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CEREMONIES  
ON  
LAYING CORNER-STONE  
OF  
David Williams' Monument,  
AT  
SCHOHARIE, SEPT. 23, 1876.



CEREMONIES

OF

LAYING THE CORNER-STONE

OF

THE MONUMENT

TO

DAVID WILLIAMS

ONE OF THE CAPTORS OF MAJOR ANDRE.

AT

SCHOHARIE COURT HOUSE.

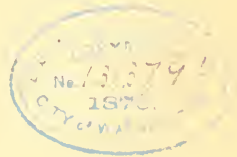
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## P R E F A C E .

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THE purpose of this publication is to perpetuate the formal part of the ceremonies which occurred at Schoharie on the ninety-sixth anniversary of the Capture of Major André, and also to record in an enduring form a brief statement of the manner in which the people of Schoharie county and the surrounding country responded to the suggestion, that the grave of DAVID WILLIAMS, one of André's captors, should be permanently honored by a monument worthy of the historic act with which his name is associated.

The following extract is taken from a description, in the local press, of the celebration which occurred at Schoharie on the 23d day of September, 1876:

“Saturday dawned cloudy and cool, but not threatening. The streets were dry but not dusty, and the committee-men in purple ribbons and white ribbons were busily performing the various duties assigned to them before eight o'clock in the morning. People were coming in from every quarter at that early hour, and no one seemed to think that Old Probabilities, who announced rain, knew any thing about the weather. The cars from either direction were crowded inside, and even on their roofs.

“At 10 A. M. the steady stream of incoming people was augmented by the arrival of the excursion trains from Albany and Troy, and the day was fairly begun. The Committee of Reception was on hand at the depot with carriages for the orator and notables, and mounted marshals were also in

attendance. As soon as the train stopped, our visitors from Albany and Troy disembarked. First came the Albany Zouave Cadets, Co. A, 10th Regiment, in command of Captain John H. Reynolds, and headed by Austin's Band; then came the carriages with Hon. CHARLES HOLMES, president of the day; the orator of the day, GRENVILLE TREMAIN, Esq., of Albany; the poet of the day, ALFRED B. SWEET, of Albany; DANIEL KNOWER, RALPH BREWSTER, commissioners; several descendants of DAVID WILLIAMS: Senator W. C. LAMONT; J. R. SIMMS, historian, of Schoharie county; Hon. S. L. MAYHAM, N. LA F. BACHMAN, Esq., Hon. S. H. SWEET, of Albany, Col. C. C. KROMER, Prof. S. SIAS, CHARLES COURTER, Esq., A. A. HUNT, Esq., Hon. JOHN WESTOVER, and Dr. W. T. LAMONT and many others. The carriages were followed by the "Niagara" Engine and Eagle Hose Companies of Schoharie, headed by the Cobleskill Cornet Band, all of them making a fine appearance in their handsome uniform. Then came the Tibbitts Corps of Veterans from Troy, with their tall shakos, and headed by Doring's Band. These all moved up to Knower avenue, where the procession was formed and the citizens in carriages brought up the rear of the order above mentioned.

"The line of March was up Knower avenue to Bridge street, down Bridge street to Main street, down Main street to the Old Stone Fort, where the exercises of laying the corner stone were to take place. When the head of the line reached the Stone Fort, the road was full of carriages the entire mile between it and the village, and others were still coming, and the sidewalks were crowded the entire distance with people on their way to the Fort. Only about one-half of the people could get inside the grounds and in the street which passes by the grounds surrounding the Stone Fort,

and these were estimated by competent judges to number 5,000. We do not doubt that there were 10,000 people in the village that day. As soon as possible order was restored, and Hon. CHAS. HOLMES, president of the day, announced the following programme:

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

Singing of Whittier's Hymn by the Schoharie Musical Association.

Prayer by Rev. WILLIAM H. HANDY.

Singing of the "STAR SPANGLED BANNER" by the Schoharie Musical Association.

Oration by GRENVILLE TREMAIN, of Albany.

Music by Doring's Band.

Poem, written by ALFRED B. STREET, of Albany, and read by N. LA F. BACHMAN, Esq., of Schoharie.

Singing of "AMERICA" by the Schoharie Musical Association.

Historical Address by DR. KNOWER, of Schoharie.

Music by Austin's Band.

"The singing by the SCHOHARIE MUSICAL ASSOCIATION, composed of CLARENCE C. LASSELL and Mrs. C. C. LASSELL, Mrs. WILSON, Mrs. MOREHOUSE, the Misses IDA MAYHAM, MARY E. SMITH, ELIZA WARNER, LIBBIE KRUM and JENNIE ZEH, and four young men, elicited hearty applause and many remarks of approval. Upon the speaker's stand, among others, were two grandsons of DAVID WILLIAMS, of the same name, and a number of his descendants."

The audience, at the close of the ceremonies, on motion of Hon. S. L. MAYHAM, unanimously requested Messrs. TREMAIN, STREET and KNOWER to furnish copies of their productions for publication.





ORATION

BY

GRENVILLE TREMAIN.



## ORATION.

---

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW-CITIZENS— In that temple of silence and reconciliation where the enmities of twenty generations lie buried, in the tender and solemn gloom of that venerable abbey wherein is gathered the honored dust of England's bravest and best, surrounded by "royal sarcophagus and carved shrine, and by fading banners which tell of the knights of former time; where the Chathams and Mansfields repose, and where orators and poets lie," is a conspicuous monument, bearing this inscription:

"SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF MAJOR JOHN ANDRÉ, WHO, RAISED BY HIS MERIT AT AN EARLY PERIOD OF HIS LIFE TO THE RANK OF ADJUTANT-GENERAL OF THE BRITISH FORCES IN AMERICA, AND EMPLOYED IN AN IMPORTANT BUT HAZARDOUS ENTERPRISE, FELL A SACRIFICE TO HIS ZEAL FOR HIS KING AND COUNTRY."

By command of England's king, George the Third, was this monument raised in Westminster Abbey. The sculptor, true to the historical fact, has pictured

and perpetuated the singular sense of pain and grief entertained by those who were the foes of him whose name is thus prominently carved in this temple of fame. Contemplating, as it were, with bowed head this rare homage of a great nation to her dead, the spectator is moved to inquire more minutely into the events of this life so grandly immortalized. What has won so much in a career of only twenty-nine years? In this sacred mausoleum of England's mighty dead, where,

Through long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,

sweep memories of those who have enriched the language, ennobled the human intellect, elevated humanity, or perpetuated in immortal verse the emotions and passions of men, on every side are names, the very utterance of which is an era, an army, an anthem, an empire. To associate with these mighty dead, how incalculable the honor! How indelible the record here engraven! How immortal the fame here perpetuated!

And yet this man thus wept by his foes and immortalized by his country was an enemy to American liberty, a foe to republicanism, whose death was ignoble, and whose ashes reposed for forty years under the free soil of our own land, marked only by a tree whose fruit never blossomed.<sup>1</sup> That monument to the memory of John André would never



have been raised, no such inscription would ever have been written, and that grim irony would not have marred the greatness of Westminster Abbey, but for the critical act, the crucial conduct and the incorruptible honor of him whose name is upon every lip and in every heart here to-day.

The minute details of the story and the life that are brought to mind by the ceremonies of this day will be wrought out by another and more competent hand. The expression of the thoughts and emotions suggested by the accepted facts connected with the memorable event of September 23, 1780, and a mere outline of the occurrence, are more appropriately within the province of the duty assigned to me. In the contemplation of the performance of that duty I am sustained, buoyed and strengthened by a belief in the leniency of judgment and the charitable consideration of those whom I address.

To us, living when the nation's life has spanned a century, when her greatness and her power are recognized in every clime and upon every sea, when the rich blessings of civil and religious liberty accompany every heart-throb and every breath — to us the page that records the fidelity and the transcendent honor of David Williams, John Paulding and Isaac Van Wart, is serried with lines of the deepest interest, and glorious with letters that can never fade.

We open to-day the book that perpetuates the history of revolutionary times, that tells how our country was baptized with fire and blood; how, through toils, and labors, and sacrifices, and sorrows, and prayers, this last hope of republicanism arose; and we know that the "red rain of her slaughtered sires has but watered the earth for the harvest of their gallant sons." We turn to the chapter blackened by the only traitor that disgraced the revolutionary period, to find that his treachery was defeated and the infant nation saved by the providential presence and the memorable act of him to whom we this day erect with pageant and with pride this monumental tribute.

That André's was an important but hazardous enterprise is now more fully appreciated than even when the stirring events of that period were being enacted — nay, than during the first half century of the nation's life. The true nature of that enterprise as well, thanks to the unerring adjustment of time, has become fixed and certain wherever intelligence and judicial fairness prevail over passion or sentimentality. I would not if I could, and certainly I could not if I would, mar the charm of that picture which the character and personality of Major André presents. Dissociated from the terrible consequences which would have resulted from a successful termination of that enterprise, and independent of the

attempt made in certain quarters in England to cast a shade upon the spotless character of Washington, we cannot contemplate the fate of André, without emotions of the profoundest pity. Wherever loyalty and valor are respected, wherever steadfastness and manly devotion are admired, wherever youth, ambition, intelligence and beauty combined, command interest and win affection, there will the character of Major André be cordially and truly appreciated. But these very qualities of heart and mind were the underlying causes of his connection with the enterprise. Considered with all the surrounding circumstances, however, I have no hesitation in saying that, in comparison with the high noon glory that surrounds the distinguished service, lofty firmness and untarnished honor of our own Nathan Hale, the conduct of André pales into a glimmering twilight. He who by corruption and bribery seeks profit and renown, has no place beside him who for love of liberty, considers his own single life but an insignificant offering upon the altar of his country.

The method of André's death was an inseparable accompaniment of the act and of the offense.<sup>2</sup> The laws of war and of nations have inexorably imposed the penalty, and its infamy cannot be lessened in the world's estimation by the fact that his brother was invested with the honors of knighthood.<sup>3</sup> Vattel, the great expositor of the laws of nations and

of war, while he recognizes such enterprises as not contrary to the external law of nations, denies that they are just and compatible with the laws of a pure conscience, and says: "Seducing a subject to betray his country; suborning a traitor to set fire to a magazine; practicing on the fidelity of a governor — enticing him, persuading him to deliver up a place, is prompting such persons to commit detestable crimes. Is it honest to incite our most inveterate enemy to be guilty of a crime? \* \* \* It is a different thing merely to accept the offers of a traitor, but when we know ourselves able to succeed without the assistance of traitors, it is noble to reject their offers with detestation."

At this distance of time, then, we view the act of André with that calmness and repose of judgment that does not err, and which is not warped by

"Titles blown from adulation."

This is the darker side of the picture essential to its completeness; but there are lighter shades to attract the eye and warm the heart. Let us examine them.

