

*"Reminiscences of the Year 1776"*

THE original manuscript of these reminiscences had somehow been tucked in with my Foulke family papers of an entirely different period, and, as it is unsigned, I was at a loss as to its authorship. Because of its reference to Zachary Taylor, it must have been written during the Mexican War.

The document indicates that the writer's family lived near Gwynedd, Pennsylvania, that the writer was ten at the time he describes (1776), and that he had a brother Joseph, enough older to be "hired to care for a horse." No one of the Foulke families fitted that pattern. I showed the manuscript to my nephew, Will Cates and his wife, Inge, who had been doing some genealogical research for their church (which was having a three-hundred-year anniversary) and through their help traced the document back to my great-grandfather Abraham Shoemaker, who was born in 1766 and was therefore of the right age. He had a brother Joseph, six years older, and the Shoemaker family lived at Gwynedd.<sup>1</sup> A comparison of the handwriting in the document with that of a letter written by Abraham Shoemaker to his daughter Hannah in 1843 showed they were almost identical. Hannah had married Thomas Foulke in 1840 and was my paternal grandmother. Thus, it seems reasonably clear that my great-grandfather Abraham Shoemaker was the writer.

*New London, Conn.*

MARY FOULKE MORRISON

As all my father's family are deceased but myself that had any personal knowledge of the incidents that took place there during the latter part of the above year, I shall jot down a few of which I have a perfect recollection, although I was but ten Years of Age. In the Summer of 76 the American Army under General Washington encamped three or four miles to the Westward of father's, and remained there until Winter, when they removed over Schuylkill to the Valley Forge for better accommodations.<sup>2</sup> Soon after the Army arrived in

<sup>1</sup> Abraham Shoemaker's dates were 1766-1853. Benjamin H. Shoemaker, *Genealogy of the Shoemaker Family* (Philadelphia, 1903), 52, 86.

<sup>2</sup> Shoemaker's memory played him false on the year. It was 1777, not 1776.

our neighbourhood, we suffered very much from the depredations of foraging parties who carted away our Hay and drove off all our Cattle for the subsistence of the Army, not leaving us a Cow to give Milk for the support of a family of small Children and if we bought a fresh one she was immediately driven off again; at this period George Maris a wealthy friend living near Gwynedd Meeting House who owned several plantations and dealt largely in Cattle hearing of our destitute Condition, lent us a fresh Cow, presuming that when told that she did not belong us, that they would not seize upon her, which proved to be the Case. We were also very much annoyed by a New England Lighthorseman by the name of Gridley, who had taken Lodgings with a German family about two miles off, having two daughters grown up, with whom he had ingratiated himself, and went prowling about the Country taking forcibly without pay whatever he chose to treat his Girls with, pretending he was sent by officers of the Army. at father's he caught a number of fowls at one time, wrung off their Heads and threw them across his Horse, a handsome dappled Grey that he kept in fine order with other parts of his plunder, he also demanded of father his money, but I believe got none; he however went to our next neighbour Thomson's where he made a like demand and got all he had about 5 pounds; but his Career was of short continuance, as well as the depredations of the foraging parties; as about this time three Captains of the Virginia Line of Troops called at father's, applied for Board, and were received—their names were Richard Taylor Francis Taylor and William Cunningham;<sup>3</sup> the latter was also a Suttler in the Army and brought some Waggon Loads of Soldier's Clothing and stowed them away in our Garret, they brought also a Guard of ten or twelve Soldiers to protect them, and a blackman to Cook for the Company When any foraging parties came after the Officers arrived, they turned them away under the Plea that all we had to spare they should want themselves. Richard Taylor kept a Horse which he hired Brother Joseph to take Care of, and he pretended that he should want all our surplus Hay and Grain to feed him on, so that we fared better after this than our neighbors while the Officers

<sup>3</sup> Francis Taylor was a captain in the 2nd Virginia Regiment; Richard Taylor and William Cunningham were captains in the 1st Virginia Regiment.

boarded with us they also protected us against the Robberies of the Yankee Lighthorseman; he called once at our neighbor Thomson's soon after the Officers came to board with us, upon another plundering expedition as he had succeeded so well there before, but the Officers had been apprized of his Conduct; and our neighbors knew that they boarded with us, and seeing the Lighthorseman coming up the Lane, they sent one of the Children out the back way in all haste to inform the Officers; Richard and Francis Taylor happened both to be in, Richard had been quite ill for sometime, and was just beginning to walk out supported by a large hickory Cane, but on hearing of the Robber he forgot his Sickness, seized his Cane, and they both started upon a full run, without waiting to look up their fire arms; Francis had a Short dirk that he generally wore by his Side, and with no other arms, they were in a few minutes at the House, without being discovered by the Lighthorseman, Captain Dick as his Comrades called him foremost, the fellow having hitched his Horse on the opposite side of the Lane from the House, which Dick observing placed himself near it, so as to prevent his remounting or getting at his pistols, and sent Francis into the House as soon as Gridley saw him knowing him to be an Officer by his dress, he started to run for his Horse, but found him guarded by another Officer, he then ran up the Lane toward the Barn, but was soon overtaken by Captain Dick, when he attempted to draw his large Sword upon the Captain, which D observing brought down his Cane upon the Top of his Head with all his Strength, stunning him and smashing the Brass Comb of his Cap flat to his head, and had not his Cap saved him it would no doubt have cracked his Coco Nut, by this time Francis came up and drew his dirk and threatened to run him through if he made any further Resistance;—they soon secured and tied him and sent to fathers for a part of the Guard stationed there and had him conveyed to Camp where it was said he had to run the Guantlet and we saw no more of him. This Captain Dick was a great Warrior and full of fight; he said he had been in nine Battles, and he would be in ninety nine more before the British should gain the Day. Francis was a still quiet Man and appeared to take no delight in the War. Richard Taylor I have no doubt was the father of the present General Zachary Taylor who is now fighting the Mexicans; he was of the same name, from the same part of Virginia and about the age of

the General's father probably was, being a little over twenty in 1776 the Taylors were both young single Men of about the same age and first Cousins; Richard after the Close of the Revolution removed to Kentucky and entered into the Wars against the Indians; he was then called Colonel having no doubt been promoted for his Gallantry Bravery and military Services.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Zachary Taylor's father Richard (1744-1829) reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Revolution.