

A Sailor Returns Home

By

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A SAILOR RETURNS HOME

The Story of John Tayloe IV

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Forward

The following story resulted from a painting of a young naval officer who served aboard the USS *Constitution* during the War of 1812. The portrait was of my 3rd great-Grandfather John Tayloe IV. For over 50 years it hung conspicuously in the living rooms of many of our various homes where we lived in Dallas, Texas. It was not until much later that I learned of the significance of John Tayloe IV, his family, his service during the War of 1812 and other notable historic events that surrounded his life in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. While doing the research for a previous book which I authored, "Our Founding Fathers Homes and Churches in Virginia", I discovered several documents relating to his service and his relatively short life. The endeavor was gratifying and personal for me as the Tayloe families are direct ancestors. The Tayloes of Virginia were part America's 18th century landed gentry who were early entrepreneurs developing multiple large plantations, iron works factories, ship building plants, horseracing, and many served in the colonial government. This is a story of a Tayloe who lived a rather short, yet eventful life during our nation's infancy.

Acknowledgements

There are so many folks to whom I wish to express my gratitude for this work and I apologize for not acknowledging all of those who have been such a tremendous help. You have provided me with a wealth of information and are friends who share an appreciation for our country, for our founding fathers and for liberty and for faith.

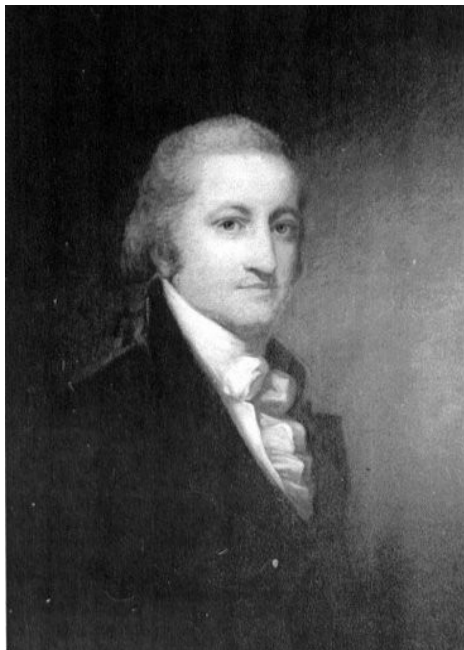
I would like to thank my Virginia cousins and especially Mrs. H.Gwynne (Polly) Tayloe of Mount Airy for her warm hospitality and keen sense of history; Cousin Barbara and Tom Segar for providing me with their letters, notes, transportation, a bed and many delicious meals; Cousin Page Warden whose knowledge of Virginia and her genealogical families is unsurpassed as well as her sharp and funny wit; and the Washington Family for their input and the great reunions! Special thanks to the folks at The Octagon Museum and the American Institute of Architects who have restored the magnificent home to its former grandeur and to the USS Constitution Museum in Boston. Also I thank my Texas relatives and family: Susie for her patience and support while I disappeared into Virginia or into the computer, my sons Robert, Joe and John and to my wonderful mother who just celebrated her 95th and whose ancestral lineage made all of this possible.



The Octagon Museum

On June 19, 1996, after being away for nearly 200 years, the portrait of John Tayloe IV was at long last returned to its original home, The Octagon, in Washington, DC.

John Tayloe III commissioned Dr. William Thornton, who had earlier designed the U.S. Capitol, to design and build a home for his family on an odd-shaped corner lot on New York Ave and 18th Street just a block west of the White House. Although Tayloe had planned on building a home in Philadelphia, his friend George Washington persuaded him to build it in the new Federal City. During its construction (1798-1800) Washington would occasionally ride by on his horse. After its completion, the Octagon would become the winter home of John Tayloe III and his wife, Anne Ogle, the daughter of Maryland Governor Benjamin Ogle. It would also be the center of the early social scene in the nation's new capital. The Tayloes would have 15 children with John Tayloe IV being their first son. He was born at the home of his maternal grandparents in Annapolis August



John Tayloe III
been

22, 1793. As a young boy he lived at his father's large estate in the Northern Neck of Virginia, Mount Airy, and at the Octagon. At age sixteen, on November 15, 1809, John Tayloe IV enlisted in the fledgling United States Navy and was soon appointed Midshipman. In the coming years he served his country admirably aboard several newly built frigates which had authorized by President Washington and Congress in 1794.



