the grave of captor, Isaac Van Wart, at the Elmsford Reformed Church Cemetery. Both events drew local officials, interested public, and honor guards of three officers and eighteen cadets from the United States Military Academy, reprising attendance by cadets at these two Patriots' funerals. Mott's Artillery Company and the 5th New York Regiment fired on the Hudson River sloop, *Clearwater*, playing the Sloop of War *Vulture* from Croton Point Park after historian Lincoln Diamant explained the role of the *Vulture* and John André to spectators including the Board of Directors of the *Clearwater*. Joined by the full contingent of West Point cadets and over thirty re-enactors from Pawling's Levies, Mott's Artillery, the 2nd New York, and the 5th New York, some 500 people watched the recreation of the capture of André (John Lopez) by the three volunteer militiamen played by Sean Grady, George Bock, and Dan Hess at Patriots' Park in Sleepy Hollow/Tarrytown hosted by the Historical Society, Inc, serving Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown. To set up the event, Hugh Francis in the guise of John André had already re-ridden the route from the Underhill

House in Yorktown to Patriots' Park on September 17th, sponsored by the Kenyon and Muenster families.

The rest of the weekend's events took place at the George Washington Masonic Historic Site (de Wint House) at Tappan. More than 1,500 people attended the 21st Annual Colonial Day sponsored by the Tappantown Historical Society and the encampment by the Brigade of the American Revolution at the de Wint House. Lecturers John E. Walsh, Lincoln Diamant, Carl Oeschner, and Dennis Corcoran explained different aspects of Arnold's treason and André's capture. Re-enactors performed drill and fired muskets and a cannon; the highlight of the exercises came when American re-enactors repelled an attempt by Crown forces to free Major André. Proprietor Robert Norden, Jr. hosted the re-enactors and their guests at an eighteenth century dinner at the Old '76 House restaurant, bringing to life Mabie's Tavern where André had been imprisoned. On Sunday a crowd gathered to watch the recreation of the trial of Major John André by actors from the Brigade of the American Revolution on the front porch of the Tappan Reformed Church's Manse. Just as it happened in 1780, American troops marched "André" to the top of the hill that now bears his name and a monument to his memory where he confronted a hangman and a cart provided by the New Jersey Militia, Heard's Brigade. At noon an announcement was made that André had been executed 225 years ago to the date and time, followed by remarks and a wreath-laying by Dr. Ray Raymond, former Political Officer at the British Consulate in New York City, and three volleys from the Brigade. As the smoke cleared, it was clear that the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area had brought to life for almost 3,000 people one of the most important chapters in American history. You too can soon hear the lectures and view video and photographs of Patriots' Weekend, 2005 at www.hudsonrivervalley.org.

As a part of your holiday travels, visit an historical site or a colonial house near you that is decked out in its holiday finery so that you can reflect on the sacrifices made by the Continentals and militiamen 225 years ago; remember especially the history-changing roles played by the captors of André, John Paulding, Isaac Van Wart, and David Williams. For example, relive Christmas at the John Jay Homestead on December 11th and with the Ellisons by candle light at the Knox Headquarters State Historic Site on December 17th (<http://www.nysparks.com/events/>). To learn more about the Revolution in the Hudson River Valley, log onto www.hudsonrivervalley.net and www.hudsonrivervalley.com. Huzza and happy holidays from the Hudson Highlands.