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## BRIGADIER-GENERAL NATHANIEL TAYLOR

By Samuel C. Williams

Nathaniel Taylor was born on Mill Creek near Lexington in Rockbridge county, Virginia, February 4, 1771, son of Andrew and Ann (Wilson) Taylor. His grandfathers were Isaac Taylor and John Wilson, who had settled in that neighborhood when it was still (about 1740) a part of Augusta county. According to F. B. Kegley, in his *Virginia Frontier* (p. 601), "Isaac Taylor, Sr., was one of the first settlers in Borden's Great Tract of James River, [and] is listed in Capt. John Buchanan's Company 1742. His land and early home place was on Mill Creek of North River a few miles above present Lexington. . . . From 1762 to 1765 he conveyed to his sons, George, Isaac, Jr.,<sup>1</sup> Andrew and William parcels of land from his holdings." Notwithstanding, at his death his estate was appraised at 6,893 pounds sterling—a large estate for the time and place.

Andrew Taylor was born in the county of Armagh in the northern, or Protestant, section of Ireland about 1733, before his parents had emigrated to America.<sup>2</sup> After coming to this country he married his cousin, Elizabeth Wilson, by whom he had four children, Isaac, Matthew, Andrew and Elizabeth. Following the death of his first wife he married in 1770 her sister, Ann Wilson. Nathaniel Taylor was the first child and only son of this marriage, which resulted, however, in two daughters, Rebecca and Rhoda.

In July, 1778, Andrew Taylor sold his farm in Rockbridge county, and joining in a decided trend toward migration to the Tennessee country, at once moved to the Watauga settlement, purchased land and located near the mouth of Buffalo Creek, a branch of the Watauga. He was a member of the State of Franklin legislature. He died in the fall of 1787.

It is not known what educational advantages Nathaniel had; it is surmised by the writer that he was tutored by his clerkly uncle, Isaac, or by Matthew Talbot, Jr., both of whom were surveyors, and

<sup>1</sup>This Isaac Taylor, II, like his brother Andrew, also removed to the Watauga settlement. He was a surveyor, and was clerk of the lower house of the State of Franklin legislature of 1786, and a supporter of Gov. John Sevier. Another Isaac Taylor, half-brother of Nathaniel Taylor, served in the Revolution and was in the battle of King's Mountain, along with his brother, Andrew, Jr. He was forebear of the Taylors who settled near the site of Milligan College.

<sup>2</sup>From another branch of the family descended the great missionary bishop, William Taylor, of the Methodist Church, and, according to the family tradition, President Zachary Taylor.

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Early marriages were the custom and, before reaching legal age, Nathaniel set out for the Valley of Virginia for a wife. On November 15, 1791, he married Mary Patton, who rode to the Watauga on a pony bought and taken to Virginia by Nathaniel for her. The young couple settled on a part of the Andrew Taylor estates and began life in earnest.

## AS A YOUTHFUL SOLDIER

The first experience of Nathaniel Taylor as a soldier was in 1793, when as a captain of militia at the age of twenty-two years he ranged on the Nolachucky River (in the present county of Unicoi) against the Indians. J. G. M. Ramsey<sup>3</sup> in his treatment of the early settlement of Greasy Cove, says:

But higher up above this, on Indian Creek,<sup>4</sup> Mr. Wm. Lewis, his wife and seven children, were killed by the Indians, and his house was burned. One of the sons escaped, and a daughter was taken prisoner and was afterwards ransomed for a gun. The Indians were pursued by a company of troops commanded by Nathaniel Taylor, but were not overtaken till they, crossing French Broad River, reached the inaccessible retreats beyond it.

From the *Knoxville Gazette*<sup>5</sup> it appears that this red raid was early in October, 1793, and that the home of Sebastian Holley on the Nolachucky, fifteen miles from Jonesborough, had been previously attacked, his wife wounded and scalped, and his young daughter's head cut off. Like barbarities were perpetrated in Greene county.<sup>6</sup>

Apparently Captain Taylor and his mounted company after chasing the foraging Indians to the French Broad, deflected to the west and speeded on to join General Sevier's forces which were destined for north Georgia against the Indians. The almost continuous perpetration of outrages such as these throughout the settled portions of East Tennessee forced on the white leaders the determination that war against the Cherokees was unavoidable. In the absence of Governor William Blount, the acting-governor, Secretary Daniel

<sup>3</sup>*Annals of Tennessee* (Charleston, 1853), 182. The reader would gather that Ramsey refers this incident to a much earlier date, 1779. But Nathaniel Taylor was only eight years old in that year.

<sup>4</sup>Followed by federal highway 23, from Johnson City to Asheville, N. C.

<sup>5</sup>Nov. 23, 1793.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, Sept. 14, 1793.

Smith, authorized such a campaign under General John Sevier. This was known as the Etowah (Hightower) expedition, the last conducted by General Sevier. Captain Taylor was in service,<sup>7</sup> in the Washington county regiment under the command of Colonel John Blair. The present county of Carter was yet a part of Washington county.

