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| **Benedict Arnold  By Jane Runyon** |  |  |

 Benedict Arnold was a very **complex** man. He was the fifth generation of his family to be born on American soil. His family had struggled for religious freedom in the colonies. They worked and prospered in Rhode Island. Yet, when you read stories about Arnold, he is not celebrated as an outstanding American.

Benedict Arnold was not an easy man to get along with. He made many enemies among his own men during his campaigns. Charges were brought against him, and an investigation of his actions was called. Although he was cleared of any wrongdoing, his enemy list grew. He was a friend to George Washington. Not everyone thought that Washington was the right man to lead the country. Those opposed to him decided to insult the men loyal to Washington in a plan to get him to leave the service. Arnold felt like he was being picked on. In February of 1777, a promotion list for major-general was presented. Arnold's name was not on it. He had been overlooked for promotion.

September of 1777 brought the battles at Saratoga. Benedict Arnold did not like, nor did he get along with General Gates, the American leader. He decided he was going to go back to Philadelphia, but he was talked into staying by the men who had no confidence in Gates. During the decisive battle at Saratoga, Gates refused to reinforce Arnold and his men. Arnold took it upon himself to order his men to storm the British lines. It was a great victory for the Americans. It was an embarrassing moment for General Gates who didn't even take part in the battle. Arnold was wounded in the battle. He was not able to take part in the war until the following spring. He did, however, finally receive his promotion.

Arnold had had enough. Hopes for the colonists' cause did not look good. Arnold let himself be convinced that the Americans were going to lose. Next he decided that he, alone, could restore the colonies to British rule. He then asked for and received command of West Point in New York. His plan was to surrender the fort to the British. Then his plan was discovered. Finally, Arnold was forced to flee in disgrace. He and his wife, Margaret, fled to London in 1782 where the British welcomed him as a hero. He died at his home in London in 1801. He was branded a traitor to his country.

