

A Scottish young man's memoir as he goes to sea, is impressed by the British Navy, fights against Napoleon's France, and returns home to South Carolina a broken man, only to find his fiancé has married his brother.

**The Founding Fathers at Odds: The Quasi-War
Volume I of the Founding of the U.S. Navy Trilogy**

By William D. McEachern

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THE FOUNDING
FATHERS AT ODDS
THE QUASI-WAR



VOLUME I OF THE
FOUNDING OF THE U.S. NAVY

WILLIAM D. McEACHERN

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Novels by William D. McEachern

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Casting Lots

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The Founding of the U. S. Navy Trilogy

The Founding Fathers at Odds: The Quasi-War

Dueling Brothers, Dueling Countries, and the Lure of Empire: The
Barbary Pirates (2023)

Free Trade and Sailors' Rights: The War of 1812 (2024)

Historical Participants in the War of 1812

The McEachern Family

(In Order of Birth)

Daniel McEachern was born in 1750 in Bowmore, Isle of Islay, Argyll, Scotland; he fought in the American Revolution; and he died on June 15, 1812, in Saddle Tree, Robeson County, North Carolina.

Daniel McEachern married **Flora McNeill** (1754-1830) in 1774 in Cumberland, North Carolina, when she was nineteen. She was born in Cumberland, North Carolina. (Her father was James McNeill, and her mother was Mary McAllister born 1732 in Balinakill, Kintyre, Scotland.)

Daniel and Flora had the following children:

James McEachern-Born 1775 in Cumberland, North Carolina; died January 1, 1816, in Sumter, South Carolina. James fought as a sailor in the War of 1812. He married **Rebecca Allen**.

John McEachern-Born 1778 in Cumberland, North Carolina; died in a duel 1807. He is a planter and a politician. He married **Patience Pendleton**.

Polly McEachern-Born in 1780. Died 1785 in a Smallpox Epidemic.

Angus McEachern-Born in 1782 Cumberland, North Carolina; he died in 1847; became a shipwright under Joshua Humphreys.

Sarah (called Sallie) McEachern-Born in 1784; Died in 1869.

Malcolm McEachern-Born in 1785; and he died in 1822. He trained at West Point and fought in Canada in the War of 1812.

Daniel McEachern-Born in 1785; and he died in 1850. He served in the militia under General Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans.

Archibald McEachern Born in 1788; he was a sailor on the *USS Constellation*; and he died in 1804 on the firebomb ship, *Intrepid*.

Spouses of Daniel and Flora's children:

James McEachern married **Rebecca Allen** in 1803. They have four sons, William H. McEachern (1805-1861), James McEachern (1812-1884), Daniel Augustus McEachern (1814-1876), and James McCathern McEachern (1816-1884).

John McEachern married **Patience Pendleton** in 1801.

Other Historical Characters

(In Alphabetical Order)

John Adams-First Vice President and Second President of the United States.

Queen Maria Carolina Louise Josepha Johanna Antonia of Austria, who was the wife of **King Ferdinand IV of Naples and the Third of Sicily**.

Captain Michel-Pierre Barreaut of the French frigate *L'Insurgente* who fought the *USS Constellation*.

Captain Edward Berry-Captain of the *HMS Vanguard* under Admiral Nelson at Aboukir Bay.

Aaron Burr-Third Vice President of the United States.

James Callender- journalist, actually a scandalmonger, who revealed Hamilton's affair with Maria Reynolds.

Nicholas Cruger-Merchant and benefactor of Alexander Hamilton.

Admiral Sir John Jervis-commander of the British Mediterranean Fleet, mentor of **Rear Admiral Horatio Nelson**.

Alexander Hamilton-First Secretary of the Treasury.

Elizabeth Hamilton-wife of Alexander Hamilton.

Joshua Humphreys-Shipwright who lived and worked in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Samuel Humphreys-Son of Joshua Humphreys and also a shipwright.

Andrew Jackson-Orphaned. He is assaulted by a British Officer who slashes his cheek. He lives with Daniel and Flora's Family.

Thomas Jefferson-Third President of the United States, Author of the Declaration of Independence, Secretary of State under President Washington.

James Madison-Fourth President of the United States, friend and confidant of Thomas Jefferson.

James Monroe-Senator from Virginia, later Fifth President of the United States, friend and confidant of Thomas Jefferson.

Daniel Morgan-Victorious General in the American Revolution at the Battle of Cowpens.

Frederick Augustine Conrad Muhlenberg-Speaker of the House of Representatives, Congressman from Pennsylvania.

Rear Admiral Horatio Nelson-Victor at Aboukir Bay.

Joshua Penny- a member of the crew of the *HMS Stately*, who escaped in South Africa.

Timothy Pickering-A staunch Republican, who was Adam's Secretary of State, and who did all he could to undermine President Adams.

Midshipman David Porter of the USS Constellation.

James Reynolds-husband of Maria Reynolds and instigator of the Reynolds-Hamilton Affair and Scandal.

Maria Reynolds-woman with whom Hamilton had an affair.

Edward Rutledge-Signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Reverend Simon Seabury-Episcopal priest on Long Island, New York.

Captain Thomas Truxtun of the USS Constellation who defeated both the French frigate *L'Insurgente* and the French ship of the line *La Vengeance*.