On October 4, 1796, Taylor was commissioned first major in the Carter county regiment of militia. By 1803 he had been advanced to the rank of colonel.

#### CIVIL CAREER

Governor William Blount of the Southwest Territory, on November 21, 1793, appointed Taylor a justice of the peace for Washington county. When the first General Assembly of Tennessee (1796) established the county of Carter, cut from the eastern part of Washington, Taylor was chosen its first sheriff—an office then held in high esteem. On April 22 of the same year he was honored by being named by the General Assembly first in commission as justice of the peace for the new county. After him were named such leaders as Landon Carter and Andrew Greer.<sup>8</sup> In 1796 he was one of the commissioners named to lay off the county seat, "Elizabeth," later changed to Elizabethton.

In 1803 Taylor succeeded Colonel John Tipton as a member of the state Senate, evidently defeating Tipton in a race for re-election. The senatorial district was composed of the counties of Washington and Carter. Taylor joined his associates in a communication to Judge Andrew Jackson urging him not to resign from the bench.<sup>9</sup> Taylor was a trustee of Duffield Academy in Elizabethton on its incorporation in 1806.

In 1809 Taylor was a representative in the legislature from Carter county. A political career seems to have had little appeal to him, however, and he retired from that field, manifestly in order to give closer attention to his private fortunes then fast coming to flood tide,<sup>10</sup> and to a military career.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, May, 1794, pay roll.

<sup>8</sup>*Tennessee House Journal*, 1796, p. 45.

<sup>9</sup>"We hope [that] at this momentous crisis, when Party is raging in a most extraordinary manner, you will not retire from the service of your country, and leave them to struggle with the loss, etc." The letter was dated Knoxville, Oct. 5, 1803. J. S. Bassett (ed.), *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson* (Washington, 1926-35), I, 72.

<sup>10</sup>A tendency to a political career marked, in a signal way, the older son of General Taylor, James Patton Taylor, and his descendants. The contrary was true of his younger son, Alfred W., and his descendants.

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#### DOHERTY'S CAMPAIGN TOWARD NEW ORLEANS (1803).

When the United States early in 1803 purchased the Louisiana Territory from Napoleon, Spain was yet in possession of New Orleans and the remainder of the territory and claimed that France had no right to make the sale, as in the retrocession then but recently made by Spain to France there was a stipulation against such a transfer to the United States. President Jefferson feared that Spain would not surrender New Orleans unless compelled to do so by force. He sent a message to Governor Sevier directing that five hundred mounted infantry be raised in Tennessee with all possible expedition to march to Natchez and cooperate, if necessary, in forcing a surrender of the coveted city. This requisition for troops reached Knoxville early in November. A Knoxville newspaper of November 14<sup>11</sup> announced that the command of the force would be assigned to Colonel George Doherty of Jefferson county. How many men of Colonel Taylor's regiment actually left for Natchez is not ascertainable, since no muster rolls were kept. But Major-General Andrew Jackson discouraged enlistment in Middle Tennessee, incensed as he was<sup>12</sup> that to Governor Sevier had been assigned by President Jefferson the appointment of the officers. The result was that more men had to volunteer from East Tennessee; and it is almost certain that not a few of the lovers of adventure in the militia of Colonel Taylor's counties went south under Colonel Doherty. We know that some did.<sup>13</sup>

This command on reaching Natchez learned that the Spanish authorities at New Orleans had already voluntarily turned over the city to the representatives of the United States. Nothing was left for the Tennesseans but to march back home.<sup>14</sup> There they were received with acclaim, not for what they had accomplished but for what they stood ready to do.

President Jefferson had asked that, in addition to this first contingent of 500 men, "a force of some thousands be also in readiness

<sup>11</sup>Newspaper clipping in Draper Collection (Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wis.), 26CC74.

<sup>12</sup>The breach between Sevier and Jackson was at the time at its height. The latter showed to poor advantage in the affair of the Natchez expedition. Nevertheless, the competent historian, J. S. Bassett, erroneously says, in writing of the expedition of 1803, that General Jackson received a call to service, and that "his response was decided and was seconded by the enthusiastic support of the militia under his command." *Life of Andrew Jackson* (New York, 1916), I, 76.

<sup>13</sup>Among them George W. Sevier, son of the governor. The gallant Captain Gilbert Christian Russell led a company to Natchez. To Captain Russell's company fell the honor of participating in receiving from the Spaniards on January 12, 1804 "Post Concord" in the Natchez district.

<sup>14</sup>For details of the expedition see S. C. Williams, "Tennessee's First Military Expedition," in *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, VIII (Nashville, 1924), 171-90.

to march, if necessary, by the first of December."<sup>15</sup> Governor Sevier promptly turned to the naming of the officers and regiments to man the second contingent. He chose from East Tennessee Brigadier-General James White of Knoxville, and under him Colonels Nathaniel Taylor of the first regiment and Joseph McMinn of the second regiment. It may easily be imagined what activity set in throughout Upper East Tennessee in preparation for an expedition: shoeing of horses, repair of wagons and guns and the holding of musters. A draft of the militia was put in effect under the militia laws of the state. The imposition of the draft harrowed the Quaker soul of Thomas Embree of Washington county, who addressed a protest to President Jefferson.<sup>16</sup>

The surrender of Louisiana Territory by the Spanish authorities ended warlike preparations in Tennessee. The general willingness of Tennesseans to protect the interests of the nation in this period has gone without recognition on the part of Tennessee historians.