Stand with me upon that historic spot, hard by Tarrytown, in the county of Westchester, where the dark blow that was aimed at the life of the young nation was arrested. There the zealous André sees visions of future glory and honor, kingliest rewards,

within his very grasp. There, as he rides along his solitary path beyond the American lines and on the very verge of safety, he knows that his heel is upon the throat of American freedom and independence. Within sight the great artery of trade and commerce flows majestic to the sea, unconscious that on this hapless morning of September 21, 1780, its bosom is vexed by the Vulture laden with the fate of nations and of centuries. The giant mountains, sentinels of the centuries, stand and see the beginning and the tragic ending of the hellish plot which includes the destinies of the nation, and the sacrifice of the precious life upon which those destinies hang. Standing at this point of observation, the magnitude of the service of David Williams is more fully seen, is more fully comprehended. In the rusty garb of a reduced gentleman the solitary horseman, as he approaches, is now the central figure of our view. And who is he? Major John André, adjutant-general of the British forces in America. He has left the "Mercuries reclining upon bales of goods, and the Genii playing with pens, ink and paper." Mercantile glories crowd no longer upon his fancy. An "impertinent consciousness" has whispered in his ear that he is not of the right stuff for a merchant, and the picture of his beautiful and beloved Honora has lost the talismanic power to lighten toil and inspire



industry.<sup>4</sup> Accomplished in the lighter graces of music, poetry and painting, graceful and cultured in literary expression, fired with a zeal for glory:

“ Yearning for the large excitement  
that the coming years would yield,  
Eager-hearted as a boy,  
when first he leaves his father's field,”

he has turned his glowing nature toward the profession of his heart. In the words of his biographer, few men were more capable than he of winning a soldier's reward. A prisoner at the surrender of St. Johns, we see him clinging to the picture his own hand had painted of the loved Honora; promoted for merit and fidelity to a position far above his years and experience, winning the confidence and affection of his chief, Sir Henry Clinton, he is now commissioned for a service of which the King of England did not hesitate to say that “the public never can be compensated for the vast advantages which must have followed from the success of his plan.”

Up to that critical moment, nine o'clock on the morning of the 23d of September, there had been no special lack of discretion on André's part. He had been borne along by fates that were propitious, so far as human ken could see, though in fact perils were approaching from sources called accidental, perils which to him were entirely unforeseen. For

more than a year he had, without exposure or suspicion, conducted a clandestine correspondence with the traitor Arnold. The treason had been hidden under the phrases of the mercantile profession. Arnold, under the feigned name of "Gustavus," had communicated much valuable, and often highly important information to André whom he addressed as John Anderson. Sir Henry Clinton, the commander of the British forces, had soon suspected the true rank and person of Gustavus. Several attempts at a personal interview had miscarried, but the infidelity of Arnold had never been suspected. He had by importunity at last succeeded in obtaining from Washington command of West Point without causing the slightest shade of suspicion to cross the sagacious mind of that watchful commander. There his plottings were renewed. Even the overture which had come in response to his communications, and borne by the ominous Vulture up the Hudson to within fourteen miles of Arnold's quarters, near West Point, had been shown to Washington in the presence of La Fayette, with a brazen boldness that extinguished all doubts of Arnold's honor. "I had no more suspicion of Arnold than I had of myself," said the chief in relating this. On the 20th, André had boarded the Vulture in the highest spirits, confident of success. The details of that midnight voyage of twelve miles,

from King's Ferry to Teller's Point, and back from the Vulture to Long Clove, are known to all. With oars carefully muffled in sheep-skins, the flag-boat, so called, beneath a serene and clear sky, approached in silence the place of meeting, where the arch-traitor was hid among the firs.

From this point occur a series of trivial circumstances, insignificant in themselves but yet big with fate. The refusal of the boatmen to return to the Vulture that night, necessitated the journey to the Smith house, some three or four miles distant, the consequent disguise assumed by André to escape detection during the return by land, and as well the possession of the papers found under André's stockings, which led his captors to the knowledge of his true character. Without that disguise and without those papers, while the conspiracy might not have been defeated, the life of André would have been saved. But the memorable act of Col. Livingston is still more remarkable. At day-break, on the morning of the 22d, the Vulture still lingered with impudent audacity in the vicinity of the American fortifications. Her presence had so outraged the spirit of Livingston and the troops that he had applied, but without success, to Arnold for two heavy guns. Nothing daunted by the treasonable refusal of Arnold, he had carried a four-pounder to Gallows Point, a lesser promontory of Tellers, and

with but a scant supply of powder, he commenced so active a cannonading upon her that she was obliged to drop down the river beyond range.<sup>5</sup> In this manner all means of access to her by water was cut off from André. But for the American grit and perseverance of Livingston, André would doubtless have found some means of again boarding the *Vulture*, carrying with him the instruments for the destruction of West Point and her dependencies. Upon such apparently trivial and accidental incidents does the fate of nations frequently depend.

From the window of Smith's house André saw with impatience the *Vulture* withdraw, but he knew not that she carried with her all his hopes of future glory and renown. All that morning after Arnold's departure, which occurred at ten o'clock, he chafed with impatience to depart. But the jealous, prying, gossip-loving guide, in whose care André had been left, proved too timid, weak and procrastinating for the part assigned him. Toward the last of that ill-omened Friday, the return was begun, with André's spirits sunk deep in gloom and sadness. And well might they be. The bargain had been made by which, for gold, an officer, high in the esteem of Washington, had sold his birth-right and his honor. During that long night he had been breathing the foul atmosphere where treason was hatched, had been looking into a face wrinkled

with perfidy, into the blood-shot eyes of a debauched and worthless traitor. And he, the soul of honor, "the pet of the British army," had been bartering with devilish coolness for the soul of a fellow-man. Involved in that midnight conference were the lives of men who had never done him injury, and the happiness of innocent women and children who had never crossed his path. He, the hero, who had been fired by a desire to win renown by heroic bravery and distinguished service for his country, was skulking inside the enemy's lines like a common thief in disguise, the companion of a petty tool and his negro, and with his stockings stuffed with an ill-gotten booty, bought with the price of another's dishonor.<sup>6</sup> Is it any wonder that his mind settled into gloomy forebodings?

He crossed Kings's Ferry at the northern extremity of Haverstraw bay and took his way, under the dictation of his over-cautious companion, northward, to disarm suspicion. Here another trivial circumstance interposed itself with unerring fatality. Smith, the willing tool of Arnold, insisted upon remaining over night on the way. Fatal error! In the darkness and silence of that night, there were hidden forces at work, which would block the morrow's path with a wall more impregnable than Fort Putnam. The honor and incorruptibility of David Williams was a part of its masonry.



All night the restless André tossed upon an uneasy bed, side by side with the miserable creature whose easy virtue had yielded to the persuasions of Arnold. Is it wonderful that both should have been robbed of sleep? Is it strange that at daylight and without breakfast they should hasten on in the path that was to lead André to the feet of his sovereign, to receive a grateful country's homage and reward?

And now we approach the place and the act in commemoration of which, by the tardy favor and justice of our State, we are assembled here to day.

The three captors of Major André, whose names have become renowned, would in all likelihood have remained unknown to future generations, had Smith, as he agreed, accompanied André to White Plains, below Tarrytown. But yielding to his pusillanimous fears, he refused to go further than Pines Bridge.

From this point, then, our solitary horseman approaches the place where we stand. To the west of the road was the river; to the east, the Greenburgh Hills, in whose bosom lies the world-renowned vale of Sleepy Hollow, with its old church founded by the Philipse family, and the ancient bell with its legend, *Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos*. In front of him as he passes, a few rough logs laid side by side, furnish a passage over a rivulet, which rises in the neighboring swamp and finds its way westward

into those broad waters of the Hudson known as the Tappaan Zee.

Here on the south and west side of the path, concealed among the bushes, are David Williams, the eldest of the party (he being about twenty-two years old), John Paulding and Isaac Van Wart, yeomen. Not freeholders under the rank of gentlemen, but American citizens of humble birth, two of whom had already risked their lives in the service of their country and in the cause of the colonies, against whom the breath of slander from sentimental or compassionate lips, had not yet breathed a shade of suspicion; representatives of that "Peasant Patriotism of America — the conquering power of the revolution — the essential element then, as now, and evermore, of American greatness and American freedom!"

Springing to their feet, with presented muskets, they bid the stranger stand and announce his destination. Surely the darling of the British army, who, by sagacity, prudence and bravery, has been elevated to the rank of adjutant-general of the British forces in America, is possessed of sufficient caution to disarm this bristling trio! Not so. Although armed with Arnold's pass to guard him against the only real enemies he has cause to fear, and which has already put to sleep the awakened suspicions of the wary Captain Boyd, some over-

ruling Providence leads him to make that fatal answer, "My lads, I hope you belong to our party." The reply comes quick, "What party is that?" "The lower party," he answered. "We do," is the reply. "Thank God, I am once more among friends," he cried, deceived by the rude simplicity of the men, and recognizing a British military coat upon Paulding's back, a coat in which (in lieu of his own, of which he had been despoiled) Paulding had escaped from the enemy, in whose hands he had fallen some five or six days before the capture of André. "I am glad to see you, I am a British officer; I have been up in the country on particular business, and I hope you won't detain me a minute," confidently continued André.

The long agony was over! That mine which had been set for the overthrow of the citadel of American freedom and independence, whose train it had taken months to lay, was now exposed and harmless, unless

"The jingling of the guinea  
That helps the hurt that honor feels."

can successfully assail the virtue of Williams, Van Wart and Paulding. This vast assemblage, these ceremonies, the projected monument over the remains of David Williams, but above all that waving symbol of the power and greatness of this nation, tell with unmistakable and an answerable emphasis

of the incorruptible integrity of these simple rustic men.

The State of New York has honored herself by making the appropriation necessary to commence this monument over the remains of the only one of that immortal three, whose grave remains to this day unhonored. In 1827 the city of New York erected a monument over the remains of Paulding near Peekskill, bearing this significant inscription :

“ON THE MORNING OF THE 23D OF SEPTEMBER, 1780, ACCOMPANIED BY TWO YOUNG FARMERS OF THE COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER (WHOSE NAMES WILL ONE DAY BE RECORDED ON THEIR OWN DESERVED MONUMENTS) HE INTERCEPTED THE BRITISH SPY ANDRÉ. POOR HIMSELF, HE DISDAINED TO ACQUIRE WEALTH BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIS COUNTRY. REJECTING THE TEMPTATION OF GREAT REWARDS, HE CONVEYED HIS PRISONER TO THE AMERICAN CAMP; AND BY THIS ACT OF NOBLE SELF-DENIAL THE TREASON OF ARNOLD WAS DETECTED, THE DESIGNS OF THE ENEMY BAFFLED, WEST POINT AND THE AMERICAN ARMY SAVED, AND THESE UNITED STATES, NOW, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, FREE AND INDEPENDENT, RESCUED FROM MOST IMMINENT PERIL.”

At Greenburgh, near Tarrytown, on the spot where the remains of Isaac Van Wart lie buried, the citizens of the vicinity erected, in 1829, a suitable

monument, with the following inscription engraven thereon :

“ FIDELITY. ON THE 23D OF SEPTEMBER, 1780, ISAAC VAN WART, ACCOMPANIED BY JOHN PAULDING AND DAVID WILLIAMS, ALL FARMERS OF THE COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER, INTERCEPTED MAJOR ANDRÉ ON HIS RETURN FROM THE AMERICAN LINES IN THE CHARACTER OF A SPY; AND, NOTWITHSTANDING THE LARGE BRIBES OFFERED THEM FOR HIS RELEASE, NOBLY DISDAINED TO SACRIFICE THEIR COUNTRY FOR GOLD, SECURED AND CARRIED HIM TO THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE DISTRICT, WHEREBY THE DANGEROUS AND TRAITOROUS CONSPIRACY OF ARNOLD WAS BROUGHT TO LIGHT, THE INSIDIOUS DESIGNS OF THE ENEMY BAFFLED, THE AMERICAN ARMY SAVED, AND OUR BELOVED COUNTRY FREE.”

