

**William North, "Recollections"**

New London, Connecticut, 18 September 1823.

Autograph manuscript signed, 4 pages.

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Recollections—

I was at Tappan with the army when Andre was executed, but I did not attend his execution, nor as I have always believed, did an great number of spectators go to witness the [struck: execution] exit of that unfortunate Gentleman- You must remember that [struck: no one rejoiced] all mourned his fate though fully convinced of its Justice & propriety. When Baron Steuben came from the house in which the court had been holden- I remarked to him that the tryal had not taken so long a time as I had expected- No, said The Baron, [struck: gave us no] The unhappy prisoner gave us no trouble in calling witnesses. He confessed everything. after the execution, it was asked if Major Andre's request to be shot could not have been complied with- No, answer<sup>d</sup> the Baron He was a spy & in no army was any other death than by the gibbet awarded to a spy- I have thought that Andre's request to those around him, to [2] witness "that He died like a brave man", ought not to have been made [inserted: with respect to] & the story told in Lees [struck: memory] history of the Southern War, respecting the attempt to take Arnold, in which it is said, or hinted, that another General Officer, was suspected by the Com<sup>dr</sup> in Chief all I can say is, that I never heard the remote suspicion attaching to any one, of being concerned or in any Way implicated in Arnolds treason – It is true, it was a moment of alarm & fear, & doubt how far the treason might have extended but [struck: to have] Suspicion to have allighted on anyone, much more a General Officer, I can not bring my mind to believe it – I remember the dark moment [inserted: well] in which the defection of Arnold was announced in [strikeout] pers, It was midnight, Horses were saddling officers going from tent to tent, ordering their men, in [inserted: a] suppressed voice, to turn out & parade [3] no drum beat – the troops formed in silence & in darkness – I may well say, in consternation, for who in such an hour, & called together in such a manner, & in total ignorance of the cause, but must have felt, & feared the near approach of some tremendous shock – As to Scammell, I can not answer – You have said much in Hulls faveur I presume it is also Warranted. He undoubtedly lost his mind at Detroit – He was considered a good Officer in the Revolution – that Prescott is at ease, I rejoice. Poor

Condy! & Bob W<sup>mes</sup>, you think rightly I fancy, of him. However I ought to have a regard for him, when two or 3 years since I met the Cincinnati of Boston Bob drank so much that in grasping my hand he reeld, it is for Joy of seeing you once more Captain North, said he, that is the occasion of this [4]

It was said of John Adams by R<sup>d</sup> Henry or some other of the Lees, that He was sometimes mad, frequently great, & always honest. & when He lost the Presidency, His madness was at its highth. Poor Human Nature! I wish that His letters not only to Cunningham, but to Hamilton had never been written- & I presume He wishes so too- His son has drawn censure on himself as I see by the Boston papers. Whether He will be President or not is to me of no consequence. His manners are not conciliating, & his soul I believe is pretty much like Bob's- Eustis also I see is laughed at in the Galaxy— To be in high station in our country, is not to be a bed of roses. His inaugural speech was exceedingly bad— I am glad Cunningham committed suicide, & I hope his son will do the same

I am D<sup>r</sup>. Sir  
Your Friend Ser<sup>t</sup>  
W North

New London Sept. 18, 1823

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Note: Letters between John Adams and a relative, William Cunningham, Jr., were published in *Correspondence between the Hon. John Adams, later President of the United States, and the Late Wm. Cunningham, Esq. Beginning in 1803 and Ending in 1812* (Boston, 1823) by Cunningham's son, E. M. Cunningham.