Lieutenant Andrew Sterett-a Lieutenant on the *USS Constellation*, son of John Sterett whose brothers were Samuel and Joseph Sterett, ship builders in Baltimore who built the *USS Constellation*.

Abraham Venable-Congressman from Virginia.

Characters (Wholly Fictional)

(In Alphabetical Order)

Members of the Crew of *HMS Flora*

Third Lieutenant Anderson

Mr. Brown, Tiller man

First Lieutenant Donald Campbell

Ensign Jenkins

Fourth Lieutenant Gruffyd Llywelyn

Sailing Master William Samuelson

Captain Lord Purvis Skiffington

Second Lieutenant Scott

Members of the Crew of Merchantman *Isle of Skye*

Sailing Master John Fryer

Captain John MacKenzie

Inhabitants of the Waxhaws

Angus MacDonald-best friend of **Daniel McEachern**

Colonel Pendleton-Richest man in the Waxhaws, staunch Republican
mentor of **John McEachern**

Patience Pendleton-Eldest Daughter of Colonel Pendleton

Reverend Thomas Seabury- Baptist minister in the Waxhaws, cousin
to Father Simon Seabury

Other Characters

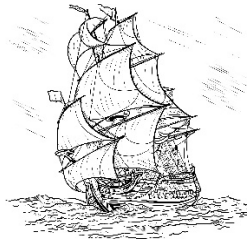
Contessa Maria d' Catini-lady-in-waiting to **Queen Maria Carolina
Louise Josepha Johanna Antonia of Austria**

Book 1:

My Childhood in South Carolina

“To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?”

-Marcus Tullius Cicero.

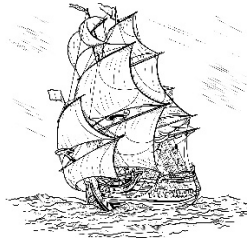


James McEachern 's Preface

I think that this, my humble memoir, might shed light on our recent history. I think I have a most unique and unusual perspective: having fought as a naval officer both for Britain against France and for the United States against Britain. In addition, my vision is unique because I came from an agrarian family in South Carolina and yet I took to the sea as a young lad to learn to be a merchant. I became immersed in all the intricacies of running a ship of sail, as well as the complexities of the import and export trade to and from the Americas.

My life has been a hard, difficult, and complex thing. I have known great love, great disappointment, the joy of friendship, the heartbreak of betrayal, the deprivations of the sea and yet, her bounty also. I have seen much of the world, yet I am loyal to my country and my state, even though I have spent little of my life in South Carolina.

With the War of 1812 recently concluded, I thought I would write this memoir now whilst things are still fresh in my mind, and whilst I still have the ability to write. I have also used the journals and letters of my brothers, my sister, my wife, Rebecca Allen, and the widow of my brother, Patience Pendleton McEachern. I have also perused the correspondence received by my deceased brother, John, from Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe, when they served to flesh out parts of the history of which I had no personal knowledge. Finally, I have used the newspapers of the era to supplement these resources, when no family member or friend had direct knowledge.



Chapter 1: A Life Forged In War 1780-1781

“Those who will stand for nothing, fail at anything.

-Alexander Hamilton

War impels one to write an account of human activity, rendered under the most extraordinary circumstances. My era was one of continuous war.

I was born in 1775, a few months before the start of the American Revolution. I was raised in the Waxhaws of South Carolina, the site of one of the most horrendous and horrific battles, nay massacres, of the American Revolution.

As a young boy, the Pirates of the Barbary Coast reared their barbaric heads to wreak havoc upon our sailors, ships, and trade in the Mediterranean Sea. Our sailors were imprisoned and enslaved.

Later, the French, once our ally, began to prey upon our trade leading to the undeclared Quasi-War.

Thereafter, the British, failing to fulfill their promises under the Treaty of Paris, began to impress our sailors and hinder our trade to aid them in their relentless fight with Napoleon. I was one of those sailors who was impressed and forced to fight for Great Britain against France.

After a number of years, the United States was left with no other option than to go to war Great Britain in the War of 1812.

So, I begin the story of how I was raised on a farm in South Carolina during the American Revolution, then later set out to sea to become a merchant, when I became impressed by the damned British Navy, such that my life was stolen by the British Monarch, and I ended up becoming a lieutenant of a warship in our Second War of Independence, that is the War of 1812.

My first real memory, when I was four or five, is of my Grandpa Jim, for whom I was named, and my Papa getting ready to hunt with their Pennsylvania long rifles. It is the smell of the gun oil, as they cleaned their guns with the cloth moving to burnish their barrels, that I recall. I can see Grandpa polishing the wooden rifle butt adorned with a brass plate. I do not remember his words, but he lovingly caressed his rifle. Father told me many times thereafter that grandpa was a 'crack shot.' I did not understand for a long time what that meant, other than Grandpa would always come home from a hunt with a turkey or a deer with a broad smile arching across his face. That is how I always recall my Grandpa, his face graced by a big, toothy grin of supreme satisfaction.

My early childhood was one that was in the shadow of the Revolution. Everyone was always talking about the War, but whenever a child came into the room, the adults were suddenly quiet. I might never have known anything about the War until the War came to our home.

