

America's History, LLC

presents

7th Annual Conference on the American Revolution

March 23-25, 2018

Williamsburg, Virginia

Friday Bus Tour:

Benedict Arnold's Raid on Richmond, 1781

Friday, March 23 (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

Led by Mark Lender

On 4 January 1781 a British expeditionary force under Brig. Gen. Benedict Arnold landed at Westover Plantation, some thirty miles from Richmond. The next day Arnold's command arrived in Richmond. The British met no resistance as they sacked and burned public buildings; some private property also went up in flames as collateral damage. The state foundry at Westham also fell to Arnold's raiders before he withdrew. Heading down the James, Arnold sent detachments to scatter militia concentrated at Charles City Courthouse and pillage the grounds of the neighboring plantation of Berkeley, home of Virginia patriot Benjamin Harrison. Arnold sailed for Portsmouth on 10 January. Arnold's expedition marked the beginning of British operations in Virginia which ultimately ended with the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

Our tour will trace Arnold's movements during his Richmond raid on the north side of the James. Tour attendees will receive a copy of the Virginia Historical Society's *Magazine of History and Biography* which includes Mark Lender and James Kirby Martin's new article on Arnold's raid with an excellent map.

Some of the sites we'll visit include Charles City Courthouse where Arnold sent Simcoe's Queen's American Rangers to hit patriot militia on 8 January; Westover Plantation on the James where Arnold arrived on 4 January and Berkeley Plantation where 40 slaves left with British troops. We will follow the route Arnold followed going to and coming from Richmond. The route is clear on period maps. At Church Hill in Richmond, a militia position, we'll stop at St. John's Church (clearly marked on the Simcoe map), where Patrick Henry gave his "Liberty or Death" speech. Various sites in Richmond will be pointed out that are associated with the raid.

This tour is an opportunity to learn about an overlooked operation led by Benedict Arnold who will be wearing a red uniform for the first time in the War for Independence. We expect Arnold's biographer, James Kirby Martin will be along with us to add his perspective on the military hero-turned-traitor.