John Tayloe IV

John Tayloe IV was first ordered to serve aboard the frigate *President* at Norfolk on March 6, 1810 and on April 27, 1810 he was ordered to join the *President* at Philadelphia. On November 1, 1810 he was ordered to the frigate *Essex*. On January 9, 1811 he received orders to report to Newport, Rhode Island to serve aboard the dispatch vessel *John Adams* which sailed from Newport on March 17 for Europe. Tayloe was notified that he was to accompany Mr. Washington Irving, a young aspiring writer, to Paris and remain with him as long as his services would be required before returning to the *John Adams*. On November 27, 1811 Tayloe was ordered to join the *Hornet* in Europe. Tayloe was then ordered to the USS *Constitution* on June 4, 1812 and he joined the ship in Boston on August 2, 1812. War with Great Britain had been declared on June 19th and the *Constitution* set sail on her second cruise of the war on August 2. On August 11 she captured the British brig *Lady Warren* in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the next day she captured and burned the *Aedona*. On August 16 she captured the British brig *Adeline* which was taken to Boston.



On the first cruise just a few weeks after the beginning of the war, the *Constitution*, under the command of Captain Isaac Hull, set sail from Annapolis for New York. Nearing her destination, she encountered a squadron of British ships comprised of four frigates and one smaller ship under the command of Captain Philip Broke. The winds were nearly dead calm and, for the next 3 days, the British squadron chased the *Constitution* at a very slow pace in the North Atlantic. When the winds died down completely, Captain Hull launched his life boats to tow the *Constitution* ahead of the enemy ships that were gaining on her. The British followed suit to keep apace. Captain Hull then decided on a daring and rather unusual maneuver known as kedging. The ships crew dropped anchors with long chains off the bow and began pulling the ship ahead to try to gain an advantage over the pursuers. The towing and kedging continued for many hours and the *Constitution* moved slowly ahead from the enemy ships. By July 19 she was a few miles ahead of the British squadron. When the winds finally came up, Hull ordered the sails hoisted and the *Constitution* was finally able to leave the enemy far behind in her wake. Hull sailed her into Boston, a safer port than New York, arriving on July 26. The daring escape, known in naval terms as “The Great Chase”, demonstrated the sea worthiness of the *Constitution* and the seamanship of her captain.

In a few weeks she would be tested again.

The *Constitution*, soon after capturing and burning the three British brigs on her second cruise, encountered the British frigate HMS *Guerriere* at sea off the coast of Nova Scotia on August 19. The *Guerriere* was one of the 5 boats in the squadron that had earlier chased Captain Hull and his ship into Boston harbor. Soon a short but fierce 45 minute battle erupted



with the 56 gun *Constitution* with a crew of 476 men engaging the 38 gun *Guerriere* with 263 men captained by James Dacres. The enemy ship was so badly damaged that it was ordered to be set afire and sunk by Captain Hull. It was during this battle that the *Constitution* became known by the nickname “Old Ironsides”. As enemy cannonballs bounced harmlessly off her sides into the ocean, one of the crewmen yelled, “Huzzah! Her sides are made of iron!”. This was the first great victory for the young United States Navy and it was widely cheered and acclaimed throughout America.

After sinking of the *Guerriere* and capturing much of her crew, Midshipman Tayloe, Captain Hull, and the crew of the *Constitution* returned home to a heroes welcome. On February 4, 1813, the Virginia Legislature awarded John Tayloe IV a sword on which was inscribed, “In testimony of the intrepidity and valor of Midshipman John Tayloe of the United States frigate *Constitution* in action at the capture of the British frigate *Guerriere* 19 August 1812, Virginia presents this sword.” In April 1813, Tayloe wrote Governor James Barbour of Virginia, “I only yesterday received your favor of the tenth instant via Boston enclosing the resolutions of both houses of the legislature and believe me Sir, my heart dictates to me, as an American, the abundant gratitude that is due my country for her praise . But more particularly to my native state which has so generously proffered me so noble a testimony of her esteem...P.S. You will please forward the sword to the care of John Tayloe of Washington City.” On December 16, 1813 John Tayloe IV was promoted to Acting Lieutenant.