It was late spring, almost summer of 1780. I had turned five earlier that year and had been given chores to do around the farm. As I had finished my work, I was playing outside, rocking on my wooden horse. Grandpa, Mama, and Papa were inside our log cabin, talking in hushed tones. I overheard the words that Charles Town had fallen to the British. I heard them and I wondered how a city could fall. What happens when a city falls?

Mama was crying. I had never heard my Mama cry like that. She had always been a rock upon whom we all could rely. Her faith in God, and in Jesus was our foundation.

All their talk of war frightened me. It was that devil Tarleton this and that demon Tarleton that. He was coming on his horses of the apocalypse in the form of British Redcoats.

My Papa whispered, “Colonel Abraham will stand against those devil Redcoats!”

“Can our boys whip them?” was the hushed question of my sobbing Mama. Did she mean me?

All I knew was that the Redcoats were coming to our small village with their swords drawn to kill everyone. Colonel Abraham (whom I thought was Abraham from the Bible Mama was always reading) ordered his men to line up in a single line. He ordered the Americans to fire, but too late, for the British were almost upon them in their wild charge. So, the Americans fired but a single volley as the British horsemen charged. Even though the Americans fired, Colonel Banastre (which I the thought was another word for banshee) Tarleton, and his horses ripped through the thin American line and within minutes had defeated our boys.

Abraham and his men surrendered, but Tarleton cut them down even as Abraham’s men had held their hands in the air, even after they had thrown their weapons on the ground.

Momma, Papa, grandma, grandpa, Angus, Colonel Pendleton, our Reverend Thomas Seabury, the McNeills, who were mom’s relatives, Andy Jackson, and everyone else of the village tended to the wounded for days in our church which became a hospital. I, too, went to our church and fetched buckets of water from the well to give the wounded men a drink. Their cries from their wounds scared me. It broke my heart to hear men wail like that.

It was at the church that I first met Andy Jackson. Although he was wounded, he was tending to the other men who were worse off than

he. Although Andy was a teenager, I gravitated towards him because he was closer in age to me than anyone else. I must admit that the gash across his face and cheek repulsed me. Andy towered over me. One could readily see that he was a Scot, because he had what my father called ‘an unruly shock of red hair’ and penetrating, deep blue eyes.

“Andy was slashed by a British officer wielding his sword. The officer demanded that Andy clean his muddy boots and Andy refused. He is a brave boy!” Papa told me.

It was sometime later that Andy Jackson came to live with us. Father told me to treat Andy well. He was ‘an orphan.’

I looked quizzically at my father for he then said, “Andy had lost his brothers and his mother in the Revolution (there was that word again!) and has no family left.”

Andy was a deeply sullen young man of 13 or 14 when he came to live with us. Besides being tall, I remember his intense anger and hatred for the British. He was always saying, “When I grow up, I am going to kill every Brit I can.”

I asked Andy why he wanted to do that. “Because they murdered all of my family,” he answered calmly.

I remember looking into his eyes and seeing a flinty hardness there.

The Massacre at Waxhaws, as this battle became known, made our modest home village a rallying cry for the Patriots, as we called ourselves, who would fight the evil of the Redcoats. We were now famous in a sense.

It was later in the early fall, when grandpa and Papa made their decision. I heard their raised voices in the kitchen.

“Look, Flora, I have to go. Father and I must go. Our new nation needs us. Angus is here; he’ll help. Andy is here and although he’s not

a man yet, he's as close as you will get. They can help with the farm until I get back."

Again, father and grandfather were oiling and polishing their long rifles. At first, I thought they were going on a hunt, but Mama was crying. Mama kept brushing aside her tears to not frighten me.

"Do you really have to go?" she blubbered. She cast her pleading eyes on her husband. "Danny, do you really have to go?"

"Now, Flora, you know we had talked about this. My father and I have to go. If we don't, who will?" My father was putting his long skinning knife in his belt. He adjusted his belt on his deer skin fringe coat.

Grandma, Mary, just stood there and hugged grandpa, Jim. "Do what you must. Come back to me." Grandpa embraced grandma and smiled at her.

That was the last time I saw my grandpa. I can still see his broad grin in my mind's eye. He did not come back to us. He walked out of our log cabin with my father, turned around to wave good-bye, and walked off into history, memory, and glory. I, on the other hand, stayed, and under Mama's tutelage, alongside Andy, learned to farm, raise animals, and do the work of life.

My father came back after the battles of Kings Mountain, Cowpens. Over a year later, when he came back home, he stayed a while, then he left again to fight at Yorktown. I was thrilled to see him for I had missed him.



Chapter 2: I Go to School 1782

“If a man empties his purse into his head, no man can take it away from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.”

— **Ben Franklin**

My father had been teaching me to read, which I enjoyed. It was opening whole new worlds to me which thrilled me.

“Flora, I want a formal education for my son,” he said one day apropos of nothing.

My mother glared at my father, “You are not going to send my boy away.”

Normally, when she said something like that, that was the end of the discussion. This time it was different. They went back and forth arguing. My mother maintained that I was too little. (I was seven and thought myself to be quite grown up.)

My father rebutted her by saying, “The best time for a child to learn is when he is a young.”

