

Benedict Arnold and Jewish Aid in Shady Deal

Narrative of Conspiracy Between Maj. Franks and Gen. Arnold to Loot Americans Under Cover of Military Authority; Speculating in Contraband

WHILE Benedict Arnold was in Canada and David Solesbury Franks, the Jew of Montreal and a British subject, was serving as quartermaster to the American troops, David Franks, of Philadelphia, a member of the same Jewish family and of the same Jewish syndicate of army-contractors, was also engaged in an interesting business.

It has already been shown that this David Franks, the Philadelphia Jew, had gone part way with the colonists in their protests against British colonial rule. That this was not sincerity on his part, his subsequent actions proved. He first comes into the purview of this narrative in 1775, the year in which Benedict Arnold performed the remarkable feat of marching into Canada, whence he was sending back into the colonies numerous Canadian prisoners. These prisoners were kept in the New England colonies for a time, but were later collected into Pennsylvania, some of them being quartered in the city of Philadelphia.

An Early Jewish Traitor to the U. S.

HOW inspired it is impossible now to tell, but presently a committee of the Continental Congress proposes that Mr. David Franks be commissioned to feed and otherwise care for these British prisoners, and be allowed to sell his bills for as much money as may be necessary for the purpose. Of course, in accepting this proposal, Franks was only pursuing the course for which he and his numerous relatives had come to America. He was really doing business with and for Moses Franks, the head of the family syndicate in London. Shortly afterward we read of David under the mouth-filling title of "Agent to the Contractors for Victualing the Troops of the King of Great Britain," and to check him up, a British officer was allowed to pass the lines once a month and spend a few hours with David. That this was a dangerous practice may be deduced from his further story.

In the records of the Continental Congress is a request from Franks that he be permitted to go to New York, then the British headquarters; and such was the power of the man that his request was granted on condition that he pledged his word "not to give any intelligence to the enemy" and to return to Philadelphia.

In January, 1778, six months before Benedict Arnold took command of Philadelphia, David Franks got himself into trouble. A letter of his was intercepted on its way to England. The letter was intended for Moses Franks, of London, and was concealed under cover of a letter to a captain in a regiment commanded by a British general who had married Franks' sister. It appears on the record of the American Congress "that the contents of the letter manifest a disposition and intentions inimical to the safety and liberty of the United States."

Whereupon it was "Resolved, that Major General Arnold be directed to cause the said David Franks forthwith to be arrested, and conveyed to the new gaol in this city (Philadelphia), there to be confined until the further order of Congress."

Thus Benedict Arnold comes into contact with another member of the Franks family, whose name was to be so closely associated with the great treason.

A Slippery Gentleman of Much Influence

AND now begins a serpentine course of twistings and turnings which are so delightfully Jewish as to be worth restating if only to show how true the race remains to its character through the centuries. It is in October, about the eleventh day of the month. Franks is imprisoned and remains a week. Then by strange reasoning it is discovered that the United States has no jurisdiction over the charge of treason against the United States (!) and that the prisoner should be handed over to the Supreme Executive Council of the state of Pennsylvania. It follows that the state of Pennsylvania has nothing to do with the crime of treason against the United States either, and in spite of the contents of the letters and the findings of the Congressional Committee thereon, David Franks smiles pleasantly and goes free! It was a time, of course, when much money was lent by Jews to public officials. The Jew, Haym Salomon, was credited with having most of the "fathers" on his books, but he did not charge them interest nor principal. He grew immensely wealthy, however, and was the recipient, in lieu of interest and repayment, of many official favors. David Franks, likewise a wealthy man, charged with treason, has his case transferred and finally dismissed. It is a trick not unknown today.

The Jewish records give much credit to Mr. Franks

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for not being daunted by this experience. Whether he is entitled to particular credit for his courage when he was master of so much influence, is a matter for the reader to decide, but that he was undaunted his subsequent actions show. He is very soon on the records again with an appeal for permission for his secretary to go again to New York within the British lines. He appeals to the Council of Pennsylvania. The Council refers him to Congress. Congress says it has no objection, if the secretary will be governed by General George Washington's orders in the matter. Washington's aide-de-camp gives permission, and the secretary gives sufficient bonds and sets out for New York.

Arrived in New York, the secretary discovers that Mr. Franks' presence is necessary and has made all arrangements for his master to go to New York, having even secured British permission to pass the lines. It was made very easy for Congress, it had only to say yes. But this time Congress said "no." The former escape of Franks made people aware of an un-American influence at work. After his first arrest he was regarded as dangerous to the American cause. He apparently succeeds in living well in Philadelphia in spite of his difficulties, living even gayly with the society of the city.

Up to this time, David Franks had come into contact with the two principal figures in Arnold's treason. As purveyor to the captured troops, Franks had met and entertained, in 1776, the young and engaging Major André, who in 1780 was to become the tragic victim of Arnold's perfidy. And in 1778 Franks had been the subject of an order of arrest given to General Benedict Arnold. Jacob Mordecai "mentions that it was at Mr. Franks' house that he met Major André, then a paroled prisoner, who was passing his idle hours and exercising his talents in the most agreeable ways by taking a miniature likeness of the beautiful Miss Franks." (American Jewish Historical Society, Vol. 6, page 41.)