The year following (1804) Taylor was raised to the rank of a brigadier-general, in command of the First Brigade. He won out in a contest with Col. John Tipton, a near neighbor. The irascible Tipton at once wrote to Governor Sevier, at Knoxville, notifying him that he would contest the election of Taylor on the grounds of illegality.<sup>17</sup> The post was an elective one, the electors being the higher regimental officers.

In 1811 the Tennessee militia was divided into two divisions: the First Division (East Tennessee) was under the command of Major-General John Cocke, and the Second Division (Middle Tennessee) was commanded by General Andrew Jackson. In the First Division there were four brigadiers in command of brigades: Nathaniel Taylor, George Doherty, James White and Thomas Coulter. General Nathaniel Taylor's First Brigade was composed of the regiments of five counties of Upper East Tennessee; the First Regiment from the mother county of Washington, Samuel Bailess, colonel;

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>16</sup>This letter is in the Jefferson Papers (Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress).

<sup>17</sup>From Jonesborough, June 28, 1804. Draper Collection, 1DD152, *Calendar of King's Mountain Papers*, 225. When he had time to cool off Tipton appears to have abandoned the contest. If not, he suffered a defeat that added to the sting already felt. As between the two rivals, Sevier and Tipton, Taylor, as had his father, preferred Sevier. The Taylor-Carter connection gave that alliance an added incentive. It may not be doubted that the combined influence of the Carters and Sevier was behind Taylor. See in this connection S. C. Williams, *History of the Lost State of Franklin* (New York, 2nd. ed., 1933), 299-301.

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Second Regiment from Sullivan county, William Snodgrass, colonel; Third Regiment from Greene county, Erwin Allison, colonel; Fourth Regiment from Hawkins county, Absalom Looney, colonel; and the Fifth Regiment from Carter county, Christian Carriger, colonel.<sup>18</sup>

#### ACTIVITIES IN PRIVATE LIFE

From 1800 to 1814 General Taylor was immersed in business affairs, and succeeded in building up a large estate. His investments were for the most part in land, and his was a far reach for choice holdings. They extended as far south as Grainger and Bledsoe counties, north into southwest Virginia and west as far as the Mississippi River. Grants issued to him, in possession of decendants, covered tracts of land in Shelby county and on the Hatchie and Loosahatchie rivers in West Tennessee.<sup>19</sup>

Among his many holdings was a tract of 62,000 acres, under a Virginia grant issued in 1796, in which the General was a tenant-in-common with another. This tract covered all the plants of the Stonega Coal & Coke Company, of recent times, a large part of the rich St. Charles coal field, and a part of the corporation of the city of Big Stone Gap. Seventy years ago that territory was an almost unbroken forest of virgin timber. Without railroads, or county roads of any importance, the traveler could make his way over much of the land only on foot or horseback. About the year 1890 a long legal battle was fought over the title to a large part of that land, which contest was finally settled in the United State Supreme Court.

The General also owned iron lands on Roan Creek in Johnson county,<sup>20</sup> where he erected and operated iron-making works. It is said that he made this investment as joint owner with General Landon Carter. Iron products were shipped by boats down the rivers to market. He owned, also, many slaves. His books of account show that for one gang of slaves he paid \$12,000; these were imported from Africa to the port of Charleston, South Carolina.<sup>21</sup> Slaves were needed to work on his plantations and in his iron works. A

<sup>18</sup>T. G. Bradford, *The Military Instructor* (Nashville, 1812), 70; reprinted in *Tenn. Hist. Mag.*, VIII, 215-19.

<sup>19</sup>Such were evidently selected and surveyed by the son-in-law of the General, Jacob Tipton, who was a surveyor and, after 1825, a brigadier-general in Tipton county. It is probable that these West Tennessee lands were allotted to Mrs. Tipton in the settlement of the estate of General Taylor.

<sup>20</sup>Later (about 1892-95) developed on a large scale by a private corporation.

<sup>21</sup>Manifestly just in time to avoid the penalties fixed by the act of Congress of 1807 which prohibited the importation of slaves after January 1, 1808. Among these slaves was Sola, son of an African chieftain, concerning whom Alf A. Taylor had many stories to tell; to that raconteur Sola was an "African prince."

near and long-time neighbor of the Taylor family says that General Taylor's wife "was entitled to much credit for the success her husband achieved." No little of the qualities of her kinsman, Colonel James Patton<sup>22</sup>—vision and forcefulness—was possessed by her. Colonel Patton from his county of Augusta in the 1750's had reached southward and acquired large grants of lands in the Tennessee country; and a half century later the Taylors were reversing and reaching northward into southwest Virginia for yet larger holdings of valuable mineral and timber lands.