On the memorable site where the capture occurred, the young men of Westchester county, in 1853, built a cenotaph in honor of the captors. How appropriate, then, that in this beautiful valley and in this county, where the survivor of the three lived for twenty-six years, and where he died and was buried, there should rise an enduring mark of the gratitude and appreciation of this people!

It does not become the time nor the occasion to enter upon any extended discussion of the mooted questions surrounding the purposes and motives of



André's captors. It is too late a day to reverse the judgment of George Washington and Alexander Hamilton, of Congress and the Legislature of this State, all pronounced at the time. Besides the united testimony of a host of their neighbors and acquaintances, the sworn statements of Paulding and Van Wart, and the solemn asseverations of Williams seven months before his death in 1831,<sup>7</sup> all unite in bearing down, with an unanswerable weight of testimony, the eleventh-hour statement of Col. Tallmadge thirty-seven years after the capture.<sup>8</sup> To all this we may add the critical analysis, by Henry J. Raymond, of the whole testimony bearing on the subject.<sup>9</sup> That acute publicist dismissed the slander to the reprobation it deserves, and the almost universal judgment of the American people confirms the verdict. For myself, I may be permitted to add, that in my judgment, when examined with fairness, and tested by the rules of common sense and common justice, every candid mind must inevitably conclude that the overwhelming balance of proof is upon the side of the incorruptible honesty and purity of their motives. Nothing more reliable than rumor and suspicion arising from statements made solely by André, stand upon the other side, statements, it must never be forgotten, which sprang from a heart sorely dejected, chagrined and mortified by his own lack of common prudence; made, too, at a time

when his mind, sunk beneath a weight of woe almost incalculable, was seeking for relief in the contemplation of what might have been. It is our duty to guard the reputation of these humble patriots against this misty testimony rising out of such a cauldron of self-interest. It must always be borne in mind that the British would not concede that true virtue was a feature of character belonging to Americans; and André, fresh from a field where he had witnessed the debased character of a high officer, was in no condition of mind to stem the tide of opinion that flowed within the English lines. The virtue of these men, under such circumstances, could not be, and evidently was not comprehended. In the words of Lt.-Col. Fleury, written from Newport, on the 5th of October, 1870: "How great, compared to Arnold, are those peasants who refused the bribe of André. Let this be remembered in favor of the poor."

I may be permitted to express the hope, that somewhere upon this projected monument to David Williams will appear these notable words of Washington in his letter to the President of Congress: "The party that took Major André \* \* acted in such a manner as does them the highest honor, and proves them to be men of great virtue, \* \* their conduct gives them a just claim to the thanks of their country."

Perhaps the true nature of this conduct is more eloquently and luminously told in the words of Alexander Hamilton, in the Laurens letter, where he says: "Arnold's conduct and that of the captors of André, form a striking contrast. He tempted them with the offer of his watch, his horse and any sum of money that they should name. They rejected his offer with indignation, and the gold that could seduce a man, high in the esteem and confidence of his country, who had the remembrance of past exploits, the motives of present reputation and future glory to prop his integrity, had no charms for these simple peasants leaning on their virtue and an honest sense of their duty. While Arnold is handed down with execration, posterity will repeat with reverence the names of Van Wart, Paulding and Williams!"

I owe it to the occasion, to you and to myself, to present some considerations in support of the constantly recurring thought, throughout this discourse, of the grave importance of Arnold's plot. I have already alluded to the estimate of its advantages to the British government pronounced by King George the Third. From the abundant materials furnished by those in the English service at the time, I will only add the following from the memoirs of Sir Henry Clinton, commander of the British forces in New York. In speaking of the arrest of André, he

says: "I was exceedingly shocked, as may be supposed, by this very unexpected accident, which not only ruined a most important project, which had all the appearance of being in a happy train of success, but involved in danger and distress a confidential friend for whom I had deservedly the warmest esteem."

Creasy, in his "Decisive Battles of the World", has succinctly described the great and pivotal victory of the Americans at Saratoga, on the 7th of October, 1777. He has conclusively shown the plan of operations which the English attempted in that year, and which the battle of Saratoga defeated. The English had a considerable force in Canada, which had been re-enforced for the purpose of striking a vigorous and crushing blow against the Colonies. It was intended that the force thus collected should march southward by the line of the lakes and thence along the banks of the Hudson river. The British army in New York was to make a simultaneous movement northward up the line of the Hudson, and the two expeditions were to meet at Albany. In this manner all communications between the Colonial army in New England, and the principal army under Washington, which was watching over Pennsylvania and the South, would be cut off. The army from Canada was under command of Burgoyne, and that in New York under Sir Henry Clin-

ton. The plan was ably formed, and was defeated only by the consummate skill of Gen. Gates, and the unprecedented bravery of his men at Saratoga, aided by the delay caused by the fortifications on the lower Hudson, the key of which was West Point, which fortification hindered the prompt co-operation of Sir Henry Clinton with Burgoyne. Clinton, in fact, reached Kingston, where, hearing of Burgoyne's surrender, he burned the place and returned to New York.

What the capture of West Point would have been to the British will be more fully appreciated by an illustration familiar to all. It will be remembered how the country was stirred to its very centre, on the 4th of July, 1863, by the glorious tidings that Vicksburg had fallen, and that "the great Mississippi swept unvexed to the sea." What that meant was soon known. Surrounded, like West Point, with fortifications, redoubts and bastioned forts, it held within its iron grasp the control of the great Mississippi. When it fell, that great artery through which ran the life-blood of the Southern Confederacy was absolutely within the power of the Federal army. The Rebellion had been cut in twain. In the language of Sherman, "the reduction of Vicksburg made the destruction of the Rebellion certain." What Vicksburg and her dependencies were to the

Mississippi in 1863, West Point and her dependencies were to the Hudson in 1780.

What had been lost at Saratoga by open force, would have been regained, had West Point and its dependencies fallen by means of the secret plottings of Arnold. "This was the great object of British and American solicitude," says Irving, in speaking of West Point, "on the possession of which was supposed by many to hinge the fortunes of the war." And again he says, "the immediate result of this surrender, it was anticipated, would be the defeat of the combined attempt upon New York, and its ultimate effect might be the dismemberment of the Union and the dislocation of the whole American scheme of warfare." From the mass of American testimony at hand, the following additional proofs are selected: La Fayette wrote to his wife, October 8th: "A frightful conspiracy has been planned by the celebrated Arnold; he sold to the English the fort of West Point which was under his command, and consequently the whole navigation of the North river."

General Greene issued a general order on the 26th of October, from which the following is taken:

"Treason, of the blackest dye, was yesterday discovered. General Arnold, who commanded at West Point—lost to every sentiment of honor, of private and public obligation—was about to deliver



up that important post into the hands of the enemy. Such an event must have given the American cause a deadly wound, if not a fatal stab. Happily this treason has been timely discovered to prevent the fatal misfortune. The providential train of circumstances which led to it, affords the most convincing proof that the liberties of America are the object of divine protection. At the same time, though the treason is to be regretted, the general cannot help congratulating the army on the happy discovery. Our enemies, despairing of carrying their point by force, are practicing every base art to effect by bribery and corruption, what they cannot accomplish in a manly way. Great honor is due to the American army that this is the first instance of the kind, where many were to be expected from the nature of the dispute; and nothing is so bright an ornament in the character of the American soldiers, as their having been proof against all the arts and seductions of an insidious enemy.

\* \* \* His Excellency the commander-in-chief has arrived at West Point from Hartford, and is no doubt taking proper measures to unravel fully so hellish a plot."

It must be borne in mind, that had the "hellish plot" succeeded, it would have involved the captivity of Washington himself. The following remarkable letter of Governor Wm. Livingston to

General Washington so entirely expresses the emotions of the hour, that it is inserted in full :

TRENTON, *7th October*, 1780.

DEAR SIR— I most heartily congratulate your Excellency on the timely discovery of General Arnold's treasonable plot to captivate your person and deliver up West Point to the enemy, of which the loss of the former, had his infernal machinations succeeded, would have been more regretted by America than of the latter. The remarkable disposition of Providence to frustrate the diabolical conspiracy, will inspire every virtuous American with sincere gratitude to the Great Arbitrer of all events; and I hope that no true Whig among us will ever forget the memorable era when we were, by the peculiar guardianship of Heaven, rescued from the very brink of destruction.

“ I have the honor to be  
 your very obedient servant,  
 “ WILLIAM LIVINGSTON.”

Is it any wonder, then, that with pomp and circumstance, and with grateful hearts, we assemble to perpetuate with enduring granite, here under the broad sky, and upon the free acres of our beloved country, that transcendent act and that renowned virtue of these captors of André !

Though neglected, he whose ashes lie buried here,

was not absolutely forgotten by his country, and it is proper that allusion should be made to the rewards which a grateful country has bestowed upon him.

By authority of congress, in 1780, a silver medal bearing the inscription of "Fidelity" and the legend "*Vincit Amor Patriæ*" was presented to each of the captors, and at the same time an annuity was authorized to be paid to each of \$200 in specie. In addition, congress granted to each the privilege of locating any confiscated lands in the county of Westchester to the amount of \$1,250, or of receiving that sum in cash. The Legislature of the State of New York granted to each a farm, reciting in the act as a consideration "their virtue in refusing a large sum offered to them by Major André as a bribe to permit him to escape." In the fall of 1830 the corporation of the city of New York invited David Williams (the survivor of the three), by special messenger to be present in that city at the celebration of the French Revolution. He was drawn, with other heroes of '76, in a carriage at the head of the procession and attracted much attention. He was presented with a silver cup at one of the schools and at another with a silver headed cane, the stem of which was made out of a *chevaux de frise* used near West Point during the revolution. His widow obtained a continuation of his pension, which

ceased at the time of his death. Forty-five years ago, amid a concourse of honoring friends and countrymen, he was buried at Livingstonville, in this county. His remains have been removed by consent of his descendants to this place.

Here in this locality, made memorable by the ruinous invasion of Johnson about the time when the events we have described were transpiring near Tarrytown — here near the place where the “peeled log” of the enemy<sup>10</sup> left its mark upon the old Dutch church — here where brave men and braver women stood with undaunted courage in the midst of conflagration, ruin and death — where the red men showed no mercy, and where patriots never flinched — let his ashes lie. Not in the midst of royal sarcophagi or carved shrines, but surrounded by the veneration of untold generations of freeborn Americans; not wholly unhonored, as heretofore, but graced and adorned with a permanent token of our remembrance and esteem. For at last, thanks to the interest and sense of justice of many good men and true, the legislature of the State, by making an appropriation for the monument, has removed the stain which the neglect of forty-five years had fastened upon us.

Standing where we do to day, as it were upon the apex of a pyramid, we look back over the way the nation has so grandly trod. In the beginning

we perceive the toiling multitudes, who, regardless of personal sacrifice, conscious of their own rectitude and relying upon the favor of God, wrought out the greatest empire of freedom the world has ever seen. In that great work, so full of the richest blessings for us and for our children, let it be remembered, that the part performed by the humblest, was often as important as that of the greatest. The cause of the colonies was near to the hearts of the people. That was the security of the nation then, and it cannot endure without it now.

“Oh! if the young men of our time would glow with a healthy pride of race; if they would kindle with the inspiration of patriotism; if they would find annals wealthier in enduring lesson, and bright with the radiance of a holier virtue than ever Rome embraced or Sparta knew, let them read their own land’s history.” Then may we be hopeful for the future. Then may the story we rehearse here to-day be borne to future ages along with the growing grandeur of this mighty nation which was built upon the devotion, and will be sustained by the bright example of the Revolutionary Patriots.