My mother continued doing her chores in silence. Occasionally, I saw a tear flow down her cheek. I knew she was mustering further arguments. I knew she was a person who never gave up. My father, on

the other hand, read his newspaper confidently, believing that he had won this argument.

Finally, my mother said, “He can go to the local school run by the minister at John the Baptist Church.” My father harrumphed in reply. He had won the battle, but my mother had won the war.

Reverend Thomas Seabury was a Baptist minister. His church was at the intersection of the small crossroads which was the Waxhaws. Next to the church was the parsonage and a little schoolhouse. On the opposite side of the road was the general store which was next to the newly renamed tavern, “The President and the Country.”

Reverend Seabury was a circuit riding preacher, which meant he gave sermons at the various small Baptist churches in the area, riding to a different one each Sunday. His home was next to the school. He had a few borders, but I was to be a day student, brought by my father or by Angus each day and picked up each evening. I would spend four years in this school which were some of the happiest years of my life.

Reverend Seabury was an intelligent man who prided himself on being a member of the Royal Society of Sciences ‘before the War,’ as he called the Revolution. He still read scientific journals and followed the latest experiments of the day. He told everyone that he was a ‘correspondent with Mr. Ben Franklin, the greatest scientist of the day.’

He was solidly built, strong of limb and back, used to hard manual labor, and was an excellent rider which was due to his vast experience on the circuit.

“I was educated at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. They have a fine seminary!”

At that point in time in my life, I did not know enough to be impressed and, therefore, was not impressed. It was much later that I realized how much he had accomplished.

His school was designed to instruct boys in ‘Latin, Greek, mathematics of the highest order, reading, and writing.’ Reverend Seabury would not enroll any girls as they were a ‘grand distraction to a young male!’ He had one simple rule: ‘All boys need to pray and to learn the Scriptures.’ Thus, we would kneel before each school day began and pray to the Lord. Immediately thereafter, we read the Bible.

“If you want to enroll your son,” he told my father, “you must make sure he prays before bedtime, reads the Scriptures, which I will outline each day for him, and he must do charitable works.” Reverend Seabury continued, “I charge twenty-eight pounds per year, but your son will be taught not only academics, but also how to be a genteel man.”

Reverend Seabury, because of his scientific background, also doubled as a doctor. As he made his rounds on the circuit, he would bleed people, bind their wounds, prepare blister plasters, and pull out infected teeth. His doctoring and his school supplemented the meager amount he received from his parsonage.

Mrs. Seabury was a patient woman who cooked and tended to her husband and to ‘his boys’ who went to his school and lived in their house as boarders. I remember her as being a large woman, graced with a large heart. She often softened the fairly benign lessons in punishment that her husband was wont to mete out.

So, I set out to learn. I loved mathematics. I had a natural aptitude for the subject, which seemed so elegant, precise, and beautiful to me. I was soon delegated the chore of tutoring other boys under Reverend Seabury’s guidance. Fractions, for example, seemed to explain themselves to me. I readily understood that pieces of eight were one coin, a Spanish dollar, cut into eight pieces like a pie divided among eight boys. I would see that four of such pieces were one-half of the coin, two such pieces were one-fourth of the coin and so forth. This led me to facily understand division and then, when I thought about it, multiplication.

Latin was merely a feat of memorization. Amo, Amas, Amat and so forth. Greek, on the other hand, stumped me, but Mr. Seabury encouraged and supported me. He was usually a kindly man. He never hit any of us with a switch.

“No child, nor any man, should be beaten or whipped. We can do more with charity, then with beating!” He explained.

On one occasion, he told us about his cousin, Simon Seabury, who was an Episcopal priest., who lived on Long Island in New York.

“Like the apostle of our Lord, later known as Peter, Simon is a gentle man. He was the one who told me that he will not punish a boy with a rod. We are to obey because it is in our best interest to obey and to learn. He was able to cower even the strongest, most defiant boy, by a mere look of his disapproval, so much do they want his grace showered upon them.”

He looked off wistfully and it was some minutes before he continued again.

“But for our differences in religion, we could have been twins. He also teaches a little church school and is a fair and gentle man to which I aspire also. It is truly a shame that our religion separates us, for otherwise, I would have loved to converse and correspond with him.”

He stood silent for several minutes and then said, “He might be dead by now for he was far older than I am. I truly hope that he is well.”



Chapter 3: A Visit from Eileithya 1782

“Behold, children are a gift of the Lord.”

-Psalm 127:3

I could have started with this memory which is, perhaps, one of my earliest memories.

“James,” my father began slowly. I was sure now that I was in trouble. He always called me ‘James,’ when he started a lecture which led to the ‘punishment.’ I already started to cringe.

“Son,” he stared at me intensely.

Now, I was really frightened. I searched my conscience. ‘*What have I done?*’ I had closed the chicken coop door after feeding the chickens. I had mucked the stables and had given grain to the horses. I had taken off my dirty boots before entering the house. I went through my checklist, one by one, until... ‘*Oops, had I straightened up the tackle room?*’ Oh, boy! I couldn’t remember. That had to be it.

“Dad, I’m sorry.” I launched a preemptive attack.

Maybe my apology would staunch the onset of the ‘punishment.’ I hoped I was sincere enough. I looked up at him in his towering height, as a supplicant to the priest. I folded my hands in the pose of a beggar.

