

JOHN TAYLOR

OF CAROLINE COUNTY

American Statesman



A COLLECTION OF HIS SPEECHES, WRITING & SATIRE

FEATURING ORIGINAL BIOGRAPHICAL WORKS BY

WM. E. DODD, E. STANARD & G. HUNT

THIS EDITION EDITED WITH NEW MATERIAL FROM

MIKE CHURCH



John Taylor

1753 - 1824

*For republicans and remnants,
our souls' safety is your toil.*

American Statesmen

E.C. Stanard, 1809
Gaillard Hunt 1905
William E. Dodd 1908

THIS EDITION EDITED AND PREPARED FOR DIGITAL PUBLICATION BY

MIKE CHURCH
©2014

American Statesmen

John Taylor of Caroline

BY
John Taylor, Gaillard Hunt, Edward Dodd,
E.C. Stanard
and
Mike Church



The Founding Father Films Publishing Co.

The [r]epublican Press

1809, 1905, 2014

ALSO FROM
FOUNDING FATHER FILMS
and
MIKE CHURCH



PRINTED WORKS

Patrick Henry - American Statesman
An Argument Respecting The Constitutionality of The Carriage Tax
Is Davis A Traitor-Was There A Constitutional Right to Secession
Previous to the War of 1861?
Article V Amendment Convention Symposium-A Federal Solution for
a Federal Crisis

FILM/DVD

The Road To Independence-The Movie
The Spirit of '76 - The Movie

CD/AUDIO BOOK

The Road to Independence
The Spirit of '76
The Fame of Our Fathers
What Lincoln Killed-EPISODE I
The Spirit of '76-The Story Continues

Available at amazon.com
Available at mikechurch.com



JOHN TAYLOR OF CAROLINE COUNTY

AMERICAN STATESMAN

BY

John Taylor

*Original works edited by E.C. Stanard, Gaillard Hunt
and*

William Edward Dodd

*This Edition Edited with Foreword and commentary by
Mike Church*



21489 Koop Rd., #2
Mandeville, LA 70471
www.mikechurch.com

JOHN TAYLOR OF CAROLINE COUNTY - AMERICAN STATESMAN

Edited with commentary by Mike Church ©2014 Mike Church.

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

For information, address BlackHat Studios, LLC,
21489 Koop Rd., #2, Mandeville, LA 70471

www.mikechurch.com

ISBN: 978-0-9903324-0-4

1st U.S. Printing of this hardback edition: August, 2014

JOHN TAYLOR
OF CAROLINE,
AMERICAN STATESMAN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is the culmination of years of reading John Taylor's work as a necessary vein of research for the Mike Church Show on SiriusXM radio. Taylor is also the co-star of two movies I wrote and produced *The Spirit of '76* and *What Lincoln Killed EPISODE I*. The role of Professor Kevin Gutzman cannot be exaggerated in helping me discover and understand Taylor's work in both endeavors. In reviewing the script for another documentary I wrote *The Fame of Our Fathers* Kevin had written in the margins on a page where my character as Narrator explained to my daughters about the wonders of the Federal Constitution, saving the hapless soul living under the Articles of Confederation. "*Why? Maybe a new central government wasn't such a good idea?*" Then Kevin suggested in correspondence that I read Taylor's *New Views on The Constitution*. We have since not stopped discussing Taylor publicly and privately.

The work of the three historians whose biographies of Taylor appear in this work is of obvious importance. What may not be obvious is that historian Henry H. Simms's 1932 edition *Life of John Taylor* was the source for discovering "The Spirit of '76" essay's existence as well as introducing me to Taylor's bon voyage letter to James Monroe.

Finally, most of this manuscript is the product of converting out of print texts into digitized versions that can then be edited. The service that Google has performed in this regard is staggering in its scope and completeness. There are few works from this time period that have not been removed from the shelves of major university libraries and digitized by Google. This provides the curiosity seekers, professional and amateur alike, with access to works previously not possible, thanks Google.