## APPENDIX.

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### NOTE 1.

When André's remains were removed in 1821, from their burial place in this country, a young peach tree was found growing out of the grave.

### NOTE 2.

Remarks of Chief Justice Marshall: "*André having been unquestionably a spy, and his sentence consequently just*; and the plot in which he had engaged having threatened consequences the most fatal to America, his execution, had he been an ordinary person, would certainly have been viewed with cold indifference: but he was not an ordinary person. It would seem that art had been successfully employed in the embellishment of those fascinating qualities which nature had profusely lavished on him.

"Possessed of a fine person and an excellent understanding, he had united the polish of a court, and the refinements given by education, to the heroism of a soldier." \* \* \* \* \*

### NOTE 3.

A brother of André's was knighted by the king of England to remove the stain which was supposed to attach to the family on account of the mode of André's death.

### NOTE 4.

Letter from Mr. André to Miss Seward. Sargent's Life of André, page 21:

"LONDON, October 19, 1769.

"From the midst of books, papers, bills, and other implements of gain, let me lift up my drowsy head awhile to converse with dear Julia. And first, as I know she has a fervent wish to see me a quill-driver, I must tell her, that I begin, as people are wont to do, to look upon my future profession with great partiality. I no longer see it in so disadvantageous a light. Instead of figuring a merchant as a middle-aged man, with a bob-wig, a rough beard, in snuff-colored clothes, grasping a guinea in his red hand, I conceive a comely young man,



with a tolerable pig-tail, wielding a pen with all the noble fierceness of the Duke of Marlborough brandishing a truncheon upon a sign-post, surrounded with types and emblems, and canopied with cornucopias that disembogue their stores upon his head; Mercuries reclined upon bales of goods; Genii playing with pens, ink and paper; while, in perspective, his gorgeous vessels, "Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames," are wafting to distant lands the produce of this commercial nation. Thus all the mercantile glories crowd on my fancy emblazoned in the most retulgent coloring of an ardent imagination. Borne on her soaring pinions I wing my flight to the time when Heaven shall have crowned my labors with success and opulence. I see sumptuous palaces rising to receive me; I see orphans and widows and painters and fiddlers, and poets and builders, protected and encouraged; and when the fabric is pretty nearly finished by my shattered perieranium, I cast my eyes around and find John André by a small coal-fire, in a gloomy compting-house in Warnford Court, nothing so little as what he has been making himself, and, in all probability, never to be much more than he is at present. But oh! my dear Honora!—it is for thy sake only I wish for wealth. You say she was somewhat better at the time you wrote last. I must flatter myself that she will soon be without any remains of this threatening disease. It is seven o'clock; you and Honora, with two or three more select friends, are now probably encircling your dressing-room fireplace. What would I not give to enlarge that circle! The idea of a clean hearth, and a snug circle round it, formed by a few select friends, transport me. You seem combined together against the inclemency of the weather, the hurry, bustle, ceremony, censoriousness and envy of the world. The purity, the warmth, the kindly influence of fire—to all for whom it is kindled—is a good emblem of the friendship of such amiable minds as Julia's and her Honora's. Since I cannot be there in reality, pray imagine me with you; admit me to your conversationés—think how I wish for the blessing of joining them! and be persuaded that I take part in all your pleasures, in the dear hope, that e're very long, your blazing hearth will burn again for me. Pray keep me a place; let the poker, tongs or shovel, represent me. But you have Dutch tiles, which are infinitely better; so let Moses, or Aaron, or Balaam's ass be my representative. But time calls me to Clapton. I quit you abruptly till to-morrow, when, if I do not tear the nonsense I have been writing, I may, perhaps, increase its quantity. Signora Cynthia is in clouded majesty. Silvered with her beams, I am about to jog to Clapton upon my own stumps; musing as I homeward plod my way—ah! need I name the subject of my contemplations?"

## NOTE 5.

The important consequence of this cannonade was not understood, when the following note was written by Colonel Lamb :

WEST POINT, 20 *September*, 1780.

SIR— I have sent the ammunition you requested, but, at the same time, I wish there may not be a wanton waste of it, as we have little to spare. Firing at a ship with a four-pounder is, in my opinion, a waste of powder, as the damage she will sustain is not equal to the expense. Whenever applications are made for ammunition, they must be made through the commanding officer of artillery, at the post where it is wanted.

I am, sir, yours, etc.,

JOHN LAMB.

COL. LIVINGSTON.

## NOTE 6.

Papers found on Major André's person when captured.

## I.

[Pass for the use of André. In Arnold's handwriting.]

HEADQUARTERS, ROBINSON'S HOUSE, {  
Sept'r 22d, 1780. }

Permit Mr. John Anderson to pass the guards to White Plains, or below if *he chuses*, he being on public business by my direction.

B. ARNOLD, *M. Gen'l.*

(Indorsed: Arnold to John Anderson — Pass. 22 Sept., 1780.)

## II.

[ARTILLERY ORDERS.]

(Disposition of the Garrison at West Point, in case of an alarm.— In Arnold's handwriting.)

WT. POINT, *Sept. 5th*, 1780.

Artillery Orders :

The following disposition of the corps is to take place, in case of an alarm :

Capt. Dannils, with his company, at Fort Putnam, and to detach an officer with 12 men to Wylly's Redoubt; a non-commissioned officer, with 3 men, to Webb's Redoubt, and a like number to Redoubt No. 4; Captain Thomas' company to repair to Fort Arnold; Captain Simmons and company to remain at the North and South Redoubts, at the east side of the river, until further orders.

Lieut. Barber, with 20 men of Capt. Jackson's company, will repair to Constitution Island; the remainder of the company, with Lieut. Masons, will repair to Arnold.

Capt. Lieut. George and Lieut. Blake, with 20 men of Capt. Treadwills' company, will repair to Redoubt No. 1 and 2; the remainder of the company will be sent to Fort Arnold.

Lieut. Jones's company, with Lieut. Fisk, to repair to the South Battery. The Chain Battery, Sherburn's Redoubt, and the Brass Field-pieces will be manned from Fort Arnold, as occasion may require.

The Commissary and Conductor of Military stores will, in turn, wait upon the Commanding Officer of Artillery for orders.

The Artificers in the Garrison (agreeable to former orders) will repair to Fort Arnold, and there receive further orders from the Commanding Officer of Artillery, J. Bauman, Major Comm't Artillery.

(Indorsed: Artillery Orders, Sept. 5, 1780.)

### III.

*(Estimate of the Strength of the Garrison, Sept. 1780. — In Arnold's handwriting.)*

Estimate of the forces at Wt. Point and its dependencies, Sept. 13th, 1780:

A Brigade of Massachusetts Militia and two Regiments of Rank and File, New Hampshire, inclusive of 166 Batteaux Men at Verplanks and Stoney Points . . . . .	992
On command and extra service at Fish Kills, New Windsor, &c., &c., who may be called in occasionally . . . . .	852
Three Regiments of Connecticut Militia, under the command of Colonel Wells, on the lines near No Castle . . . . .	488
A Detachment of New York Levies on the lines . . . . .	115
	<hr/>
Militia . . . . .	2,447
Colonel Lamb's Regiment . . . . .	167
Colonel Livingston, at Verplank and Stoney Pts. . . . .	80
	<hr/>
Continental . . . . .	247
Colonel Sheldon's Dragoons on the lines, about one-half Mounted,	142
Batteaux Men and Artificers . . . . .	250
	<hr/>
Total . . . . .	<u>3,086</u>

(Indorsed: Estimate of the Force at West Point and its dependencies, Sept., 1780.)

## IV.

(*Estimate of the Force necessary to completely Man the Works. — In Arnold's handwriting.*)

Estimate of the number of men necessary to Man the Works at Wst. Point and in the Vicinity:

Fort Arnold.....	620
“ Putnam.....	450
“ Wyllys.....	140
“ Webb.....	140
Redoubt No. 1.....	150
“ “ 2.....	150
“ “ 3.....	120
“ “ 4.....	100
“ “ 5.....	130
“ “ 6.....	110
“ “ 7.....	78
North Redoubt.....	120
South Redoubt.....	130
Total . . . . .	<u>2,438</u>

VILLEPAUCHE, *Engineer.*

N. B. — The Artillery men are not included in the above estimate.

(Indorsed: Estimate of Men to Man the Works at West Point, &c., Sept., 1780.)

*Return of Ordnance in the different Forts, Batteries, &c. at West Point and its dependencies, September 5, 1780.*

	Metals.		Garrison carriages.		Travelling carriages.		Garrison carriages.		Stocked carriages.		Garrison carriages.		Stocked carriages.		Travelling carriages.		Garrison carriages.		Stocked carriages.		Travelling carriages.		Garrison carriages.		MORTARS.		HOWITZ.		Total.	N. B.—The following ordnance not distributed.				
	24	18	15	12	9	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6			6			
Calibres .....	24	18		12	9	6		6	6		6	6		6	6		6	6		6	6		6	6		6	6							
Fort Arnold.....																																		
{ Brass.....	1	6			1																													
{ Iron.....																																		
Fort Putnam.....																																		
{ Constitution Island.....		5		2	4	1	5																											
{ South Battery.....		1		1	1	2																												
{ Chain Battery.....																																		
{ Light Battery.....																																		
{ Moultrie's Battery.....																																		
{ Sherman's Redoubt.....																																		
{ Mages's Redoubt.....																																		
{ North Redoubt.....																																		
{ South Redoubt.....		3		3																														
{ Weyler's Redoubt.....																																		
{ Rocky Hill No. 4.....																																		
{ Rocky Hill No. 1.....																																		
{ Rocky Hill No. 2.....																																		
{ Verplanck's and Stony Points.....																																		
Total .....	1	18	3	11	5	9	14	5	2	1	3	6	5	11	2																			

(Signed)

L. BAUMAN, Major,  
Comdt of Artillery.

## VI.

(Remarks on Works at West Point, September, 1780—In Arnold's handwriting.)

Sept, 1780.

Fort Arnold is built of dry fascines and wood, is in a ruinous condition, incomplete, and subject to take fire from shells or carcasses.

Fort Putnam, stone wanting great repairs; the wall on the east side broke down, and rebuilding from the foundation at the west and south side; have been a chevaus de frise on the west side broke in many places. The east side open, two Bomb Proofs and Provision Magazine in the Fort, and slight wooden Barrack. A commanding piece of ground, 500 yards west between the Fort and No. 4—or Rocky Hill.

Fort Webb, built of fascines and wood; a slight work, very dry and liable to be set on fire, as the approaches are very easy, without defenses, save a slight abattis.

Fort Wylly's, built of stone; five feet high, the work above plank filled with earth; the stone work 15 feet; the earth nine feet thick. No Bomb Proofs; the Batteries without the Fort.

Redoubt No. 1. On the south side; wood nine feet; the west, north and east sides four feet thick; no cannon in the works; a slight and single abattis; no ditch or picket; cannon on two Batteries; no Bomb Proofs.

Redoubt No. 2. The same as No. 1. No Bomb Proofs.

Redoubt No. 3. A slight woodwork three feet thick; very dry; no Bomb Proofs; a single abattis; the work easily set on fire; no cannon.

Redoubt No. 4. A wooden work about ten feet high and four or five feet thick; the west side faced with a stone wall eight feet high and four feet thick; no Bomb Proof; two six-pounders; a slight abattis; a commanding piece of ground 500 yards west.