“What? What’s this son? You have nothing to be sorry about. I’m trying to tell you that Mother and I are going to have another child. You are going to be a big brother to a little sister or little brother.” He smiled at me.

‘I wasn’t going to be punished.’ That was the first thought that raced through my mind. Then I realized we were going to be a bigger family. John, Polly and I were to have another sibling.

I had been through Mother’s pregnancy of John, although I was too young to really remember it. Polly had been another thing. I was five when she was born. I could clearly see in my mind’s eye the swelling of my mother’s belly. At first, I did not understand it back then. A vision of my pregnant mother rose to my mind.

I could hear her say as she had caressed her belly, “Little Polly is in there.”

“How do you know that it’s a girl?”

“I just know. A mother knows these things.”

She nuzzled my head. I was reassured that my mother was all-knowing, almost as God. I had already learned that she had eyes in the back of her head, for otherwise, how had she caught me doing naughty things, when I was sure she could not see me. This was only another one of her wonderful powers.

This time, as opposed to her pregnancy with John, I knew what was going on. I was seven. As her time approached, mother was able to do fewer and fewer things.

“Son, you are going to have to help out your mother,” father spoke as he bent down to put his face close to mine. I could see the serious look in his eyes.

As a child, I thought that my mother's pregnancy seemed at once to go on forever and to be over in an instance. I played with my toys. The days passed. I did chores with dad. I got my mother her blanket and her shawl. I watched the clouds fly by in the sky and imagined that they were animals, wagons, and boats moving off to novel places and doing new things.

"Mother, last time you knew it was going to be a girl. What's it going to be this time? A boy? I would like a boy I could play with."

I thought maybe my mother could choose what she was going to have and if so, then I was putting in my order for another brother. I guess I already knew that John and I weren't working out as brothers.

My mother laughed. "James! I can't just pick!"

"Why not?"

"God chooses what I will have," she purred.

"Oh, then should I pray to God for a brother?" I started to get to my knees.

Her laughter was lilting. She held her belly.

"Oh, my, James, you are a handful! God has already decided. But, I will tell you, I think it is a boy!"

"Yippee!" I screamed. I danced on the floor. "I'm going to have a brother. I'm going to have a brother-all my own!"

Angus was born that year of 1782, when I was seven years old. We became fast friends. When he was born, I carried him all around. I helped to feed him. I helped to change him. I only wish that I had not left him, when he was only six.

My little sister, Sarah, whom we called “Sallie” was born two years later. Sallie was only four when I left home. Then, she was a year younger than Polly was when Polly died.

My mother had once again told me the gender of the child during her pregnancy. It was years later that I learned that she did not have the ‘power’ of knowing.



Chapter 4: Away from Home 1784

There is no place more delightful than one's own fireside.(Nullus est locus domestica sede jucundior.)

-Marcus Tullius Cicero

At nine, I went with my father, Daniel, to Charleston, as people were now starting to call the city, formerly known as Charles Town. This was my first real trip away from home. My mother did not want me to go.

“He’s so little,” she pleaded with my father.

“It will do the lad good to see some of the world. I want to start to train him about business, the world, and what it is like beyond the confines of our farm.”

My father’s face took on that certain, stern look, which, to anyone who knew him, meant that he had settled his mind and would not budge.

She cried; she pleaded; she begged; but my father would not relent.

The truth was I wanted to go. I wanted to see a city. I wanted to see the sea. I wanted to see a fort. It all sounded so fascinating to my boyish mind. It was a great adventure like a knight itinerant going about the countryside to save damsels in distress. It made me feel

grown up. My father wanted me there. He was going to share the world of business with me. I was becoming a man. This was heady stuff.

Our trip came nearly a year after Great Britain had formally recognized that hostilities between the United States and Great Britain had ceased. The seaport was still in a state of celebration. Everyone was jubilant that we had won the Revolutionary War. There was a thrill in the air.

“The world lies open to Americans and to American trade. We are going to seize this opportunity,” my father told me as we rode to Charleston. He waved his hand in an arc in the air, as if he were introducing the world.

We were riding on our horses. My father was on a bay mare whose black points of coloration of mane, tail and lower legs were absolutely perfect. She was called Black Rose. I was on my favorite horse, a beautiful chestnut whose name was Blaze. We were sharing this daring undertaking. We were dressed in our deerskins with fringe. I loved to play with the fringe with my fingers.

My father was used to riding far more than I. I think he could have travelled 35 to 40 miles a day without me. With me, however, we made only about 20 or 25 miles a day, because I had to stop often to walk around and tend to necessities. So, it took us eight days to travel from the Waxhaws to Charleston.

One of the things one notes, coming out of the Piedmont and moving down to the Low country, is the change in vegetation. The trees changed from soaring tall Pines to sprawling wide Live Oaks draped with Spanish Moss.

As we got to the outskirts of Charleston, a whole new vista opened before me. It was not only the bright colors or the pungent fragrances of the blooming flowers, magnolias, forsythia, azaleas, jasmine, and even Carolina lilies which were starting to blossom, quite early, I might add. It was also the stunning array of buildings, bridges, and people, lots of people, gayly dressed people, who seemed beyond number. Surely, more people than I had ever seen before in one place.

