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**Revolutionary Westchester 250
Launches *This Man's A Spy For America's 250th Anniversary***

**The Treason Of Benedict Arnold
Involved Many Westchester Communities And People**

Westchester County, New York – June 16, 2021 – From Philadelphia, on July 3, 1776, John Adams mailed a letter to his wife, Abigail, in Boston. The letter explained the historic decisions agreed upon by the Continental Congress and the plans for celebration.

“The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more.” ~ John Adams

Practically immediately, though, the country chose to celebrate its founding not on July 2, when the resolution for independence from Great Britain was approved by 12 of the 13 colonies, but on July 4, when America's birth certificate, the Declaration of Independence, actually was approved by the Congress. Just four years later, however, as the fight for independence continued throughout the colonies and on the frontier, one of the world's most infamous acts of treason took center stage in Westchester County. The series of events could have ended the war abruptly and crushed the democracy.

Revolutionary Westchester 250 (RW250) (<https://rw250.org/>), under the leadership of President Constance Kehoe, is Westchester County's commitment to remembering the local events and people associated with the American Revolution in accordance with the United States Semiquincentennial Commission Act of 2016. With the upcoming observation of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America in 1776, many local events preceding, during and after the Revolutionary War will be recognized by RW250.

“RW250 is collaborating with local and regional groups to promote heritage tourism and to enhance the experience of the war for independence for Westchester residents,” said Mrs. Kehoe, a resident of Irvington. “We are working with heritage and historic, art and cultural, and educational organizations along with libraries, veterans' organizations, municipalities, private businesses and others to commemorate Westchester County's contribution to the 250th anniversary of the founding of this great country. Treason and a spy – and, thankfully, quick-thinking Patriots – in our midst are part of our story.

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“With the legislation recently passed in Albany creating a 250th Commission, the State of New York will join other states in the national plans for the 250th commemoration,” added Mrs. Kehoe. “As the legislation points out, New York played a leading role in the struggles in the ensuing nearly 250 years, to more fully realize - for all groups - the ideals of the revolution. Those ongoing movements will be an important part of the commemoration as well.”

This Man's A Spy

Recognizing the people, events and sites related to what General George Washington described as “treason of the blackest dye,” referring to traitor American General Benedict Arnold's attempt to surrender the American fortification at West Point, RW250 is launching an aptly named initiative – *This Man's A Spy*. Co-chaired by Lynn Briggs and Bob Fetonti, this effort will create community awareness, understanding and enthusiasm for the historical significance of this critical event in U.S. history through a variety of public outreach programs.

“We will cooperate with local volunteer groups at the events in Westchester and important sites in the other counties,” said Lynn Briggs, co-chair of *This Man's A Spy* and a member of the Yorktown Heritage Preservation Commission. “We will collaborate with volunteers to design, plan and execute projects that acknowledge and interpret the plot through a variety of colonial era demonstrations, mobile applications, art, music, presentations, re-enactments, theatrical plays, driving, walking and biking tours, and videos.”

This Man's A Spy will feature the stories of the Patriots of Westchester County who primarily were responsible for the capture of British Major John André and foiled Arnold's treasonous plot. If Arnold's plan had been successful, the loss of West Point could have led to an American defeat. The initiative will build community awareness, understanding and enthusiasm for this period of America's history through a variety of public outreach programs.

Historic Sites Throughout Westchester

In Westchester, the plot involved critical actions by soldiers, their officers, members of the local militia and civilians who were Patriots, Loyalists, Native Americans, African-Americans, women and children. Among the more than 15 Westchester communities that witnessed events related to the plot are Armonk, Croton Point Park (Teller's Point), Dobbs Ferry, North Salem, Ossining, Peekskill, Pleasantville, Tarrytown, Verplanck's Point (King's Ferry) and Yorktown.

This Man's A Spy will deliver an inclusive account of the historic events surrounding the Patriot militiamen's (John Paulding, Isaac Van Wart and David Williams) capture of Major André of the British secret service as a spy in Tarrytown. The description of the strength of the West Point garrison provided by Arnold was found in André's boot. The September 1780 treasonous plot has connections to more than 30 locations across Westchester, Rockland, Putnam and Orange counties.

Community Involvement Underway

“We are working with people who reside in the communities where the André-Arnold Affair occurred,” added Bob Fetonti, co-chair of *This Man's A Spy* and a volunteer for the Westchester County Historical Society. “We are historians, teachers, authors, municipal leaders and preservationists who are passionate about our history and wish to make people aware of the historic events which occurred in their community and the importance of Westchester County in the American effort to win the Revolution.”

Programs will continue during the 250th nationally planned commemorative year of 2026 and then through 2033 to mark the full eight years of the American Revolution (1775-1783) that includes the anniversary of the betrayal.

This Man's A Spy welcomes the involvement of all Westchester County organizations and individuals interested in the county's history to assist in the planning and oversight of programs, and to share local and family stories related to the people, places and events associated with this significant historical event. Anyone who wishes to contribute to the preservation and interpretation of this critical period of local history should email ThisMansASpy@yahoo.com .

Revolutionary Westchester 250 (RW250) is a public charity described in Sections 501(c)(3) and 509(a)(1). RW250 was created as a part of the national initiative begun in 2016 with the passage of Public Law 114-196 to commemorate the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. RW250 cooperates with local partners to plan programs in Westchester County to highlight our Revolutionary Era history.

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