The North Redoubt on the east side built of stone, four feet high; above the stone wood filled in with earth; very dry; no ditch; a Bomb Proof; three Batteries without the Fort, a poor abattis; a rising piece of ground 500 yards south; the approaches under cover to within 20 yards; the work easily fired with faggots diptd in pitch, etc.

South Redoubt much the same as the North; a commanding piece of ground 500 yards due east; three Batteries without the Fort.

(Indorsed: Remarks on Works at West Point, a copy to be transmitted to his Excellency General Washington.)



## VII.

(*Copy of a State of Matters laid before a Council of War, by Gen'l Washington, Sept. 6, 1780. — In Arnold's handwriting.*)

At a Council of War, held in Camp, Bergen County, Sept. 6th, 1780.  
Present — The Commander-in-Chief.

The Commander-in-Chief states to the Council that, since he had the honor of laying before the General Officers, at Morristown, the 6th of June last, a general view of our circumstances, several important events have occurred, which have materially changed the prospects of the campaign.

That the succor expected from France, instead of coming out in one body, and producing a national superiority in these seas, has been divided into two divisions, the first of which, only consisting of seven ships of the line, one forty-four, and three smaller frigates, with five thousand land forces, had arrived at Rhode Island.

That a re-enforcement of six ships of the line from England having re-enforced the enemy, had made their Naval Force in these seas amount to nine sail of the line, two fifties, two forty-fours, and a number of smaller frigates, a force completely superior to that of our allies, and which has, in consequence, held them blocked up in the harbor of Rhode Island till the 29th ult., at which period the British fleet disappeared, and no advice of them has since been received.

That accounts received by the alliance frigate, which left France in July, announces the Second Division to be confined in Brest, with several other ships, by a British fleet of thirty-two sail of the line, and a fleet of the allies of thirty-six or thirty-eight ships of the line, ready to put to sea from Cadiz to relieve the port of Brest.

The most of the States, in their answers to the requisitions made of them, give the strongest assurances of doing every thing in their power to furnish the men and supplies required for the expected co-operation.

The effect of which, however, has been far short of our expectations, for not much above one-third of the levies demanded for the Continental Battalions, nor above the same proportion of Militia, have been assembled, and the supplies have been so inadequate that there was a necessity for dismissing all the Militia, whose immediate services could be dispensed with, to lessen our consumption, notwithstanding which the troops now in field are severely suffering for want of provisions.

That the army at this post and in the vicinity, in operating force, consists of 10,400 Continental troops and about 400 Militia, besides which is a regiment of Continental troops of about 500 at Rhode Island, left there for the assistance of our allies, against any attempt of

the enemy that way; the two Connecticut State regiments, amounting to 800, at North Castle.

That the times of service for which the levies are engaged will expire the first of January, which, if not replaced, allowing for the usual casualties, will reduce the Continental Army to less than 6,000.

That since the state to the council above referred to, the enemy have brought a detachment of about 3,000 men from Charles Town to New York, which makes the present operating force in this quarter between ten and eleven thousand men.

That the enemies' force now in the southern States has not been lately ascertained by any distinct accounts, but the General supposes it cannot be less than 7,000 (of which about 2,000 are at Savannah), in this estimate the diminution by the casualties of the climate is supposed to be equal to the increase of force derived from the disaffected. That added to the loss of Charles Town and its garrison, accounts of a recent misfortune are just arrived from Major-General Gates, giving advice of a general action which happened on the 16th of August, near Campden, in which the army under his command met with a total defeat, and, in all probability, the whole of the Continental troops, and a considerable part of the Militia would be cut off.

That the State of Virginia has been sometime exerting itself to raise a body of 3,000 troops to serve till the end of December, 1781, but how far it has succeeded is not known.

That Maryland had resolved to raise 2,000 men, of which a sufficient number to compose one battalion, was to have come to this army. The remainder to recruit the Maryland line, but in consequence of the late advices, an order has been sent to march the whole southward.

That the enemies' force in Canada, Halifax, St. Augustine and at Penobscot, remains much the same as stated in the preceding Council.

That there is still reason to believe the Court of France will prosecute its original intention of giving effectual succor to this country, as soon as circumstances will permit; and it is hoped the second division will certainly arrive in the course of the fall. That a fleet greatly superior to that of the enemy in the West Indies, and a formidable land force had sailed sometime since from Martinique to make a combined attack upon the Island of Jamaica, that there is a possibility of a re-enforcement from this quarter also, to the fleet of our ally at Rhode Island.

The Commander-in-Chief having thus given the Council a full view of our present situation and future prospects, requests the opinion of each member, in writing, what plan it will be advisable to pursue; to what objects our attention ought to be directed in the course of this

fall and winter, taking into consideration the alternative of having or not having a naval superiority; whether any offensive operations can be immediately undertaken and against what point; what ought to be our immediate preparations and dispositions, particularly whether we can afford or ought to send any re-enforcements from this army to the Southern States, and to what amount; the General requests to be favored with these opinions by the 10th instant at farthest.

(Indorsed: Copy of a Council of War held Sept. 6th. 1780.)

Note 7.

So long a time has elapsed since the documents here referred to were originally published, that they had been very generally forgotten: and as they are important to a correct judgment of the conduct and motives of the captors of André, on which even Mr. Sparks, with less than his scrupulous regard for exact justice, has thrown down unmerited distrust, it may not be amiss to reprint them in this connection. They were originally published in February and March, 1817, immediately after the remarks of Major Tallmadge in Congress.

*Certificate of Inhabitants of Westchester County.*

"We, the subscribers, inhabitants of the county of Westchester, do certify, that during the Revolutionary war, we were well acquainted with Isaac Van Wart, David Williams and John Paulding, who arrested Major André; and that at no time during the Revolutionary war, *was any suspicion entertained by their neighbors or acquaintances, that they or either of them held any undue intercourse with the enemy.*

"On the contrary, they were *universally esteemed, and taken to be ardent and faithful in the cause of the country.*

"We further certify, that the said Paulding and Williams are not now resident among us, but that Isaac Van Wart is a respectable freeholder of the town of Mount Pleasant: that we are well acquainted with him; and we do not hesitate to declare our belief, that there is not an individual in the county of Westchester, acquainted with Isaac Van Wart, who would hesitate to describe him as a man whose integrity is as unimpeachable as his veracity is undoubted. In these respects no man in the county of Westchester is his superior.

"Johnathan G. Tompkins, aged 31 years.

"Jacob Purdy, aged 77 years.

"John Odell, aged 60 years.

"John Boyce, aged 72 years.

"J. Requa, aged 57 years.

- “ William Paulding, aged 81 years.
- “ John Requa, aged 54 years.
- “ Archer Read, aged 64 years.
- “ George Comb, aged 72 years.
- “ Gilbert Dean, aged 70 years.
- “ Jonathan Odell, aged 87 years.
- “ Cornelius Vantassel, aged 71 years.
- “ Thomas Boyce, aged 71 years.
- “ Tunis Lynt, aged 71 years.
- “ Jacobus Dyckman, aged 68 years.
- “ William Hammond.
- “ John Romer.”

*“ Isaac Van Wart's Affidavit.*

“ Isaac Van Wart, of the town of Mount Pleasant, in the county of Westchester, being duly sworn, doth depose and say that he is one of the three persons who arrested Major André during the American Revolutionary War, and conducted him to the American camp. That he, this deponent, together with David Williams and John Paulding, had secreted themselves at the side of the highway, for the purpose of detecting any person coming from or having unlawful intercourse with the enemy, being between the two armies — a service not uncommon in those times. That this deponent and his companions were armed with muskets, and, upon seeing Major André approach the place where they were concealed, they rose and presented their muskets at him and required him to stop, which he did. He then asked them whether they belonged to his party? and then they asked him which was his party? to which he replied, ‘the lower party.’ Upon which they — deeming a little stratagem, under such circumstances, not only justifiable, but necessary — gave him to understand that they were of his party; upon which he joyfully declared himself to be a British officer, and told them that he had been out on very particular business. Having ascertained thus much, this deponent and his companions undeceived him as to their characters, declaring themselves Americans, and that he must consider himself their prisoner. Upon this, with seeming unconcern, he said he had a pass from General Arnold, which he exhibited, and then insisted on their permitting him to proceed; but they told him that, as he had confessed himself to be a British officer, they deemed it to be their duty to convey him to the American camp, and then took him into a wood, a short distance from the highway, in order to guard against being surprised by parties of the enemy, who were frequently reconnoitering in that neighborhood.

That when they had him in the wood they proceeded to search him, for the purpose of ascertaining who and what he was, and found inside of his stockings and boots, next to his bare foot, papers, which satisfied them that he was a spy. Major André now showed them his gold watch, and remarked that it was evidence of his being a gentleman, and also promised to make them any reward they might name, if they would but permit him to proceed, which they refused.

He then told them that if they doubted the fulfillment of his promise, *they might conceal him in some secret place, and keep him there until they could send to New York and receive their reward.* And this deponent expressly declares that every offer made by Major André to them was promptly and resolutely refused. And, as for himself, he solemnly declares that he had not, and he does most sincerely believe that Paulding and Williams had not, *any intention of plundering their prisoner, nor did they confer with each other, or even hesitate whether they should accept his promises*; but, on the contrary, they were, in the opinion of this deponent, governed, like himself, by a deep interest in the cause of the country and a strong sense of duty. And this deponent further says that he never visited the British camp, nor does he believe or suspect that either Paulding or Williams ever did, except that Paulding was once, before André's capture, and once afterward, made a prisoner by the British, as this deponent has been informed and believes. And this deponent for himself expressly denies that he ever held any unlawful traffic, or any intercourse whatever, with the enemy.

And — appealing solemnly to that Omniscient Being at whose tribunal he must soon appear — he doth expressly declare that all accusations, charging him therewith, are utterly untrue.

ISAAC VAN WART.

Sworn before me, this 28th {  
day of January, 1817. }

JACOB RADCLIFFE, *Mayor.*

*John Paulding's Affidavit.*

John Paulding, of the county of Westchester, one of the persons who took Major André, being duly sworn, saith that he was three times, during the Revolutionary War, a prisoner with the enemy; the first time he was taken at the White Plains, when under the command of Captain Requa, and carried to New York and confined in the Sugar-House. The second time he was taken near Tarrytown, when under the command of Lieutenant Peacock, and confined in the North Dutch Church, in New York; that both these times he escaped, *and*

*the last of them only four days before the capture of André; that the last time he was taken he was wounded and lay in the hospital in New York, and was discharged on the arrival of the news of peace there; that he and his companions, Van Wart and Williams, among other articles which they took from Major André, were his watch, horse, saddle and bridle, and which they retained as prize; that they delivered over André, with the papers found on him, to Col. Jameson, who commanded on the lines; that shortly thereafter they were summoned to appear as witnesses at the headquarters of General Washington, at Tappan; that they were at Tappan some days, and examined as witnesses before the court-martial on the trial of Smith, who brought André ashore from on board the sloop of war; that while there, Col. William S. Smith redeemed the watch from them for thirty guineas; which, and the money received for the horse, saddle and bridle, they divided equally among themselves and four other persons, who belonged to their party, but when André was taken, were about half a mile off, keeping a look-out on a hill; that André had no gold or silver money with him, but only some Continental bills, to the amount of about eighty dollars; that the medals given to him and Van Wart and Williams, by Congress, were presented to them by General Washington, when the army was encamped at Verplanck's Point, and that they on the occasion dined at his table; that Williams removed some years ago from Westchester county to the northern part of the State, but where, particularly, the deponent does not know. And the deponent, referring to the affidavit of Van Wart, taken on the 28th of January last, and which he has read, says that the same is in substance true.*

JOHN PAULDING.