After a few minutes of watching all the people, I was drawn back to the flowers. There were cardinal flowers, with their bright red flowers, which were always a favorite of the hummingbirds, and creeping vines of coral honeysuckle. The homes, which were either white clapboard or red brick, were framed by lady ferns, or shrubs of multi-color hobblebush, while majestic live oaks, with their many gnarled and often twisted trunks, were rising from the ground in great clumps with tangled branches sprawling in all directions, as dancing Spanish moss, like beards of gray whiskers of old men, hung from their boughs, swaying in the breeze. Many homes had the graceful lace of wistful wisteria creeping up their sides, bringing their delicate grape-like bunches of lavender flowers winding around chimneys and grasping for toeholds on lattices and trellises.

But it was not only the change in appearance of my surroundings, but it was also the new experiences. We stopped at a tavern. As we were eating, my father brought out bundles wrapped in paper and tied with string.

“What’s that?” My boyish mind could not conceive of what could be in these packages.

“Your new attire.” He was smiling, but I was still not any more the wiser as to the contents.

“At...tire? At...?”

“That means new clothes.”

We dressed after our meal. He had to tie my neck sock, because I still had not mastered the art, even though we went to church almost every Sunday. But in the end, we were two immaculate gentlemen in the latest fashion of 1784.

“We can’t visit important people in our deerskins. They’ll think us bumpkins.”

I didn’t immediately understand the import of his comment. So, I asked the question that was on my mind. “What’s a bumpkin?”

“Well, a bumpkin means a spar that protrudes from the stern of a ship, but everyone understands it to mean a person who is out of place and inferior.”

He patted my head. “We are going to see some particularly important people...” He had said it again.

Now, I caught on. “Who are we going to see?”

He smiled that infectious smile of his. “Well for one, my old friend, and head of the firm who exports our trade.”



Chapter 5: Dreams of the Sea 1784

I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.

-Isaac Newton

My dreams of the sea began with that trip with my father to Charleston in 1784. The seaport of Charleston Harbor was a forest of masts stretching to the skies. So many ships, from so many lands, carrying so many goods. The aroma of the trade assaulted one's nostrils: the tang of tobacco, the loamy whiff of cut pine lumber and saw dust, the slimy odor of seafood and fish, the unmistakable musty, smoky, incense of indigo, and the dizzying fragrances of perfumes. The crowded docks were tangled with barrels, wooden boxes, large crates, sacks of rice, bales of cotton, stacks of cut timber, bundles of furs and animal hides, and innumerable hogsheads of rum and molasses. On and on went the stacks of goods making up the trade from the Caribbean Islands, and beside them were the mountains of items manufactured in Britain, textiles, glass, furniture, pistols, china, all as far as the eyes could see and all accompanied by exotic smells, such as furniture polish, tallow, and oils.

Men carrying things were hurrying here, there, and everywhere in a bustle of motion and industry. The stevedores were dressed in red stripped socks, thick blue woolen jackets, and long pigtails which were knotted with ties every few inches. They sang their working songs-sea shanties-as they swung the sacks on their shoulders. Their pigtails swayed to the rhythm of their songs. I stared in awe at their brawny, bare arms which seemed as thick as the barrels they carried. I could not believe the brute strength that seemed to lie within their muscled arms.

The streets were cobbled. So, the sound of horseshoes clinked, clacked, and clopped as the horses hauled the wealth of nations. The horse-pulled wagons moved with such precision in a line, being almost simultaneously loaded and unloaded, such that one might have thought of a column of soldiers marching. The arching cranes and the yardarms of ships, posing as cranes, lifted and lowered the vast armada of lading, as my father called it.

I was in heaven. I loved the motion and the commotion of the docks. I loved the smells, the sights, and the sounds.

Until I saw something that filled my heart with sorrow, disgust, and anguish. Actually, first I heard it, then I saw it. A line of young negro men bound in clanking chains at their hands and their feet were trudging through the docks. They look wretched, thin, almost starving. Their heads hung low; they had been broken in their hearts, minds, and souls. There were white men next to them armed with bull whips, often ripping through the air with their snapping, crackling thunder sound. The overseers screamed terrible things at the struggling chained men. In desperation, I turned to my father.

His face was contorted with anger and disgust. Had he been Zeus, I would have expected a thunderbolt to zap forth from his hands to smite the ‘overseers,’ as he called them.

“This is the most abominable trade that man can engage in! I would not enslave a man! That is what the British monarch did to us, the Scots, and I would not do that to any man!”

“Where are they going?”

“They are going,” my father whispered, “to the slave market. Before they get there, they will be cleaned, greased with palm oil to improve their appearance, and prepared for sale. At the slave auction, white men, the overseers from the plantations, will inspect each slave to check his teeth, his strength, and his general health. It is as if they are cattle being bought for slaughter. It is the most inhumane thing that one man can do to another.”

“Is that why we do not have any slaves?”

It was common knowledge in the Waxhaws, that most of the Scots would not buy or sell slaves. They would not have them work on their farms.

“Yes, son. I need to make that clear to Mr. Nicholas Cruger when we meet him. I will not invest in the slave trade in any way!”

My father was thinking of investing in a merchant import and export company. We were now walking to meet with Mr. Cruger.

“Everyone expects that our trade will flourish now that the War is over,” my father would say to anyone who would listen.