While the *Constitution* remained in Boston from August 30 until October 28, 1812 for repairs, Tayloe was ordered to the USS *Constellation*. In November, the *Constitution* with William Bainbridge as Captain sailed through the Caribbean and to the West Indies. She captured the brig *South Carolina* on November 9th and encountered the British frigate HMS *Java* off the coast of Brazil on December 29th.



The *Java*. was another large British frigate with 47 guns, a crew of 397 that was carrying mail and passengers. After a 3 hour battle, the *Constitution*, although damaged, defeated the *Java* which was ordered burned and sunk. It was after the sinking of the HMS *Java* that the Royal British Navy issued a directive that none of her frigates were to engage in a one-on-one

battle with the *Constitution* or any U.S frigate.

The *Constitution* arrived back at Boston on February 20, 1813 to another heroes welcome for her captain and crew. She went into dry dock for overhaul and was blockaded by British ships inside the harbor for much of the year. The *Constitution* sailed out of Boston Harbor on December 30, 1813 heading south to the Caribbean and toward the coast of South America. While sailing off the coast of Guiana, she captured the British ship HMS *Lovely Ann* on February 14, 1814. The British schooner *Pictou* was then captured and destroyed. On February 18, the British schooner *Phenix* was destroyed and the British brig *Catharine* the very next day. Loaded with prisoners, the *Constitution* placed her captives aboard a Swedish schooner. Next the *Constitution* tracked north toward the United States. On April 23, two British frigates, the *Junon* and the *Tenedos*, chased her into Marblehead off the coast of Massachusetts. From there she sailed into Boston where she spent most of 1814 again blockaded in the harbor. In late December, under the command of Captain Charles Stewart, the *Constitution* finally slipped away. This would be her 5th and final cruise of the war as she set sail toward Africa. First she captured and scuttled the British merchant ship *Lord Nelson* off Bermuda. Next she captured the *Susannah* with a cargo of \$75,000 on February 16 off Lisbon.



On February 20, 1815, near Madeira Island, the *Constitution* encountered two British men-of-war ships, HMS *Cyane* and HMS *Levant*. She quickly defeated both of the enemy ships. The *Cyane* was badly crippled and captured. Captain Stewart sent a boarding party aboard the *Levant*.

Lieutenant Tayloe was one of those detached to the prize crew of 63 sailors which boarded the *Levant*. While under sail with the Americans aboard, the *Levant* was pursued by three British warships which had earlier been chasing the *Constitution*. The *Levant*, in an attempt to evade its pursuers, sailed into the neutral harbor of Portuguese St. Jago. However, the British ships, ignored the neutrality, proceeded to blockade the ship inside the harbor and began firing upon the sailors. The American prize crew aboard the *Levant* including Lieutenant Tayloe were captured.

While Tayloe and the prize crew from the *Constitution* were held in British captivity, the War of 1812 had formally ended just days before when the Treaty of Ghent had been ratified by President Madison on February 17, 1815. In a twist of historical irony, the treaty had been signed in a second floor room in Lieutenant Tayloe's home, the Octagon!

Meanwhile, months earlier in August 1814, the British under Admiral George Cockburn staged a daring raid laying siege to the new Federal City and torching buildings such as the Capitol and the Federal House where President James and Dolley Madison resided. Colonel John Tayloe III had earlier left his Octagon home to raise a Virginia militia. The Tayloes invited the French Minister Louis Serurier to stay at the Octagon while they were at Mount Airy. Most Americans had fled the Federal City as the British set fire to the nation's capital on August 24, 1814. The Octagon was spared when Serurier declared the home to be a



French Embassy. President and Dolley Madison had just escaped the burning their home. Dolley was the last to leave with her servant Jennings. They managed to save the famous Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington cutting it out from its frame and loading on the carriage. Cockburn and his British officers ate a dinner that evening left behind by the Madisons. A few days later Cockburn took his troops through Maryland seizing several Americans along the way including a doctor, William Beanes.