Sworn before me, this 6th }  
day of May, 1817. }

CHARLES G. VAN WYCK,  
*Master in Chancery.*

*Autobiography of David Williams.*

The following biography of David Williams appeared in the Albany *Daily Advertiser*, in January preceding his death, said to have been dictated by himself:

"I was born in Tarrytown, then called Philips' Manor, Westchester county, New York, October 21st, 1754. I entered the army in 1775, at the age of 21, and was under General Montgomery at the siege of Fort St. Johns, and afterward on board the flat-bottomed boats to carry provisions, etc.; served out my time which was six months:



I then went, listed again in the spring of 1776, and continued in the service by different enlistments, as a New York militiaman, until 1779. In 1778, when in Capt. Acker's company of New York militia, at Tarrytown, I asked his permission to take a walk in company with William Van Wart, a boy sixteen or seventeen years old; I proceeded to the cross-roads on Tompkins' ridge; stood looking a few moments; saw five men coming, they had arms; we jumped over a stone fence and concealed ourselves in a corner of it; observed that they were armed with two muskets and three pistols; they came so nigh that we recognized two of them, viz.: William Underhill and William Mosher, who were Tories, and known to be of De Lancey's corps; when they came within proper distance, I said to my companion, 'Billy, neck or no joint!' I then said aloud, as if speaking to a number, with a view of intimidating them, 'Men, *make ready!*' They stopped immediately; I told them to ground their arms, which they did; I then said, 'March away;' they did so; I then jumped over the fence, secured their arms, and made them march before us to our quarters; I continued in the service until a week or ten days before the year 1780. In December, 1779, Captain Daniel Williams, who was commander of our company, mounted us on horses, and we went to Morrisania, Westchester county. We swept all Morrisania clear; took probably \$5,000 worth of property; returned to Tarrytown and quartered at Young's house. My feet being frozen, my uncle, Martinus Van Wart, took me to his house; I told Captain Williams that the enemy would soon be at Young's, and that if he remained there he would be on his way to Morrisania before morning; he paid no attention to my remarks—he did not believe me; but in the course of the night a woman came to my uncle's, crying, 'Uncle Martinus! Uncle Martinus!' The truth was, the British had surrounded Young's house, made prisoners of all the company except two, and burnt the barn. "Having got well of my frozen feet, on the 3d of June, 1780, we were all driven from Tarrytown to the upper part of Westchester county, in the town of Salem. We belonged to no organized company at all; were under no command, and worked for our board or *johnny-cake*. Isaac Van Wart, who was a cousin of mine (the father of Williams and mother of Van Wart were brother and sister), Nicholas Storms and myself went to Tarrytown on a visit; we carried our muskets with us, and on our way took a Quaker, who said he was going to New York after salt and other things. The Quaker was taken before the American authority and acquitted. "In July or August a number of persons, of whom I was one, went on a visit to our friends in Tarrytown, and while on the way took ten head

of cattle, which some refugees were driving to New York, and, on examination before the authority, the cattle were restored to their right owners, as they pleaded innocence, saying they were stolen from them. I then returned to Salem, and worked with a Mr. Benedict for my board, until the 22d of September. It was about one o'clock p. m., as I was standing in the door with Mr. Benedict's daughter (who was afterward my wife), when I saw six men coming; she remarked, 'They have got guns.' I jumped over a board fence and met them. 'Boys,' said I, 'where are you going?' They answered 'we are going to Tarrytown.' I then said 'if you will wait until I get my gun I will go with you.' The names of the six persons were, Isaac Van Wart, John Paulding, William Williams, John Yerks and James Romer; the name of the sixth I have forgotten. We proceeded about fifteen miles that night, and slept in a hay barrack. In the morning we crossed Buttermilk hill, when John Paulding proposed to go to Isaac Reed's and get a pack of cards to divert ourselves with. After procuring them we went out to Davis' hill, where we separated, leaving four on the hill and three, viz., Van Wart, Paulding and myself, proceeded on the Tarrytown road about one mile and concealed ourselves in the bushes on the west side of the road, and commenced playing cards three handed, that is, each one for himself. We had not been playing more than an hour, when we heard a horse galloping across a bridge but a few yards from us; which of us spoke I do not remember, but one of us said, 'there comes a trader going to New York.' We stepped out from our concealment and stopped him. 'My lads,' said he, 'I hope you belong to our party.' We asked him 'what party?' he replied, 'the lower party.' We told him 'we did.' He then said, 'I am a British officer, have been up the country on particular business, and would not wish to be detained a minute,' and as a token to convince us he was a gentleman, he pulled out and showed us his gold watch; we then told him we were Americans. 'God bless my soul,' said he, 'a man must do any thing these times to get along,' and then showed us Arnold's pass. We told him it would not satisfy us without searching him. 'My lads,' said he, 'you will bring yourselves into trouble.' We answered 'we did not fear it,' and conducted him about seventy rods into the woods. My comrades appointed me to search him; commencing with his hat, I searched his person effectually, but found nothing until I pulled of his boot, when we discovered that something was concealed in his stocking. Paulding caught hold of his foot and exclaimed, 'by G—d, here it is!' I pulled off his stocking, and inside of it, next to the sole of his foot, found three half sheets of paper inclosed in another half sheet which was indorsed

'West Point;' and on pulling off the other boot and stocking, I found three like papers, inclosed and indorsed as the others. On reading them, one of my companions said, 'by G—d, he is a *spy!*' We then asked him where he got those papers? he told us, 'of a man at Pine's bridge,' but he said 'he did not know his name.' He offered us his gold watch, his horse, saddle, bridle and 100 guineas, if we would let him go; we told him 'no, unless he would inform us where he got the papers.' He answered us as before, but increased his offer to 1,000 guineas, his horse, etc.; we told him again we would not let him go; he then said, 'gentlemen, I will give you 10,000 guineas' [nearly \$50,000] 'and as many dry goods as you will ask; conceal me in any place of safety while you can send to New York with an order to Sir Henry Clinton from me, and the goods and money will be procured so that you can get them unmolested.' [Paulding then told him, as he stated on the trial of Joshua H. Smith, a few days after the arrest]: 'No, by G—d, if you would give us 10,000 guineas you should not stir a step; we are Americans, and above corruption, and go with us you must.' We then took him, about twelve miles, to Col. Jamieson's quarters at North Castle."

## NOTE 8.

*Letter of Colonel Tulmadge.*

[Written after André's death, it displays the intimate relations that sprang up between the writer and André, and the natural commiseration which had arisen in the former's heart.]

"Poor André, who has been under my charge almost ever since he was taken, has yesterday had his trial, and though his sentence is not known, a disgraceful death is no doubt allotted to him. By heavens! Colonel Webb, I never saw a man whose fate I foresaw whom I so sincerely pitied! He is a young fellow of the greatest accomplishments, and was the prime minister of Sir Harry on all occasions. He has unbosomed his heart to me so fully, and, indeed, let me know almost every motive of his actions since he came out on his late mission, and he has endeared me to him exceedingly. Unfortunate man! He will undoubtedly suffer death to-morrow, and, though he knows his fate, seems to be as cheerful as though he were going to an assembly. I am sure he will go to the gallows less fearful for his fate, and with less concern than I shall behold the tragedy. Had he been tried by a court of ladies, he is so genteel, handsome and polite a young gentleman that I am confident they would have acquitted him. But enough of André, who, though he dies lamented, falls justly."

The same officer, in other communications upon the subject, says:

"From the moment that André made the disclosure of his name and true character, in his letter to the Commander-in-Chief, which he handed to me as soon as he had written it, down to the moment of his execution, I was almost constantly with him. I walked with him to the place of execution, and parted with him under the gallows, overwhelmed with grief that so gallant an officer and so accomplished a gentleman should come to such an ignominious end. The ease and affability of his manners, polished by the refinement of good society, and a finished education, made him a most delightful companion. It often drew tears from my eyes to find him so agreeable in conversation on different subjects, when I reflected on his future fate, and that, too, as I believed, so near at hand."

"When he came within sight of the gibbet, he appeared to be startled, and inquired, with some emotion, whether he was not to be shot. Being informed that the mode first appointed for his death could not consistently be altered, he exclaimed, 'How hard is my fate!' But immediately added, 'It will soon be over.' I then shook hands with him under the gallows, and retired."

#### NOTE 9.

See Raymond's oration, delivered at Tarrytown October 7, 1853, on the completion of the monument erected by the young men of Westchester county to the captors of Major André.

#### NOTE 10.

In Simms' History of Schoharie County and Border Wars of New York, p. 404, it is related, in connection with Sir John Johnson's invasion of this valley, that "Col. Johnson had with him a small mortar and a field-piece, the latter a six-pounder. The carriage for the cannon was carried in parts, and required screwing together." When the enemy approached the Lower Fort, to wit: the stone church with its massive tower, referred to in the original, it is related that the following incident occurred: "Col. Johnson halted, after crossing Fox's Creek. Preparations were now made to give the Americans a passing salute; the gun-carriage was screwed together, and the gun placed upon it. At this time it was supposed, by the men in the tower, from the ease with which the gun was carried, and the manner of its transportation in a wagon, to be a 'peeled log,' placed with the design of frightening its inmates to surrender the fort. On applying the linstock it twice flashed, and the Americans were the more

confirmed in their opinion that the fire was 'playing possum,' but the third application of the match was followed by a peal of war's thunder, which sent a ball through one side of the roof of the church, and lodged it in a heavy rafter in the opposite side." This ball is now in the possession of a merchant in Schoharie.

POEM

BY

ALFRED B. STREET.





## POEM.

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What fires the human heart with noblest flame,  
And fills, with grandest swell, the trump of fame —  
Strengthens the sinews, war's dread arms to wield —  
Scorns the red horrors of the battlefield —  
Tunes to triumphant song the failing breath,  
And sheds live brilliance on the brow of death?  
'Tis love of country! mystic fire from Heaven! —  
To light our race up stateliest heights 'tis given;  
To guard man's home — make that his holiest shrine  
Where his soul's love grows purest, most divine;  
Where dear domestic virtues safely bloom,  
And joy's rich rainbows deck grief's transient gloom;  
At whose bright hearth is changeless summer found  
Heightening to pleasure daily duty's round;  
Where humble wishes sweet enjoyments shed  
Like violets fragrant in their lowly bed.  
Not this alone! beyond the narrow span  
Of single souls, it rivets man to man;  
Links in one circling chain the stretched out hand,  
And makes one fireside of the whole broad land.  
Thus home meets home, though mountains rise between,  
And winter storms beat backward summer sheen;  
O'er the wide river, through the forest, all  
That most repels, on runs the living wall,

Against which, should its faithful strength remain,  
The world shall hurl its angriest waves in vain.

It turns the rocks to roses, stormiest skies  
To loveliest calm ; where cloudy crags arise  
The anointed eye views plains knee-deep in flowers ;  
The ear in dumb wastes hears melodious bowers.  
Deem we the Esquimaux, though brutish, sees  
Heavens that but frown and waters that but freeze !  
Think we the Arab, though untaught, surveys  
Sands that but burn and sunbeams that but blaze !  
No ! In that frown the cold-dwarfed shape perceives  
Summer's soft gold poured out on emerald leaves ;  
His wooden streak, wild plunging, ripples smooth  
O'er glassy seas that undulate to soothe ;  
And the fierce roamer of the ocean gray  
Treads velvet grass, feels sweet the pleasant ray,  
Till one oasis smiles along his songful way.