Like other prominent men of the region,<sup>23</sup> Taylor engaged in dealing in lands jointly with some associate. One of these was Colonel Robert Love, I,<sup>24</sup> of Tennessee and North Carolina. In the papers of President Madison<sup>25</sup> is found a memorial lodged with the President, signed by James Knox, recently of Knoxville, but dated from Giles county, Tennessee, February 24, 1812, in which complaint was made that Love and Taylor were wrongfully "surveying lands bordering the States of Tennessee and North Carolina."

#### OPERATIONS UNDER GENERAL JACKSON IN 1814-1815

After the conquest of the Creek Indians, the Secretary of War in July, 1814, called for 2,500 Tennessee militia to march south and man the forts in the recently conquered territory. September 20 was named as the date for their assembling. Promptly on receipt of a call from Governor Willie Blount of Tennessee, Brigadier-General Taylor began, August, 1814, to lay plans to embody a mounted force of 1,000 of his First Tennessee militia brigade; and shortly proceeded to Knoxville. There he met Colonel John Williams of the 39th U. S. Regulars, who was at home endeavoring to recruit men for his own regiment. Colonel Williams had 1,000 stands of arms and other necessary military equipment. General Taylor, when he turned up at Knoxville, needed 500 muskets for one half of his force. Colonel Williams had met with indifferent success in recruiting, and more than the needed 500 arms could well be spared to Taylor, who at first

<sup>22</sup>For accounts of this remarkable man, see S. C. Williams, *Dawn of Tennessee Valley and Tennessee History* (Johnson City, 1938), *passim*.

<sup>23</sup>Such as John Carter, James Robertson and John Sevier.

<sup>24</sup>The name reappears in that of Governor Robert Love Taylor. After Colonel Love's removal to North Carolina he had a noteworthy career. He was founder of the town of Waynesville.

<sup>25</sup>*Calendar of the Correspondence of James Madison*, Bureau of Rolls and Library of the Department of State, *Bulletin No. 4* (Washington, D. C., 1894), 446. See in this connection S. C. Williams, "The Tennessee-North Carolina Boundary Line Survey of 1799," in *Tenn. Hist. Mag.*, VI (1920), 55.

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requested them, only to meet with a curt refusal. Taylor's request was accompanied by an offer of proper receipts. Next came from Taylor a peremptory demand for the much needed arms. Williams countered with this reply:

Sir: By your order of this date, you require me to deliver into the hands of the militia the muskets which have been furnished for my regiment. You have been already informed that it is not in my power to part from the arms in my possession. I am under the necessity of refusing positively a compliance with your order. I deem it unnecessary at this time to investigate your authority to give me an order. I have the honor to be with great respect. . .<sup>26</sup>

General Taylor was compelled to march to the Alabama country with his command inadequately equipped; but before doing so he reported under date of September 28, 1814, the facts to General Jackson, who was now major-general of the regular army and was thus the superior of both Williams and Taylor. Letters moved slowly, and it was not until October 17 that General Jackson wrote a biting criticism of Colonel Williams for his part in this affair. Williams, from Knoxville on November 1, replied, trying to excuse his conduct:

Sir: . . . Your letter of the 17th ulto. excites both regret and astonishment. Regret at having incurred the displeasure of my commanding General—And astonishment at the position assumed in that letter. Had you been acquainted with all the circumstances attending the transaction, I feel confident you would not have considered me, meriting, such a harsh reprimand. I was apprised that a communication had been made to you from Knoxville, by Genl. Taylor. But supposing, that it would be understood by you, and that it would be treated as it deser[v]ed; I was perfectly silent on the subject. It is the opinion of every military man that I have conversed with, that situated as General Taylor and myself were, he had no authority to give me an order. I admit when a Militia Genl. and a United States colonel are associated in the same service, by the order of their superiors; that then the former has a right to command, and the latter is bound to obey. Genl. Taylor was on one description of service, and myself on another. General Taylor had the same power to demand of me, the military clothing, in my possession, for the use of his troops; as he had to demand my arms. And I should have been as criminal in delivering up the one, as the other. In either case, I should have been accountable to the Government, and bound to have paid the amount, out of my private funds. A system of accountability has been established, And nothing but the order of a legitimate superior would justify me in disposing of the public stores in my possession; in a manner different from the one intended. I am assured that Genl. Taylors correspondence with me, was not commenced, with an expectation of promoting the public service. I

<sup>26</sup>Bassett, *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, II, 88, n.

entered the army with no other view than to perform honorable service to my country. Altho the unwearied and unceasing exertions of myself and others on the recruiting service, has not been crowned with much success, during the season, It is not owing to causes over which I have any control. No person on earth more than myself regrets the ill success of the recruiting officers. I agree with you that this is not a time to investigate nice military questions of rank. From the many proofs which I have given of the truth and importance of this remark (within your own observation) I did not expect to be reminded of its necessity. I yield to no man in a disposition to promote the service of my country. And it would afford me infinite satisfaction to deliver over all the public stores in my possession to promote the service, if I had a legal order to that effect. But I never will involve myself in ruin by squandering the public stores confined to my care. And I will resist every attempt to make me responsible for others faults. I am always ready and willing to have every act, both of my civil, and military life, investigated. In the exercise of your discretion you seem to think these are sufficient grounds for my arrest. I shall therefore hold myself in readiness to receive your order of arrest, And to repair without delay to such place as may be appointed for my trial.<sup>27</sup>