After asking for volunteers to assist in the digitizing and editing process I wish to thank J. Andrew Makal for rising to

the challenge and assisting in this laborious process. “J.” helped transcribe pages that Google had scanned but were of such poor quality that the digitizing software could not convert the scans to text. J. also assisted in indexing and proof-reading the final text, his efforts made this a better book since there were 2 sets of eyes pouring over texts and identifying the thousands of corrections needed to convert any 18th and 19th century printed texts into a modern format for publication.

I also wish to thank my wife Candace for her work in helping manage the business end of this company’s projects and in keeping me well grounded and happy during the process. A work like *John Taylor* requires an amount of work that would strain a bachelor’s family to the breaking point, thanks Candace for helping hold ours together during this project.

Foreword



John Taylor
1753 - 1824

FOREWORD

Why assemble another biography of an obscure, Early Republic Virginian who never acquired the attribute “founding father” yet certainly conducted his public affairs in their circle? This is a fair question considering the dozens of new bios that come out every year covering the American, self described, “pantehon of founders.”¹ There have also been recent biographies of John Taylor written and he appears prominently in other new works as well. But there remains a good quantity of Taylor’s life that has not been published nor has there been an attempt to paint a lifelong picture of our subject, predominant-

1. See e.g. “On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a Pequot” Apess, William, 1994, p. xix

ly using his own works. Even if this daunting task were successfully undertaken there remains the principal reason Taylor doesn't appear on Liz Cheney's radar. He is very difficult to read some say, John Randolph of Roanoke is said to have once quipped. "Taylor's writing is profound, now if we can just translate it into English." I think this is an unwarranted criticism but to lose this stigma the reader has to assume he is reading political theory whose author intends the subject to be somewhat satirical. In some passages, Taylor goes for all out comedy e.g. his oft repeated punch line. "Saturated are preferable to hungry flies." Taylor also uses himself as a foil in his comedy by practicing self-deprecation. Writing to Thomas Jefferson in 1798, suggesting a course of state-sponsored assertions to "expound" the constitution. Taylor slings a barb at himself, then makes a political point then a joke in one sentence. "As to these I have opinions, but unless you should patronize efforts of the kind, I am convinced that they will prove abortive, and would of [course] aggravate the Evil. For I must candidly declare, that I believe the chance is against a hope, that an individual will in a century, again unite the principles, powers, and confidence, adequate to such an undertaking."

In this volume, I tried to paint for the reader an engaging and worthy picture of three things. Taylor's biography, in chronological order. Taylor's decisively important actions in the times he acted as a legislator and his lesser known writings that illustrate his grasp of republican government and how perilous an experiment it is. In many of his works, there is an air of futility present that does not escape the sensitive soul. Taylor seems to be going along for the purpose of being the guy that writes the biography of the soon to be deceased. The cynicism toward government he exhibits dwarfs that of most contemporaries. While others schemed and theorized just how the new constitutional order could be restored to its Spirit of '76 moor-

ings, Taylor lent only sparse support to that effort and instead offered plans for constructing the reset button. “Is man’s natural propensity for liberty, a sufficient curb upon this art [of parties] and corruption? Monarchy will answer these questions. And let it prove if it can, that an union in political principle is natural to man under a monarchy, but unnatural, under a republick. Of this I must doubt, until I see a republick so organized by annual & rotary offices.”