Those, to whom he spoke, nodded their heads in agreement and always answered, “There’s plenty of money to be made in the three-way trade with Britain, the Caribbean, and us.”

In the past, my father had employed the services of a New York-based firm by the name of Kortright & Cruger, formerly known as Beckman & Cruger, to sell abroad our farm goods of tobacco and hemp, our flour, and our sawn timber.

“They are established throughout the Caribbean and their clerks are so intelligent and capable,” he whispered to me as we entered the doors of their correspondent office.

“I learned of this firm through Alexander Hamilton, when we fought together at Yorktown. On the island of Nevis, he had been a clerk with them before the War.”

I vaguely remembered something of Mr. Hamilton from the story, oft told by my father, of the assault on Redoubt No. 10. Mr. Hamilton was my father’s hero. In time, I came to admire him also.

When we reached the trade establishment, the clerks were dressed as fine gentlemen. They all seemed so polished and polite. They bowed to my father as he approached them. I had never seen anyone bow before, let alone to my father. My faith in my father as a figure larger than life grew exponentially.

“Is Mr. Nicholas Cruger in?”

One of the clerks, his hands folded in front of his waistcoat, condescendingly replied, “Who may I say is calling?”

“Mr. Daniel McEachern, of the Waxhaws. I am an established customer of this firm. My introduction to Mr. Cruger is through Mr. Alexander Hamilton.”

I do not know whether it was at the mention of the name of Mr. Alexander Hamilton, or of the mention of my father’s name, but the clerks suddenly became animated, quite obsequious, and began bowing repeatedly to my father and me. They motioned to us to sit down.

“Pardon me, sir, pardon me. I shall get him immediately.” One of the clerks backed away cautiously, while still continuing to bow. He then suddenly whirled on his heel and strode off quite hastily.

A few moments later, Mr. Cruger entered the vestibule where we were sitting. Mr. Cruger was a tall man. His hair rose in peaks in the middle of his head. I thought to myself that the peaks of his hair mirrored the tall sharp points of his collar which jutted up into his neck. He did not wear a neck sock but had some type of tie around his neck. His suit was all black and reminded me more of a Puritan

preacher than a merchant. His accent was from the north, but it was not the clipped speech of a New Englander. He immediately bounded over to my father and extended his hand to shake my father's hand, pumping it exaggeratedly.

“What can I do for you, Daniel?” His hand continued to grasp my father's hand demonstrating that they were old friends.

“Well, Nicholas, I am thinking about investing in an import/export firm such as yours. Are you taking on any investors?”

Mr. Cruger eyed my father completely differently from merely a moment before.

“Becoming a partner in this firm is a serious matter, which I'm not sure you want to take on.”

Mr. Cruger caught sight of me. My father's eyes followed Mr. Cruger's. My father released Mr. Cruger's hand.

“I forgot my manners, Nicholas. This is my son, James. He is nine years old, and he is starting to talk about wanting to go to the sea. What are your thoughts about this?”

Mr. Cruger bent down such that my face and his were about the same height.

“James, I think you are too young to ship out now. If you wait a couple of years, you could become a midshipman on one of our merchantmen. You need to know a lot more about the sea before you can work on a ship. Besides knowing a lot of mathematics, so you can navigate your ship far from land, when there's no landmark to steer by, and all your eyes behold is endlessness itself stretching to the wide horizon, you also need to know all the parts of the ship and the rigging of the ship. Let me send you a book or two, as my gift to you.”

My father smiled broadly, as if Mr. Cruger had read his mind. I liked books so reading a book about the sea and about ships, sounded like a good thing to do before I went to sea. I, too, was smiling broadly.

“Thank you,” replied my father, “that is extremely kind of you Nicholas. But I still would like you to consider my becoming an investment partner in the firm. I would not want to manage the firm in any way, because I certainly wouldn’t know how to do that. But I would like to participate in the profits...”

At that, Mr. Cruger interrupted, “You need to also understand that you would have to participate in the losses too! If the ship goes down in the storm and we lose the entire crew, ship, and cargo, it can wipe out the profits for the entire firm from even a relatively good year.”

My father had that determined look in his eye, which spoke volumes that he was ready to take on any loss, if necessary. Mr. Cruger saw that and changed his tack.

“Tell you what I can do, let me send you the Summaries of the last 10 years of our firm so you can see what profits and losses we have had. Why don’t we say you’re interested in 10% of my firm and that way you can better visualize what might happen.”

My father stared at the floorboards. He was gathering his thoughts.

“Nicholas, I must put a further stipulation on my investment. I will not under any circumstances nor in any way, whether directly or indirectly, invest in the slave trade. I am utterly opposed to it and will not participate in the enslavement of one man by another.”

“Daniel, then I think it would be best if you only invested in cargo in a single ship, rather than in the entire firm. In that way, you could make sure that the ship is only carrying goods of which you approve.”

At that, Mr. Cruger extended his hand to my father who gladly took it and shook it vigorously. I did not know it then, but a deal had been struck.

It was later, as we wandered the docks; I was amazed and awed by the tall ships which surrounded me. I started imagining taking the ships to different lands, meeting different people, buying, and selling all

sorts of goods and manufactures. It was then, I think, that I knew I would venture to the sea as my career.