General Jackson was too busily engaged on the Gulf coast with the threatening British to order such an arrest and trial as Williams invited.<sup>28</sup> Events had moved fast in the farther South. Every available man, and he equipped as well as possible, was sorely needed at two points, Mobile and New Orleans. Leaving these aside for the present, we follow General Taylor and his command through the wilderness towards the scene of action.<sup>29</sup>

On September 30 he was at Kingston on the Tennessee where he received a communication (Oct. 2) from the adjutant-general of Tennessee, Andrew Hynes, saying that General Jackson was "urging the

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, II, 88.

<sup>28</sup>Here was opened a breach between Jackson and Williams that so widened as to be disastrous to the political fortunes of Williams. Perhaps, except for the ruptures between Jackson and Sevier and between Jackson and Hugh Lawson White, it was the most fateful breach between two men in the history of Tennessee. Williams, previous to this dispute with Taylor, had stood high in the regard of Jackson. Indeed, only a few days before the occurrence in Knoxville, Jackson had written from Mobile (Aug. 28) to Colonel Robert Butler, then temporarily at Nashville: "Colo John Williams of the 39th would be of great benefit to me. I have enclosed an open note for your perusal, and wish you to enclose it to him with any further remarks." *Ibid.*, II, 35. It may not be doubted that the conduct of Williams at Knoxville would have been different had he known of what was, in fact, brewing on the Gulf coast.

<sup>29</sup>Major Howell Tatum, of Nashville, as topographical engineer of the 7th military district, kept a journal of the campaign in the South, which was edited by John Spencer Bassett and printed in the *Smith College Studies in History*, VII (Northampton, 1922). On p. 52 this entry appears: "About this time (late in August) the General was advised that the Tennessee requisition of two regiments and one battalion of militia had been ordered into service ... ready to march under the command of Brigadier General Taylor."

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The difficulties that attended a march of a military force in an unsettled region, such as Alabama of 1814-15, were appalling. The Creek War had but recently swept over the land, and food supplies and feed for horses were scarce. Roads were either non-existent or wretched. Before leaving the Tennessee Valley (in northern Alabama) a council of General Taylor's staff officers was held to consider the breakdown in the commissary department of the army. The following communication gives the conclusions reached.<sup>31</sup>

Camp Duffield,  
13th October, 1814.

Brigr. Genl. N. Taylor, Sir:—Your order of the 12th inst. for the army to march this morning at 8 o'clock we fear, sir, was issued under the impression that provisions for the army could be obtained on our march to Fort Jackson, but in the report of Maj. Spoor, who is just from Fort Strother, this appears not to be the fact. Provisions are not to be had at Fort Williams or the probability of any at Fort Jackson. Considering these circumstances we humbly represent that we think it highly imprudent to march an army with only nine days provisions for a distance of two hundred and forty miles through a country where nothing can be had for its supply, and beg that you would devise means for subsistence before we leave the place where it can be had.

And we also humbly represent that we think it would be best to remain at this place a few days until wagons can be procured for the transportation of a sufficient quantity of rations to support us to Fort Jackson. We are willing, however, to submit to any order that you may think proper to dictate.

Respectfully yours, etc.,  
C. T. Spoor, In. At.  
George Duffield, A.D.C.  
John Russell, B.M.  
John Anderson, In Colo.  
Samuel C. Magee, Major,  
Thomas J. Van Dyke, R. Surgeon.

In November the East Tennesseans were farther south at "Camp Misery"—a name descriptive of conditions that confronted them. On

<sup>30</sup>Nathaniel Taylor Papers (in Tennessee Historical Society's Collection at Nashville).

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.* Camp Duffield was named in honor of Taylor's aide-de-camp, Major George Duffield, a favorite of General Taylor. As to him, see *infra*, note 37. From "Tatum's Journal" (*loc. cit.*, 68): "30th. On the morning of this day, the first regiment of West Tennessee, drafted, Militia (part of Genl. Taylors Brigade) arrived and encamped near Fort Pearce, supposed to contain near 1,000 men, officers included."

the 14th from that camp an order went forward to the contractor's agent at Fort Claiborne:<sup>32</sup> "Without the least delay forward on to meet the Tennessee troops on their line of march, fifteen hundred complete rations and three barrels of whiskey for the hospital department."<sup>33</sup>

General Jackson was disposed to criticise General Taylor for the slowness of the progress of the East Tennessee troops towards Mobile. However, any one acquainted with Jackson's record will recall how his own complaints reached high heaven when troops under his immediate care were deprived of rations or transportation facilities by a breakdown in the commissary department of the service. Jackson's health at this time was wretched and in consequence he was querulous.