Dr Beanes was taken prisoner aboard a British ship that was among a large British fleet anchored near Baltimore. Francis Scott Key, a Georgetown lawyer,

was enlisted to obtain the release of Dr. Beanes and was sent to the British ships in Baltimore harbor. Shortly, on September 13th, the British began their bombardment of Fort McHenry. The bombing continued unabated for 25 hours with hundreds of shells exploding in the sky over the fort. Inspired by the sight of the large 30 x 42 ft. American flag illuminated by the rockets that flew over the fort during the all night bombardment, Key wrote the words to the "The Star Spangled Banner." It was printed and set to a popular British drinking song, "To Anacreon in Heaven." The song became popular in the colonies yet did not become the official national anthem until 1931.

Francis Scott Key married Marie "Polly" Lloyd, the granddaughter of John Tayloe II and Rebecca Plater, my 5th great grand-parents. The Keys lived in Georgetown and had 11 children. Rebecca Tayloe, another daughter of John Tayloe II, married Francis Lightfoot Lee, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.



FRANCIS SCOTT KEY.



Mount Airy, the Tayloe Family home since 1760

After the British withdrew from the Federal City, John Tayloe III sent a dispatch by courier to President Madison offering him the use of the Octagon. Accepting his offer, the Madisons moved into the Octagon on September 8, 1814 residing there for the next seven months. The Treaty of Ghent that had been signed earlier by the British on December 24, 1814 arrived at the Octagon for Madison's signature on February 17, 1815, where it was signed formally

ending the War of 1812.

Once word that the war was over reached the British and Americans who were still fighting, the captured prisoners were exchanged. Lt. John Tayloe IV and the prize crew from the *Constitution* were free to travel back to the United States. The *Constitution* arrived at Sandy Hook on May 14 and set sail for Boston ten days later. Lt. John Tayloe IV had arrived home earlier and on May 8, shortly after his arrival in the United States, the Navy permitted him to proceed to Boston and remain there until the arrival of the *Constitution* and his crewmates. Captain Stewart and the crew of the *Constitution* were met by large cheering crowds and a band that played patriotic music.



John Wesley Jarvis (1780-1840) was commissioned to paint a portrait of Lieutenant John Tayloe IV in full naval dress with high collar cravat, gold epaulets on a double-breasted jacket sheathing the sword he had been awarded by the Commonwealth of Virginia for bravery during the battle with the *Guerriere*. This oil portrait on canvas eventually found its way to our homes in Dallas after being in the Octagon, Mount Airy, Chatterton, and the Peyton home in Jacksonville. For years this painting adorned many living room walls in our homes where the McDonough family resided. When I inquired about this painting of the young naval man, my mother said he was a Tayloe relative and fought in the War of 1812. That was it. It was not until many years later that I discovered much more about this young naval

lieutenant and his Virginia family.

The portrait of John Tayloe IV originally hung in the Octagon and was likely moved to Mount Airy. At some time in the mid-19th century the portrait found its home at Chatterton, a Tayloe home on the Potomac River where my grandmother, Sophia Tayloe was born and lived. Sophia married Dr. Harry Alexander Peyton and they lived in Jacksonville, Florida with their three children: Harry, Virginia and John. My mother's 1940 wedding photo depicts her standing in her Jacksonville



Virginia Tayloe Peyton

home in front of the portrait of John Tayloe IV. She married Sam Frierison McDonough and they moved to Dallas later that year. For a while the portrait remained with her brother John Tayloe Peyton in Jacksonville until he moved to Dallas, bringing the portrait with him.

It was prominently displayed in our homes for some 40 years until a representative from the

Octagon Museum in Washington DC contacted us about the painting. The museum which was being renovated, managed and maintained by the American Institute of Architects would like to have the painting returned to its original home and be displayed in the second floor Treaty of Ghent room along with the treaty table. Of course, the family agreed to the request and we set about the business of shipping it to the Octagon. The painting was boxed and crated and on June 19, 1996, this painting that had seen so many homes over the past two centuries arrived safely back to the original home where the journey began.