My father still opposed my desire to go to the sea.

“It is a dangerous career,” he calmly said. Although I could tell he was quite upset by the throbbing pulse of that certain vein in his temple, his voice was calm and even. “Men lose fingers, hands, and feet-all the time.”

He put his hand on my shoulder as he always did when he got serious and was making a point man-to-man. He tapped my shoulder as he spoke each word as if to emphasize not only the cadence and the rhythm of the sentence, but also the depth of his concern.

“Little events can have grave consequences, as Caesar said nearly 2000 years ago.” My father, also, considered it a point of erudition, one of his favorite words, to be able to quote the classics.

My father had always been a tremendous supporter of education. He wanted his children to have the best education possible. He had gotten us tutors such that we could become better educated than he was. I had even been sent to school. I always thought that this was a characteristic of his personality that showed not only how caring he was, but also how humble he was.

“You have not completed your education. In order for you to be a good sailor, you’re going to have to learn navigation. Navigation requires that you have knowledge of higher mathematics, including trigonometry. You can’t go to the sea, unless you learn what you need to sail upon it.”

I looked up at him. He was a man who was a hero in the Revolutionary War, and a man among men in peace. He had built up the farm that we lived on. He had built several businesses, including a sawmill and a gristmill. Now, he was thinking of investing in ships and becoming something of a merchant. Although he was now gray with bushy eyebrows, and although I had known that he had served in the American Revolution, somehow the fact that he had been a warrior

didn't really signify to me. I knew he was a wise man. He looked the part, because his face was lined, his hair was a salt and pepper gray, and he had a wizened look to him.

"Father, did you ask Grandpa James if you could fight beside him at Cowpens?" I had heard the story often; I knew, therefore, that the answer was no. I felt a little ashamed using the story of his defiance of his father to buttress my own defiance. Somehow, I felt I had to lead him to the realization that I, too, now was a man and could choose my own destiny.

He sputtered while he made his response. "Why... No... I... I... It's different..." Pathetically, his eyes pleaded his case, when his words failed him.

I did not know then how deeply a father could feel for his child, for I did not have children then. I was young; I was determined; I was pigheaded; and I would have my own way. How he felt and what he felt did not seem as important to me as what I felt.

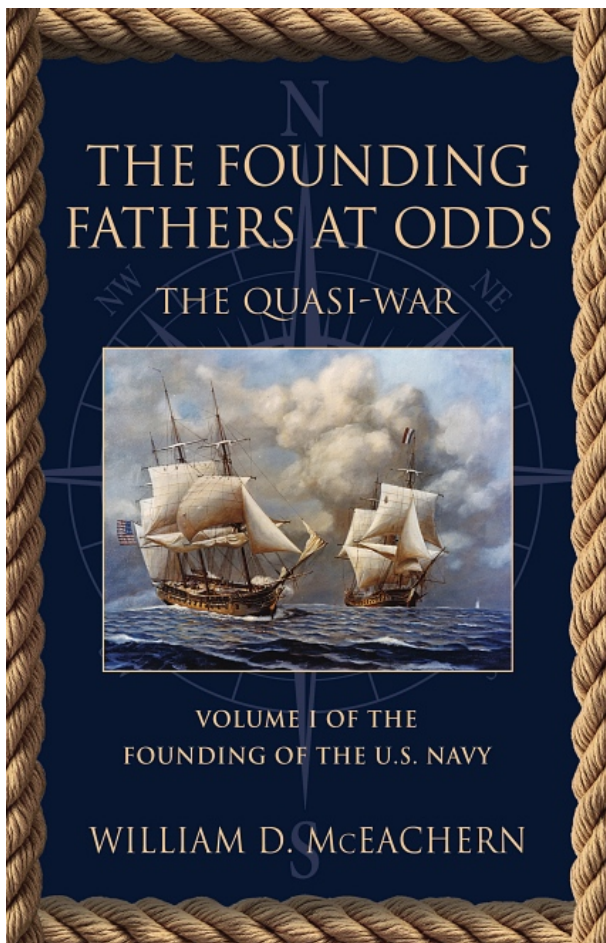
From then on, all I wanted was to venture to sea. It called me! The sea seduced me; had practice upon me all the charms of an experienced lover. My first experience with the art of seduction was played upon me by the greatest mistress the world has ever known: the moon-constant-sea, which has lured lovers to her heart throughout the ages only to cast them aside unwanted in an act of wonton indifference. Since then, it has called me, it has beckoned to me. My father recognized how badly I wanted to sail away.

As we rode back to our hotel, he launched into the story of Scylla and Charybdis, the six headed monster and the whirlpool that terrorized sailors who sailed the Straits of Messina between Sicily and the toe of Italy. Without losing a beat, he then told me the story of the sirens, Peisinoe, Aglaope, and Theixiepeia, who were half-bird and half-woman. They lured sailors to their deaths with their beautiful songs and their gorgeous naked bodies.

He concluded his stories, "It's not exclusively ancient Greek sailors whose lives were in peril on the rocks, it's every sailor in every

age. Your mother and I would always worry about you. Sailors can lose their lives in a wreck upon the rocks.”

I guess he thought that this was the winning argument, and that I would be convinced. But I was young; I was foolish; I was presumptuous. Nothing would deter me.



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