On November 9 General Taylor was at Fort Jackson, one half of his troops yet without muskets or guns of any description. About the middle of the month he was in Mobile. Until the arrival of senior Brigadier-General James Winchester, who was on his way to Mobile from his home in Tennessee, the command of all militia at Mobile was given by General Jackson to General Taylor;<sup>34</sup> the regulars to be commanded by an officer of the United States army, Lieutenant-Colonel Arbuckle of the 3rd Regiment.

Jackson was almost obsessed by an anticipation that the British would attack Mobile, and not New Orleans, and afterwards march across the country to the Mississippi River at Natchez or at the Walnut Hills (Vicksburg), embodying Choctaw Indians as auxiliaries as they marched westward. That, doubtless, would have been Jackson's own strategy had he been in command of the British force. He, of course, could not know that the plan of the invaders was to strike directly at New Orleans. Thus thinking, Jackson left a considerable

<sup>32</sup>In mid-November General Jackson learned of the arrival on an earlier date of General Taylor's command at Ft. Claiborne on the Alabama River, and that "Major Childs from East Tennessee, with about 500 volunteer Gun-Men, mounted, had also arrived at the same place, in order to join General Coffee's Brigade." "Tatum's Journal," *loc. cit.*, 85.

<sup>33</sup>Taylor Papers. John McKee (later a member of Congress from Alabama) was contractor to the troops. The captains joined in a communication to General Taylor, complaining that McKee was withholding rations. "Your petitioners are of the opinion that the contractor has it in his own power to either give us for rations what he may be pleased in money, not giving your petitioners any say in the price whatever." (Signed) James Tunnell, Benj. Powell, James Stewart, Andrew Lawson, Alex Millikan and Joseph Scott, captains. *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup>See "Tatum's Journal" (p. 86): "14th [Nov.] The command of Fort Montgomery [Mobile] was therefore allotted to General Taylor, on his arrival, with his own Brigade and, perhaps, some other forces." This was before Taylor's actual arrival at Mobile. The order of General Jackson assigning the command followed his arrival.

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bodies of regulars and militia at Mobile, which place he left on November 22 for New Orleans. General Taylor's brigade, therefore, took no part in the battle and signal victory over Sir Edward Packenham on January 8, 1815.

Following the battle of New Orleans the British felt that they could not leave the Gulf of Mexico without retrieving in some measure, thus assuaging the sting of defeat. Their naval force was almost as strong as it had been on January 1. Waiting for and receiving a re-enforcement of a thousand fresh soldiers, General Lambert determined to attack Fort Bowyer on Mobile Point. At daylight on the morning of February 8 a whole brigade and a heavy battering-train were disembarked in the rear of that fort which was located across the bay from Mobile, where lay the American forces under General Winchester. The British land brigade was supported by about 450 artillerymen, sappers and miners, and marines. They began parallels, sieged sand mounds, and constructed batteries which cannon-fire from the fort could not destroy. On the morning of the 11th their howitzers and other guns were trained on the fort. Not until the 10th did General Winchester send out land forces to cross the bay to aid the garrison of Fort Bowyer. On the 12th the commander of the fort received a demand for its surrender to which, after a council of his officers, he felt obliged to yield. While the British lost twenty-one in killed and wounded, against the American loss of eleven, the capture of the fort was inevitable and comparatively easy. General Winchester in reporting to the Secretary of War said:

It becomes my duty to communicate to you the unpleasant news of the loss of Fort Bowyer. It was completely invested by land as well as water, on the 8th inst. On the 10th and 11th I passed a detachment over the bay with a view to divert the enemy from his object; but it arrived twenty-four hours too late. . . . The besiegers had advanced their works on the land side to within certain musket shot of the fort. . . . About thirty of the enemy's vessels, besides boats and barges, are lying within the bar and above Mobile Point, and several ships of the line on the south. . . . I expect the honour of seeing them here every night; if I do, I have great confidence my next will be on a pleasanter subject.<sup>35</sup>

General Jackson was keenly disappointed over the surrender of Fort Bowyer, and he at once began to formulate plans to retake it. However, on February 21 he received from the British Admiral Cochrane a copy of a bulletin received from Jamaica announcing that a peace treaty had been signed at Ghent on December 24. The

<sup>34</sup>A. L. Latour, *Historical Memoir* (Philadelphia, 1816), Appendix, 39.

British forces continued to hover around the Isle of Dauphin, and Jackson could only await official confirmation of the news of peace having been declared. It was not until March 21 that General Jackson in an address to the troops authorized their march homeward: "Go then to your homes, to those tender connexions and those blissful scenes which render life so dear—go, full of honor. . . ."<sup>36</sup> The troops of General Taylor had, however, taken up the toilsome march on the 20th and were received in East Tennessee with an acclaim that must have warmed their hearts.