The Tayloe Family hosted an ancestral reunion in Washington DC in the summer of 1998 which Susie and I attended. The Octagon was our first stop. Viewing the painting there was somewhat emotional and nostalgic, yet I was filled with pride and glad to see that he had finally returned home.



Daniel McDonough, Dallas 1982



Author at Octagon Museum 1998

Epilogue

John Tayloe IV was born on August 2, 1793 in Ogle Hall, Annapolis in Anne Arundel County, Maryland to John Tayloe III and Ann Ogle. His mother was the daughter of the Governor of Maryland, Benjamin Ogle and his father the son of John Tayloe II, “the wealthiest planter in Virginia”. The early Tayloes were among America’s first entrepreneurs and diversified capitalists owning iron work factories, ship building yards, and over a dozen large farms and plantations. After his distinguished service aboard several United States Naval frigates during the War of 1812, Lieutenant John Tayloe IV resigned from the Navy July 31, 1823. On November 13, 1817 he married Maria Forrest at her parents home Rosedale in Georgetown. A son, John Tayloe V, was born on October 18, 1818. Maria was the daughter of General Urriah Forrest and Rebecca Plater. General Urriah Forrest served in the Continental Army and lost a leg during the Battle of Germantown. He and President George Washington met at Rosedale to discuss moving the nations capitol from Philadelphia to what would become Washington, DC. General Forrest is considered one of the original founders of Washington, DC. The Forrest lineage is one of most important historical significance. Maria Forrest was the 7th generation of American Forrests and a direct ancestor to Thomas Forrest and Mistress Forrest who arrived at Jamestown from England in 1608 on the second supply ship. Thomas Forrest and his wife, along with their maid Ann Burris and the man she married John Laydon are represented in the painting of the “Baptism of Pocahontas” by John G. Chapman which is displayed in the rotunda of the United States Capitol. History records the marriage of Ann Burris and John Laydon as the very first to be solemnized in the Colony. Recent discoveries suggest that Mistress Forrest was the first lady to arrive in the Colony of Jamestown. In 1634 the Forrests moved to Maryland.

John Tayloe IV was wounded aboard the *Constitution* while fighting in the battle with the English frigate *Guerriere* in the early days of the War of 1812. He was awarded a sword from the Virginia Legislature for gallantry in this combat. He later distinguished himself in sea battles with the *Cyane* and the *Levant* and was promoted to Lieutenant., U.S. Navy, for “heroism during the War of 1812.” He never fully recovered from the injuries he suffered in these battles and died on May 15, 1824 at his parents family home of Mount Airy in Virginia. He is buried at Mount Airy in the family cemetery.

Tayloe Lineage of Samuel McDonough

14Aug 1942 son of Sam F. McDonough & Virginia Tayloe Peyton (22Dec 1915)

Virginia Tayloe Peyton daughter of Dr. Harry Alexander Peyton (03Mar 1884-17Oct 1954) & Sophia Plater Tayloe (10 Nov 1881-24Dec 1945) daughter of:

Loula Estelle Dickinson (1861-1956) and Forrest Plater Tayloe (1860-1930) son of

Mary Willis Lewis (1824-1885) and John Tayloe V (18 Oct 1818 –1873) son of

Maria Forrest (?) and John Tayloe IV (2Aug 1793-15May 1824) son of:

John Tayloe III (03Sept 1771-28Feb 1828) and Ann Ogle (17 Jan 1772-13Jun 1855)

John Tayloe II (08 May 1721-1779) and Rebecca Plater (08Aug 1731-08Aug 1787)

John Tayloe (15Feb. 1688) and Elizabeth Gwynne

William Tayloe (1645-1710) and Anne Corbin (9Feb 1664-1694)

*Mary Willis Lewis was the daughter of Lucy B. Pratt and Daingerfield Lewis. Daingerfield was the son of Catherine Daingerfield (1764-1820) and George Washington Lewis (1757-1821). George Washington Lewis (1757 –1821) was the son of Fielding Lewis (1725-1782) and Betty Washington (20June 1733- 31Mar 1797). Betty Washington was the sister of George Washington (1732-1799). Betty and Fielding Lewis were our 5th great grandparents and George Washington our 5th great uncle.

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