

**Virginia DeJohn Anderson.** *The Martyr and the Traitor: Nathan Hale, Moses Dunbar, and the American Revolution.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 288 pp. \$27.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-991686-3.

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**Published on** H-War (November, 2017)

**Commissioned by** Margaret Sankey (Air University)

During my childhood, I learned about the Founding Fathers and the American Revolution, but one seemingly extraordinary figure, Nathan Hale, stood out for his supposed last words: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country" (p. 148). These words have been ingrained in American mythos for centuries, but Virginia DeJohn Anderson's *The Martyr and the Traitor: Nathan Hale, Moses Dunbar, and the American Revolution* argues that Hale's words might have been paraphrased from a popular play called *Cato* (1713). Regardless whether Hale ever uttered these words or not, Anderson's new book examines the lives of two men who gave their lives during the American Revolution; one is remembered as a patriot and the other as a forgotten traitor. Anderson shows that although these men died in exceptional manners, their lives were common and their stories represent complexities that everyday men and women faced in revolutionary America.

*The Martyr and the Traitor* is a dual biography that follows the lives of two Connecticut men who ultimately paid with their lives for their political activities. Nathan Hale is the more famous of the two because of his inclusion in the American narrative of the War of Independence. Moses Dunbar grew up in Connecticut as a farmer but was loyal to the Crown. In the first chapter, An-

derson introduces their fathers and builds a profile of their families. Dunbar grew up as a farmer and got married in 1773, after which he had a family of his own. Hale, on the other hand, came from more means and went to Yale College. At Yale, he joined the Linonian Society, which was a literary and debate club in which members discussed and debated various topics, including current events. Hale befriended Benjamin Tallmadge, who would become the ringmaster for George Washington's intelligence network. At the same time Hale was at Yale, Dunbar struggled to purchase land for farming and to make ends meet.

The news of the Boston Tea Party in December 1773 ushered in a wide variety of responses but the worst came from Parliament which passed the Coercive Acts that punished Boston. Anderson argues that Dunbar continued to move forward with his familial responsibilities but occasionally voiced his opinions of current political events, which invited attacks from his Whig neighbors. Once war broke out in Lexington and Concord, Dunbar fell on the wrong side of the political aisle. He and his family were labeled as Tories, and he was attacked by a mob, was beaten almost to death, and was forced to sign a confession of being a Tory. By contrast, Hale joined the Continental Army as a captain along with his good friend Tallmadge. Anderson demonstrates that

Hale continued to stay in touch with his schoolmates from the Linonian Society; they were also officers in the Continental Army. After the defeat on Long Island, General Washington needed intelligence about the movements of his enemy. Hale volunteered for a dangerous reconnaissance mission. His classmate William Hull knew that Hale could act the part, because he had showed his acting skills while performing in the Linonian Society. Hale attempted to join Robert Rogers's Queen's Rangers and met with him, but the wily ranger read Hale's true intentions and set a trap to catch him. Hale was arrested and hanged as a spy.

Unlike Hale, who had joined the Continental Army, Dunbar remained loyal to Britain and grew to become an outsider in his own community. After the death of his wife, Phoebe, he sought to leave for British-occupied Long Island. He then joined a Loyalist regiment, began recruiting men for the Loyalist militia, and earned the commission of a captain. However, Dunbar was stopped and searched by a rebel patrol; they found his recruitment papers and he was arrested. He was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to hang. Both men met their ends at the end of a rope.

Anderson illuminates Dunbar's story alongside Hale's. She demonstrates how Hale's friends secured his legacy by writing poems about his closely held republican ideals, which quickly faded from memory. Eventually, after the War of 1812, Americans sought a new sense of nationalism and looked for American heroes. Hale stood out and quickly became a national hero. Meanwhile, Dunbar's life had gone unnoticed except to his children and to local historians in the twentieth century. Nonetheless, both men's grim stories are essential to the telling of the American Revolution. The outcome of the War of Independence had a direct effect on how these men would be remembered—one a martyr and the other a traitor.

Anderson's well-researched and well-written dual biography deserves public acclaim. As the popularity of television shows like AMC's *Turn* demonstrates current interest in Revolutionary spying and loyalties, Anderson's *The Martyr and the Traitor* would be an excellent companion history that points to the complex human side of the American Revolution. Everyday people were pulled in various directions that resulted in various sacrifices, including the giving of their own lives. However, their memories and legacies would only be determined by the outcome of the war itself. *The Martyr and the Traitor* would be an excellent addition to any early American history class.

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**Citation:** Timothy C. Hemmis. Review of Anderson, Virginia DeJohn. *The Martyr and the Traitor: Nathan Hale, Moses Dunbar, and the American Revolution*. H-War, H-Net Reviews. November, 2017.

**URL:** <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=49446>



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