The muster roll (of March 20) of the staff of General Taylor is preserved in the rooms of the Tennessee Historical Society, at Nashville, and shows:

1. Nathaniel Taylor, Brigr. General, ordered into service on 4th of August, 1814, present.
2. George Duffield, Aid de Camp, engaged 23rd Sept. 1814, present.<sup>37</sup>
3. John Russell, Brigadier Major, engaged 21st of Sept. 1814, absent on command by order Gen. Winchester.
4. Robert W. Hart, Asst. Adj. Genl., engaged 20th Sept. 1814, present.
5. Allen Johnson, Brigadier Qr. Master, engaged 30th September, 1814, resigned on the 28th Nov. 1814.
6. Thomas W. Winn, Brigadier Qr. Master, absent on command.
7. James H. Peck, Asst. Topogl Engineer, engaged 20th Sept. 1814, present.<sup>38</sup>
8. Spencer E. Gibson, Hospital Surgeon, engaged 20th Sept. 1814, present.
9. Wm. B. Carter, Forage Master, engaged 20th Sept. 1814, resigned 17th of October, 1814.<sup>39</sup>
10. Joseph Trotter, Forage Master, engaged 17th Oct. 1814, present.
11. John S. Fulton, Asst. Forage Master, engaged 14th Dec. 1814, present.
12. John Durgan, Asst. Forage Master, engaged 14th Dec. 1814, absent on command.
13. David G. Vance, Wagon Master, engaged 20th Sept. 1814, present.

<sup>36</sup>Bassett, *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, II, 195.

<sup>37</sup>Duffield was the son of a Presbyterian minister, Rev. Samuel Duffield, of Philadelphia, and had come to Tennessee and located as a lawyer at Greeneville as early as 1801. He took a deep interest in Greeneville College. He married a daughter of General Landon Carter, and their daughter married Alfred W. Taylor. Duffield Academy (now a high school) in Elizabethton yet bears his name.

<sup>38</sup>Son of Adam Peck and brother of Judge Jacob Peck of the Tennessee Supreme Court. He removed to Missouri and became a U. S. district judge.

<sup>39</sup>Son of Gen. Landon Carter. He was a member of Congress from the first district, and was president of the Constitutional Convention of 1834.

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16. Samuel Bruff, Asst. Topgl Engineer, engaged 9th Nov. 1814. Absent on command at Fort Jackson. P. Martin, private Waiter, engaged 20th Sept. 1814, present. A private waiter to Gen. Nathl. Taylor.<sup>40</sup>

## LATER LIFE

Returning from the war in the South, General Taylor soon turned his attention to the construction of a new home in Happy Valley. There he had acquired a large holding of lands. A part of this came to him from his father; other and the larger portions were purchased by him until he owned there above 3,000 acres of land, covering the major part of Happy Valley,<sup>41</sup> so widely known in Tennessee and the South for its natural charms and historic background. The site chosen for this home was on land formerly owned by Matthew Talbot,<sup>42</sup> near the mouth of Gap Creek, a branch of the Watauga. The house yet stands, on an eminence overlooking the Watauga. More care was bestowed on the interior finish than on its exterior.

The holdings of General Taylor in Happy Valley also included the land on which the two great rayon plants of the North American Rayon Corporation stand. These plants were built at a cost of about \$17,000,000.<sup>43</sup> Broad as was the outlook of Nathaniel Taylor it was beyond his ken to contemplate such a development.

<sup>40</sup>When president of the United States, General Jackson, journeying between Nashville and Washington by stage, spent a day with friends at Blountville. When Martin heard that he would stop in that place, he asked his mistress, Mrs. Taylor, for leave to go there to see the old general once more, and said that he was willing to walk the distance. As reported by a physician in the neighborhood, N. E. Hyder, Mrs. Taylor told him he could go, but that he must ride the best horse on the farm, and that her son, Alfred, would go with him and take care of him.

<sup>41</sup>On Buffalo and Gap Creeks of the Watauga and on that river, running back into the hills. He owned the land on which the Richard Henderson & Company treaty with the Cherokees was held in March, 1775; on which stood Fort Caswell (Watauga Fort), which was attacked and besieged by the Indians in July, 1776; and where the King's Mountain men rendezvoused in September, 1780.

<sup>42</sup>An outstanding pioneer, neighbor of Andrew Taylor, Sr., Talbot was from Bedford county, Virginia. A man of ability and means, he was one of the earliest Baptist preachers in the Tennessee country. Thomas Talbot, of the State of Franklin and later a resident of the Nashville region, was one of his sons.

<sup>43</sup>The social center, the Franklin Club house, is almost on the spot where was the home of Nathaniel G. Taylor, father of Governors Alfred A. and Robert L. It was the boyhood home of the two last mentioned.



