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In 1783, John Goldar made an engraving of "The Unfortunate Death of Major Andre," after a drawing by William Hamilton. This image was reportedly used in British school books. It is online via the U.S. National Archives (Identifier: 535744).

When the local commander, Lt. Col. Jameson, heard about the developing situation - that someone was betraying West Point to the British - he immediately reported it to his commanding officer: Benedict Arnold! This "heads-up" allowed the American traitor to make a different plan.

By the time events were reported to General Washington, Arnold had escaped. He boarded the *Vulture* and was taken to British lines.

Andre was not so fortunate.

Washington ordered a Board of Inquiry to investigate the facts. The generals on the Board concluded John Andre, Adjutant-General to the British Army, was a spy because he had disguised his clothes behind enemy lines and traveled with a false name.

The Americans did not want Andre, though. They wanted Benedict Arnold.

The British command thought Washington would follow the unwritten rule of war: Captured generals would not be executed. They knew, however, what would happen if they returned Benedict Arnold.

The British refused to deal.

The generals on the Board of Inquiry recommended that John Andre be executed. General Washington agreed.

Concerned about his chief of intelligence, General Clinton wrote to Washington, expressing concern about Andre's situation. Washington responded, politely telling Clinton the decision would stand.

Washington then ordered Andre's execution, to be "carried out this afternoon at five o'clock precisely."

John Andre was hanged. No one wanted that to happen. Both sides respected his gallantry.

The person whom the Americans wanted to hang, Benedict Arnold, first escaped and then wore a British

uniform. After the war, he went to England where (but for a brief stay in Canada) he lived the rest of his life. Perhaps the Americans executed Andre in retaliation for the death of Nathan Hale, the 21-year old hero who was caught by the British and hanged as a spy in New York (in 1776). Hale - who at his death allegedly said, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country" - slipped from life into national legend. Benedict Arnold, on the other hand, fell from honor into unending national disgrace.

It would not have been like Washington to retaliate, however. Perhaps John Andre's execution was meant to set an example.

Meanwhile, in South Carolina, another patriot was setting an example that was frustrating the British to distraction.

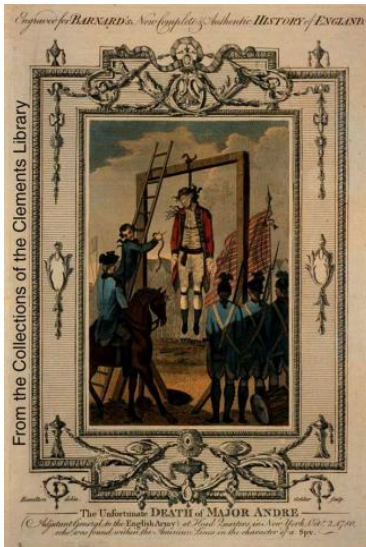
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/EXECUTIONS-American-Revolution-Highlights>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/EXECUTIONS-American-Revolution-Highlights>

## Media Stream



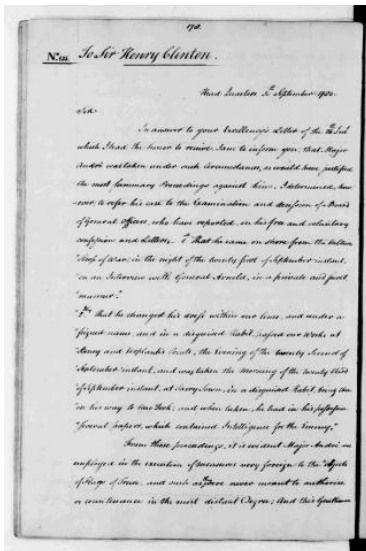
### Execution, by Hanging, of John Andre

*The unfortunate death of Major Andre, Oct. 2, 1780.* Engraving by Goldar, 1783, from drawing by Hamilton. U.S. National Archives, image 208-LU-25K-7.

Linked Above: Self-portrait, by John Andre, created October 1, 1780.

View this asset at:

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### General Washington's Letter about John Andre

General Washington's Papers, U.S. Library of Congress.

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### Nathan Hale - Trailer

Trailer for "Nathan Hale," a 2008 film by Vincent M. Biscione. Online, courtesy YouTube.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Nathan-Hale-Trailer>