A Bit of Important Neglected History

IN THE meantime, Benedict Arnold was pursuing his career, a career strangely checkered with brilliant bravery and subtle knavery, a career sustained by the confidence of noble friends who believed in Arnold even against himself. Except for this strange power of holding friends in spite of what they knew of him, Arnold's career would have terminated before it did. That psychic gift of his, and the desperate need of the Continental cause for military leaders, held him on until his moral turpitude matured for the final collapse. As before stated, there is no intention to minimize Arnold's services to his country, but there is a determination to show what were his associations during the period of his moral decline, and thus fill in the gaps of history and account for the distrust with which the American Congress regarded the young general.

David Solesbury Franks, the Montreal Jew, who was an agent of the Franks army-contractor syndicate in Canada, came south to the American colonies with Arnold when the American Army retreated. In his own account of himself, written in 1789—eight years after the treason—he makes so little of his association with Arnold that were it not for the reports of certain courts-martial it would be impossible to determine how close the two men had been. In his record of himself, as preserved in the tenth volume of the American Jewish Historical Society's publications, he admits leaving Canada with the Americans in 1776 and remaining attached to the American Army until the surrender of Burgoyne, which occurred late in 1777. He then lightly passes over an important period which saw the command of Philadelphia bestowed on General Arnold. He mentions simply that he was "in Arnold's military family at West Point until his desertion," which was in 1780. Reference to the first court-martial of Arnold, in which Colonel David Solesbury Franks was

Arnold's chief witness, will show, however, that Franks and Arnold were more closely associated than the former would care to admit after Arnold's name had become anathema. Indeed, as the Jewish Historical Society's note correctly observes, the account of this court-martial "is of much interest, as it bears directly upon the relations of General Arnold and his aid, Major David S. Franks, before the traitor's final flight in September, 1780."

There were in all eight charges preferred against Arnold, the second one being—"In having shut up the shops and stores on his arrival in the city (Philadelphia), so as even to prevent officers of the army from purchasing, while he privately made considerable purchases for his own benefit, as is alleged and believed."

Follows a supporting affidavit, printed in the style of the original, with emphatic italics added:

The Deal Between Arnold and the Jew

"ON THE seventh day of May, A. D. 1779, before me Plunket Fleeson, Esq., one of the justices, etc., for the city of Philadelphia, comes colonel John Fitzgerald, late aid de camp to his excellency general Washington, and being duly sworn according to law, deposeseth and saith: That on the evening of the day on which the British forces left Philadelphia, he and Major David S. Franks, aid de camp to major Arnold, went to the house of miss Brackenberry, and lodged there that night; and the next morning, major Franks having gone down stairs, the deponent going into the front room of the said house, to view colonel Jackson's regiment then marching into the city, saw lying in the window two open papers; that on casting his eye on one of them, he was surprised it contained instructions to the said major Franks to purchase European and East Indian goods in the city of Philadelphia, to any amount, for the payment of which the writer would furnish major Franks with the money, and the same paper contained also a strict charge to the said Franks not to make known to his most intimate acquaintance that the writer was concerned in the proposed purchase; that these instructions were not signed, but appeared to the deponent to be in the hand-writing of major general Arnold, whether or not there was a date to it the deponent doth not recollect; that the other paper contained instructions signed by major general Arnold, directing major Franks to purchase for the said general Arnold some necessaries for the use of his table; that the deponent compared the writing of the two papers and verily believes that they were both written by major general Arnold's own hand; and soon afterward major Franks came into the room and took the papers away, as the deponent supposes. And further the deponent saith not.

"Sworn, etc. John Fitzgerald."

That such a charge involved as much the trial of Major Franks as General Arnold, will at once appear. The statements in the charge argue close association between Arnold and Franks. Yet in Franks' written record of himself in 1789 he passes over this Philadelphia period thus lightly: "In 1778, after the evacuation of Philadelphia by the British Army & on the arrival of Count D'Estaing I procured Letters of recommendation from the Board of War . . . and joined him off Sandy Hook, I continued with that Admiral until he arrived at Rhode Island, where on the failure of the Expedition I returned to Philadelphia where my military duty called me."

The Jew "Explains" for Arnold

NO REFERENCE here, nor anywhere in his record, to a closeness of bond between the two which his testimony, now offered from the records, amply proves to have existed.

"The judge-advocate produced major Franks, aid-de-camp to major General Arnold, who was sworn.

"Q. On General Arnold's arrival in Philadelphia, do you know whether himself or any person on his account, made any considerable purchases of goods?

"A. I do not.

"Q. At or before general Arnold's arrival in Philadelphia did you receive orders from general Arnold to purchase goods, or do you know of general Arnold's having given orders to any other person to make purchases of goods?

"A. I did receive from general Arnold that paper which colonel Fitzgerald has mentioned in his deposition. There are circumstances leading