Dr. Charles Coffin, a New England Presbyterian minister who came to East Tennessee about 1802-03 to become president of Greeneville College (now Tusculum College), soon began a canvass for funds for that infant institution of learning.<sup>44</sup> Making the rounds in Upper East Tennessee, he visited Carter county. In his journal<sup>45</sup> he recorded under date of February 14, 1803: "Was introduced to several Gentlemen, but all the friends of the College regret the absence of Major Taylor, the most influential & public spirited man in the County." Coffin visited the Taylor home and it goes without the saying that he met with a hospitable reception. Hospitality was to the people of this section a part of their creed.<sup>46</sup>

General Taylor died in 1816; and, according to family tradition, before the new home was ready for occupancy. Cut off at the age of forty-five, with many years reasonably in expectancy, and with a worthy record already to his credit, one wonders whether, had his been the normal span of life, the first Governor Taylor of Tennessee would have been Nathaniel. His family and social connections were rapidly increasing and all were ready to back him in any aspiration for preferment.

General Taylor's remains were buried in the family burial ground on a high hill immediately overlooking the historic Sycamore Shoals of the Watauga. The grave-stone has been so defaced by time and the elements that the lettering on it is no longer decipherable.<sup>47</sup>

#### DESCENDANTS

From the outset the descendants of General Taylor demonstrated ability. His son, James Patton Taylor, was an early district or prosecuting attorney (1814-1818); but he, too, died comparatively young. That he was popular and promising is shown by the fact that in 1836, shortly after his death, when Johnson county was about

<sup>44</sup>Governor Sevier subscribed readily \$120.

<sup>45</sup>Copy preserved in the C. M. McClung Collection, Lawson McGhee Library, Knoxville.

<sup>46</sup>For proof of this, see William Tatham, *Communications Concerning the Agriculture and Commerce of the United States* (London, 1800), 83, 151-53. Tatham, the scion of a noble English house, was in the Watauga region from 1776 until 1779. On his return to England he published several volumes which shed much light on the history of upper East Tennessee. For his career, see S. C. Williams, *William Tatham, Wataugan*.

<sup>47</sup>The numerous descendants owe it to themselves, as well as to the memory of a worthy and near-great Tennessean, to see to it that an enduring monument is erected to mark the last resting place of General Nathaniel Taylor and his faithful wife.

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to be established, his name was proposed for perpetuation in that of the new county. The name of a worthy early settler, Thomas Johnson, was chosen instead; but the county seat was named, in honor of James P. Taylor, Taylorsville.<sup>48</sup> This son was named for his maternal grandfather, and married Mary (Polly) Carter, daughter of Landon C. and Elizabeth (Maclin) Carter, the latter a sister of William Maclin, the first secretary of the state of Tennessee.

The second son, Alfred Wilson Taylor, was also a lawyer. He married Elizabeth Carter Duffield, daughter of George Duffield, General Taylor's aide-de-camp in 1815, and Sarah Stuart (Carter) Duffield, daughter of Landon C. Carter. Although A. W. Taylor had little inclination towards public life, he served one term in the legislature (1833). The two sons thus married into the Carter family.

The daughters of General Taylor extended the connections to other influential families. Anna married Thomas D. Love, son of Colonel Robert Love, I, and niece of General Thomas Love, of Henry county, West Tennessee. Lorena married General Jacob Tipton, son of Captain Jacob Tipton, of West Tennessee. Tipton county, Tennessee, was named in honor of Captain Jacob. Mary married Dr. William R. Dulaney of Sullivan county, a leading physician. Seraphina, the youngest daughter, married Alfred E. Jackson, who during the Civil War was a brigadier-general in the service of the Confederate States. He was the son of Samuel D. Jackson, a wholesale merchant of Philadelphia who came to Tennessee near the close of the century, and purchased and lived on the John Sevier plantation on the south side of the Nolachucky River in Washington county.

The oldest brother of General Taylor, Isaac, was in the Revolutionary War and in the battle of King's Mountain. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Jacob Brown, founder of the noted Brown's Settlement on the Nolachucky, 1772. The Browns were prominent in Washington county.

This summary shows the influential connections of Nathaniel Taylor at the time he flourished. Later descendants were equally

<sup>48</sup>A. C. Foster in his *Counties of Tennessee* (Nashville, 1923) under Johnson county has erred in two respects. He states that the county was named for Hon. Cave Johnson of Clarksville, and that the county seat was named in honor of Gen. Nathaniel Taylor. It was proposed in the General Assembly to name the county "Taylor" for the last named; but a compromise was reached with result as stated. Foster truly states that the name of the county seat was changed to Mountain City at the instance of Roderick Random Butler, then in the state Senate. Butler and Alfred A. Taylor were at the time hot rivals, at the head of opposing Republican factions in the first congressional district.

prominent. A grandson, son of James Patton Taylor, was Nathaniel G. Taylor, congressman, elector for the state-at-large and Indian commissioner under President Andrew Jackson. He was a Methodist local minister and an orator of note. The records of his sons, Alfred A. and Robert L., as congressmen, and governors, and of Robert L. as senator from Tennessee are too recent and well known for extended comment.

Generally speaking, the descendants of James P. Taylor adhered to the Union cause in the Civil War, while those of his brother, Alfred W. Taylor, followed the fortunes of the Southern Confederacy, producing efficient officers such as Nathaniel Macon, George Duffield, and Henry Harrison (Tip) Taylor. Too, men of the Jackson, Tipton and other lines, adhered to the Southern cause.

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