Grand love of Country ! from the earliest time  
Our race has deemed its glory most sublime.  
To its proud praise the lyre has loftiest rung,  
Eloquence woke the music of its tongue ;  
A Hector's deeds filled Homer's breast with fire,  
And when shall patriot Scipio's fame expire !  
Though Rome's dread Eagle darkened earth at will,  
Thy name, Caractacus, shines brightly still !  
Planting his foot upon his native sod  
He fought ; though made a slave to Cæsar's rod,  
His big heart burst its chains, and up he towered, a God !  
And thus with willing minds we meet to lay  
Our gifts on a loved patriot's shrine to-day.  
Not fortune's favorite he — his humble sail

Felt but the shock of penury's ceaseless gale ;  
 Never he knew the rose, but felt the thorn ;  
 His pathway led through chill neglect and scorn ;  
 Yet, though man glanced on him disdainful eyes,  
 God had built up his nature for the skies ;  
 His heart was mighty, though his path was low —  
 Man made the cloud — God tinged it with his bow.  
 And thus it is ; the humble lifted up ;  
 The pearl oft decks the lowest of the cup.  
 Fame doffs aside the Sovereign of a day  
 To make a Shakespeare King with endless sway ;  
 Genius, from wealth and titled grandeur, turns  
 To touch as with live flame the tongue of Burns.  
 And thus though WILLIAMS' eye but saw the rim  
 Of the low valley, where alone for him  
 Life's pathway upward led, his mental sight  
 Flashed with the Eagle's from the mountain height ;  
 And when the bribe was proffered, off he turned,  
 And with a scornful wrath the base temptation spurned.  
 Well, well for us, worth, honor were not sold  
 By this high patriot heart for British gold !  
 Treason had woven his most cunning coil  
 Around our land, its liberty the spoil ;  
 The British Lion stood with hungry gloat  
 To flesh his fangs within the victim's throat ;  
 And had the glittering bribe its errand wrought,  
 Treason had found the victory he sought,  
 And the fierce Lion fastened in his spring  
 Our Eagle's glazing eye, and drooping, dying wing.  
 Oh, Treason, foulest demon earth has seen,  
 Darkening ev'n darkness with his midnight mien !  
 How oft his spell has fettered Freedom's brand !

And, for a smiling, left a blighted land !  
 In vain has Liberty uprisen ;—unbound  
 Her glorious folds to call her sons around !  
 In vain the crag has burst out into hordes.  
 Trees into lances, thickets into swords !  
 In vain the cataract's white has turned to red,  
 And the wind's murmuring to the war-ery dread !  
 The dingle's sylvan stillness, where the bird  
 Sprang to its wing if but a leaflet stirred,  
 Changed to the tramp of steeds, the clang of arms,  
 The grassy music to War's wild alarms !  
 In vain, in vain, the blood in vain that ran  
 While the soul soaring lifted up the man !  
 In vain has Liberty with reverent head  
 Heaped to one altar all her sainted dead,  
 And kneeling there fought sword in hand, till down  
 Her foes have fallen, and she but grasped her crown !  
 Like a fell serpent 'Treason low has crept  
 In patriot garb, till off disguise he swept  
 Striking his blow with such sure aim, his cry  
 Of triumph drowned his victim's dying sigh.  
 Oh mountain peaks, where clouds were cannon-smoke !  
 Oh glens, whose green light battle-banners broke !  
 Oh waves, whose tossings broadside-thunders crushed !  
 Oh skies, whose tempests strife's wild tumults hushed !  
 All spots where man for native land has fought,  
 Have ye not seen how 'Treason's curse has wrought ?  
 How the broad front that Freedom reared to foe  
 Has felt base 'Treason creeping from below,  
 Close twining round herself and sons till she  
 A grand Laocoon has died to 'Treachery ?  
 But pæans to brave WILLIAMS, and the two.

VAN WART and PAULDING! no such fate we rue.  
 Song to the THREE! our whole broad land should raise  
 One sounding anthem to their patriot praise!  
 For had base Arnold's treason won, we now  
 Perchance, instead of jewels on our brow,  
 Jewels of freedom, with our doom content,  
 Under some kingly bondage might have bent,  
 Native or foreign; or like those wild seas  
 Of tropic States, have surged to every breeze,  
 Dashing in endless strife — for freedom here,  
 And here, for kings, until some ruthless spear  
 The war had ended, and a waste of graves  
 Upheld a Despot's throne, and ours a land of slaves.

Now — hail the sight! — a realm of glorious pride  
 Touching earth's mightiest oceans either side!  
 Pine meeting Palm in garlands round her head,  
 Starred States, striped climates o'er her banner spread,  
 Great WASHINGTON diffused; his spirit grand  
 Incarnate in the person of our land!

In this green valley where war wildest reigned,  
 Where life's red current every harvest stained,  
 Where peace contrasting, now the brightest glows,  
 And, place of battle's thistle, smiles the rose,  
 Where builds the bird within the shattered shell,  
 Plumped with soft moss, that slew where'er it fell,  
 Where the blue violet yields the skull its eye,  
 Instead of strife's close ranks, upstands the rye,  
 Where waves the wheat whence savage plumage flashed,  
 And oft avenging Murphy's rifle crashed  
 By this STONE FORT that once threw back the tide  
 Of conflict as its surges smote its side,

This day our patriot's ashes we consign  
To his loved earth, henceforth a sacred shrine,  
Round which to latest years our grateful hearts shall twine.

Now on this flowering of our Century Tree,  
Apotheosis of our history,  
This famed Centennial, it is passing well  
Of patriot hearts and patriot deeds to tell,  
That they in memory's grasp should firmly cling  
As gold in quartz, or pearls in shells, and fling  
Like stars, a lustre o'er our Nation's way,  
Till Time's grand sun shall set, and dawn Eternal Day.

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

BY

DR. DANIEL KNOWER.





## HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

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This large concourse of people, this fine military display, the presence of these distinguished persons, and the attendance of so many ladies to grace the occasion, show that the recollection of patriotic deeds does not die out in the hearts of a free people. DAVID WILLIAMS, one of the captors of Major André, in honor of whose memory we are assembled here to-day, was born in Tarrytown, Westchester county, in this State, October 21, 1754. He entered the Revolutionary army in 1775, at the age of nineteen; fought under Montgomery at the battle of St. Johns and Quebec; and continued in the regular patriot services until 1779. The capture of Major André occurred on the 23d of September, 1780, ninety-six years ago to-day.

DAVID WILLIAMS was the eldest of the three captors — he being twenty-five years of age, and JOHN PAULDING and ISAAC VAN WART, his compatriots, being about twenty years old. The following is Williams' account of the capture, as related to Judge Tiffany, at his home in this county, February 13,

1817: "The three [militiamen] were seated beside the road in the bushes, amusing themselves at cards, when their attention was arrested by the galloping of a horse. On approaching the road, they saw a gentleman riding toward them, seated on a large brown horse, which was afterward observed to have marked on the near shoulder the initials U. S. A. The rider was a light, trim-built man, about five feet seven inches in height, with a bold military countenance and dark eyes, and was dressed in a tall beaver hat, surtout, crimson coat, with pantaloons and vest of nankeen. As he neared them, the three cocked their muskets and aimed at the rider, who immediately checked his horse, and the following conversation ensued :

André — "Gentlemen, I hope you belong to our party !"

Paulding — "What party ?"

André — "The lower party."

Paulding — "We do." This answer threw him off his guard.

André — "I am a British officer ; I have been up in the country on particular business, and do not wish to be detained a single moment."

He thereupon pulled out a gold watch, and exhibited it as an evidence that he was a gentleman, and returned it again to his fob. Paulding thereupon remarked — "We are Americans !"

André — “God bless my soul! a man must do any thing to get along — I am a Continental officer, going down to Dobbs Ferry to get information from below.”

André then drew out and presented a pass from General Arnold in which was the assumed name of John Anderson. Seizing hold of the reins of the horse, they ordered him to dismount. André exclaimed — “You will bring yourselves in trouble.” “We care not for that,” was the reply. They took him down ten or fifteen rods, from the road, beside a run of water, and Williams proceeded to search his hat, coat, vest, shirt and pantaloons, in which they found \$80 in Continental money; and at last ordered him to take off his boots. At this he changed color. Williams drew off the left boot first, and found nothing in it, and Paulding, seizing it, the foot, exclaimed excitedly, “My God! here it is!” The stocking was then drawn off, and in it, next the bare foot, three half-sheets of written paper were found enveloped by a half-sheet marked “Contents, West Point.” Paulding, still greatly excited, again exclaimed, “My God! he’s a spy!” On pulling off the other boot and stocking, a similar package was found.\*

André was now allowed to dress, and they marched

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\* A number of these original papers are preserved, and on exhibition in the State Library at Albany.

him across the road into the field about twenty rods. The young men then winked to each other to make further discoveries, and inquired from whom he got the papers? "Of a man at Pine's Bridge, a stranger to me," replied André. He then offered them for his liberty, his horse, which was browsing a short distance away, and his equipage, watch and 100 guineas. This they refused to take, unless he informed them where he obtained the manuscript. He refused to comply, but again offered his horse, equipage, and 1,000 guineas. They were firm in their denial, and André increased his offer to 10,000 guineas, and as many dry goods as they wished, which should be deposited in any place desired — they might keep him and send some one to New York (they were at Tarrytown twenty-eight miles from the city), with his order, so that they could obtain them unmolested. To this they replied, "that it did not signify for him to make any offer, for he should not go." They then proceeded to the nearest military station, which was at North Castle, about twelve miles distant, and delivered him to Col. Jaimesen, the American commanding officer.

The circumstances of the capture as narrated in the testimony of Paulding and Williams, given at the trial of Smith eleven days after the capture, and written down by the Judge Advocate at the time, is substantially the same. Williams, in his testimony

there says, "He said he would give us any quantity of dry goods, or any sum of money, and bring it to any place that we might pitch upon, so that we might get it. Mr. Paulding answered, "No, if you should give us 10,000 guineas you should not stir one step."

The importance of the capture of André can never be too highly estimated. The plan for cutting the Colonies in two on the line of the Hudson and Lake Champlain had been foiled by the capture of Burgoyne. The possession of West Point would have given a successful opportunity for prosecuting the same design. No wonder that Washington burst into tears when he learned of the treason of Arnold. He very well knew what had been our danger, and how narrow had been our escape. Washington wrote to Congress, September 28, 1770 — three days after the capture — saying: "I do not know the party that took Major André, but it is said that it consisted of only a few militia, who acted in such a manner upon the occasion as does them the highest honor and proves them of great virtue. As soon as I know their names I shall take pleasure in transmitting them to Congress." Again, October 7, 1780, he writes Congress, transmitting the findings of the court, which had tried André, and in his letter he says: "I have now the pleasure to communicate the names of those persons who captured Major André, and who refused to release him, notwithstanding

the most earnest importunities and assurances of a liberal reward on his part. Their names are John Paulding, David Williams and Isaac Van Wart." Alexander Hamilton, writing in 1780 of the affair, says: "André tempted their integrity with the offer of his watch, his horse, and any sum of money they should name. They rejected his offer with disdain."

Congress gave each of them \$1,250, or the same value in confiscated lands in Westchester county, a pension of \$200, and a silver medal. The medals were presented to the captors by General Washington at a dinner to which he invited them while the army was encamped near Ver Planck's Point; the one presented to David Williams being now in possession of his oldest grand-son, William C. Williams, of this county.\*

David Williams was married to Miss Benedict, of Westchester county, by whom he had one son named David, who had seven children living, four in this county, two in Iowa, and one in Virginia, who are worthy descendants in honor and integrity of the Revolutionary patriot. He moved to this county in 1806, and died August 2, 1831, aged seventy-seven, and was buried at Livingstonville with military honors, where his remains reposed for forty-five years, and until the 4th of March, 1876, when they were removed to the cemetery at Rensselaerville.

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\* It has since been placed in the State Library at Albany.



On the 19th of July, they were removed to the Stone Fort in Schoharie, to which destination they were escorted by a large procession, headed by the American flag and amid martial music. All places of business were closed ; the bells tolled, and the cannon at the Fort fired a salute as his coffin, wrapped in the American flag, was deposited near his present resting place.

On the 1st of May, 1876, the Governor signed the following bill introduced by Senator Lamont, it having passed both Houses :

“ For erecting a suitable monument in the cemetery grounds of the revolutionary Stone Fort at Schoharie Court House, to commemorate the virtues and memory of David Williams, one of the captors of Major André, the sum of two thousand dollars, to be expended under the supervision of Daniel Knower, Ralph Brewster, supervisor of the town of Schoharie, and Charles Holmes, county judge of Schoharie county, who are hereby appointed a commission for that purpose, and who are hereby authorized to remove the remains of the said David Williams from their present burial in the cemetery at Rensselaerville, to such cemetery at Schoharie Court House, upon first obtaining the consent thereto, in writing, of a majority of the descendants of said Williams, and upon furnishing proof thereof to the comptroller ; but in case such consent in writing

for said removal shall not be obtained, and proof thereof furnished the comptroller within two months from the passage of this act, then the above appropriation shall be expended by a commission, consisting of the comptroller of the State, Erastus D. Palmer, and the President of the Rensselaerville Cemetery Association, for the erection of the monument in the Rensselaerville cemetery."

Paulding is buried near Peekskill, and a monument was erected over his remains by the corporation of the city of New York in 1827. Near Tarrytown the remains of Isaac Van Wart are honored by a monument erected by the county of Westchester. And now in this centennial year has the State of New York recognized by its Legislature and Governor, this most important event in our revolutionary history. An event which occurred within its borders, and in which three of her sons had the honor, by their disinterested patriotism and love of country, to save our country in that important crisis of our revolutionary history. General Washington wrote to the President of Congress, October 7, 1780, two weeks after the capture: "Their conduct merits our warmest esteem; and I beg leave to add that I think the public would do well to allow them a handsome gratuity. They have prevented in all probability our suffering one of the severest strokes that could have been medi-

tated against us." Yet this one of the most disinterested acts of patriotism and love of country recorded in history, strange to say, has been attacked and the motives of the actors impugned.

A bill passed Congress some years since appropriating \$20,000 for erecting a monument to them, but did not reach, or was defeated in the senate. The patriotism of these men has been impugned by members of Congress. This bill was likewise opposed in the state senate by a senator from New York city on the same grounds. In the language of the poet,

"He who ascends to mountain tops must find  
The loftiest hills clad in snow :  
He who surpasses and excels mankind,  
Must see and feel their hate below."

Williams lived to be seventy-seven years old and died fifty-two years after the event occurred. Isaac Van Wart lived to the age of sixty-nine and died forty-nine years after the event, and John Paulding reached the age of sixty, dying forty years after the capture.\* All three during these long years

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\* [From JOHN GEBHARD, JR., the celebrated geologist.]

SCHOHARIE, N. Y., *October 16, 1876.*

Dr. KNOWER,

DEAR SIR—In compliance with your request, that I would inform you what I know in relation to the standing and character of the late David Williams, one of the captors of Major André, I would state, that I was well acquainted with Mr. Williams for several years im-

bore unimpeachable characters for honor and integrity, which would not have been possible if they

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mediately preceding his death, and can bear cheerful testimony to the high standing for truth and integrity, in which he was held by his neighbors and acquaintances.

I was present at his funeral, which was large and imposing. After the sermon was preached, the funeral procession proceeded to the cemetery, where an able eulogy was delivered by Robert McClellan, Esq., and before the remains were lowered to their resting place, R. W. Murphy, Esq., standing beside the coffin, with a sorrowful heart, overflowing with gratitude and sympathy, stated to the vast assemblage that when he was a young orphan boy, David Williams took him to his home, supported and clothed him, gave him a good education and aided him in starting in business. He also gave a full and minute account of the daily life and habits of the deceased; and concluded by saying that David Williams died as he had lived, through a long life, an upright and honest man.

Respectfully your ob't serv't,

JOHN GEBHARD, JR.

Isaac Van Wart is buried at Greenburgh, in the grounds attached to the Presbyterian church, of which he was an efficient officer for many years. The following inscription on his monument by his fellow-citizens of Westchester county, who erected it to his memory in 1829, with whom he passed most of his life, vindicates the integrity of his character:

North side — "Here repose the mortal remains of Isaac Van Wart an elder in the Greenburgh church, who died on the 23d of May, 1828 in the 69th year of his age. Having lived the life, he died the death of the Christian."

South side — "The citizens of the county of Westchester erected this tomb in testimony of the high sense they entertained for the virtuous and patriotic conduct of their fellow-citizen, as a memorial sacred to public gratitude."

East side — "Vincit Amor Patriæ. Nearly half a century before this monument was built the conscript fathers of America had, in the senate chamber, voted that Isaac Van Wart was a faithful patriot, one

had been marauders and freebooters as represented by those who impugned their motives.

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in whom the love of country was invincible, and this tomb bears testimony that the record is true."

West side — "Fidelity. On the 23d of September, 1780, Isaac Van Wart, accompanied by John Paulding and David Williams, all farmers of the county of Westchester, intercepted Major André on his return from the American lines in the character of a spy, and, notwithstanding the large bribes offered them for his release, nobly disdained to sacrifice their country for gold, secured and carried him to the commanding officer of the district, whereby the dangerous and traitorous conspiracy of Arnold was brought to light, the insidious designs of the enemy baffled, the American army saved and our beloved country free."

John Paulding. I have not obtained so much of the details of his life. The monument erected over his remains near Peekskill in 1827, by the corporation of the city of New York, was addressed by William Paulding, mayor of New York, believed to have been a relative. We understand he has a son residing near Huntington, Long Island, near eighty years of age, a retired rear admiral of the navy, a very distinguished gentleman, not only as an officer in the navy, but for his literary ability and talents.

[Extract of a letter from J. R. SIMMS, Historian of Schoharie County.]

FORT PLAIN, MONTGOMERY CO., *October 9, 1876.*

Long, long ago was the enterprise contemplated. Judge Murphy, whom it was our pleasure to know nearly thirty years ago, and who was then a worthy citizen of Livingstonville, Schoharie county, was brought up from childhood in the family of David Williams as one of his own children. He held the character and virtue of his benefactor in the highest esteem. No one could estimate his character more truthfully, and no man ever knew him better, and the picture he gave of him as a man, would compare favorably for candor, integrity and benevolence with that of any man in Schoharie county to-day. Talking with Judge Murphy at his own residence upon the subject of a monument to his god father, we learned that he had been indefatigable in his efforts to procure one. He repeatedly petitioned Congress to

Williams, previous to this event, had served four years in the revolutionary army, and Paulding, only three days previous to the capture, had made his escape from the Sugar House British Prison\* in New York. These facts indicate beyond all doubt on which side their feelings were.

André has a monument erected in Westminster Abbey, which is the highest honor that can be conferred on the remains of any person in England. His remains were removed from this country in a coffin mounted with gold. His brother was created a Knight, in honor of his services in this affair, by the King of England.

What were the services André rendered to England, compared with the services these three disinterested patriots rendered this country? Let it not always be said that Republics are ungrateful. Even the motives of the men who commenced the Revolution by throwing the tea overboard in Boston harbor, and the motives of those who fought the battles of Bunker Hill and Lexington were attacked.

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make an appropriation for this purpose, and being a man of good address, he even went in person to Washington to urge upon the law makers their duty, as the event we would honor was one of a national character, it would seem as though he applied to the right source.

\* Paulding made his escape in the dress of a German jäger. General Van Cortland says that Paulding wore this dress on the day of the capture, which tended to deceive André and led him to exclaim "Thank God! I am once more among friends."

It has been said that their grievances from Great Britain did not justify a resort to such measures. These men knew that if they yielded one point guaranteed to them in the liberal charters that had been granted to the Colonies, as an inducement for them to emigrate to this country when a wilderness, that America would become a second Ireland, and all the rights guaranteed to them in their charters would be crushed out. If I have any pride of ancestry, it is in being descended from the men who took part in the glorious events where the cannon first thundered in the war of the revolution.

Your commissioners propose to make an appeal to any county, city, association, literary club or individual, who may subscribe not less than \$200 or more than \$1,800, in addition to the \$2,000 appropriated by the State, and to have the names of the subscribers inscribed on one of the faces of the monument or on a marble tablet to be erected in the Fort, as the artists who may design the monument may think most appropriate. It is proposed to appoint one or more of the most distinguished artists and sculptors in the State to design the monument and make it a work of art appropriate to the event.

We are now one hundred years old as a nation. Our material prosperity and growth is unparalleled in history. For the sake of the future and the per-



petuity of our free institutions, we should cultivate sentiments that will inspire in the youth a strong love of country. What more appropriate occasion than the present to erect here a work of art, which will call attention for all time to the disinterested patriotism of these three men who saved our country in the revolution? It was such men among our common soldiers that enabled the country to produce a Washington. The people, the source and fountain of political power, must be kept pure and patriotic if we wish to perpetuate our republican form of government. The more we learn from the men of the revolution and the more strictly we adhere to the great principles inaugurated in our government by its founders, the better for the future of our country. Although the disinterested patriotism of these three men has conferred its benefits on a great nation of 44,000,000 of people, yet the Empire State of New York enjoys the honor of having had the event occur within its own borders. I feel that her sons and daughters will respond to an appeal for the erection of a work of art, in this beautiful valley of Schoharie, beside this Revolutionary Fort, that will do justice to this important event, and in which we all may take a just pride.

## THE OLD FORT.

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The following, from a sketch of the locality surrounding the place where DAVID WILLIAMS is buried, may be of interest to those outside of the county who peruse this volume. It is from the pen of Dr. DANIEL KNOWER:

“ On the 1st of June, 1774, the port of Boston was blockaded. The people of this valley contributed 525 bushels of wheat for their relief. In October, 1780, a strong force of Indians, Tories and soldiers, under the command of Sir JOHN JOHNSON, the celebrated Indian chief BRANT and the Seneca chief CORN PLANTER, attacked this place. The inhabitants fled to the Fort. The Fort was attacked, but the enemy were repulsed by a shower of grape-shot and musket balls from the garrison, and retreated. Only two persons in the Fort were killed, but one hundred of the defenseless inhabitants outside the Fort were murdered by the hostiles on that day. Not a house, barn or grain-stack known to belong to a Whig was left standing; and it was estimated that 100,000 bushels of grain were destroyed. The houses and other property of the Tories were spared, but the exasperated Whigs set them on fire as soon as the enemy had gone, and all shared a common fate. The Fort is now in a perfect state of preservation, with the marks of the cannon balls of that day's attack on it. The Legislature of this State donated it to the supervisors of the county on condition that they keep it in repair.”























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