But Taylor’s greatest work of political satire, fittingly, occurs in the last chapter of his last work *New Views on the Constitution of the United States*. After cranking out 16 chapters of finely detailed, wildly esoteric prose on why the Constitution was never supposed to allow any consolidation of power in the Federal sphere, Taylor leaves us with a hilarious yet scorching parody of Jonathan Swift’s “A tale of a tub”. This is high theater from a master of the political allegory. Taylor’s fire is directed directly at the disciples of Hamilton and the nationalists and packs a litany of direct challenges to the boasted supremacy of the “consolidated school.” Shortly after setting the satire and mentioning Hamilton, Taylor levels the players standing on the Constitution as ratified field with a wallop. “A profound statesman has written a celebrated treatise to establish the supremacy of construction, not hitherto quoted by the consolidators, out of pity, I presume, for their adversaries, and an aversion to killing honest but deluded people by a single blow.” The rest, is cotton candy for originalists and republicans at the embarrassing expense of the rest of the political class of the day. Not surprisingly, the parody works well today, with the substitution of a few modern proper nouns for the 18th century versions.

Men of principle seem to be in short supply these days and that is chiefly the result of the mythology created about the founders during construction of the American Pantheon. John

Taylor didn't see it that way, instead seeing political power as a near guarantee of corrupting influence and he saw corruption everywhere. To Taylor, the most certain method of avoiding corruption was to not play the game and to construct government that made it almost impossible for the elected to play it. Writing to James Monroe just prior to his run for the Presidency in 1811, Taylor warned his old friend that the moment he wielded one karat of power was the moment Taylor ceased being a friend but became a sentinel instead. "I hereby give you notice, that you are not to infer from my espousing your election, that I will join a party yell in favor of your administration; No, no, the moment you are elected, though by my casting vote, carried an hundred miles in a snow storm, my confidence in you would be most confoundedly deminished, and I would instantly join again the republican minority." Compare that to modern Presidents holding gala balls featuring "A list" celebrities who pay big-bucks to sleep in Lincoln's bedroom for 6 hours.

The reader will no doubt notice many typographical errors in the text of Taylor's letters and the essays reproduced from *Misters Hunt, Dodd and Stanard*. This was done to keep the text in the vernacular they wrote in, shining a small light on the contraction many of our words have undergone e.g. "publick" to "public". And to demonstrate they were more concerned with the impact of their work over literary correctness.

John Taylor, American Statesman is my attempt to revive the life and times of this extraordinary man of the founding era who seems to have carried a joviality about him that few men of political respect ever can.

- Mike Church, 28 August, 2014, Madisonville

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	v
Foreword	vii



SECTION I

1

Prophet of Secession

CHAPTER 1

<i>Introduction to Randolph Macon Journal</i>	3
<i>A Revolutionary Character</i>	7

CHAPTER 2

<i>The Peacemaker</i>	23
-----------------------------	----

CHAPTER 3

<i>The Virginia Publicist</i>	34
<i>Introduction to Chapter 4</i>	51

CHAPTER 4

<i>Disunion & The Missing Memo</i>	52
--	----

CHAPTER 5

<i>Gaillard Hunt's Introduction</i>	57
---	----

CHAPTER 6

<i>The Lost "Disunion Sentiment In Congress" Memo</i>	69
---	----



SECTION II

75

OUR STATESMAN AT WORK - THE SPEECHES

CHAPTER 7

Speech on Nullification Pt I..... 77

CHAPTER 8

Speech on Nullification Pt II..... 87

CHAPTER 9

Introduction to Speech on the Louisiana Purchase..... 107

CHAPTER 10

Why The Louisiana Purchase Is Constitutional..... 109



SECTION III

117

THE BRAINS OF THE OPERATION

CHAPTER 11

Preface by the editor E.C. Stanard..... 123

THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS SUPPRESSED..... 127

CHAPTER 12

The Spirit of '76, Number I..... 133

CHAPTER 13

The Spirit of '76, Number II..... 141

CHAPTER 14

<i>The Spirit of '76, Number III</i>	151
--	-----

CHAPTER 15

<i>The Spirit of '76, Number IV</i>	159
---	-----

CHAPTER 16

<i>The Spirit of '76, Number V</i>	167
--	-----

CHAPTER 17

<i>The Spirit of '76, Number VI</i>	177
---	-----

CHAPTER 18

<i>The Spirit of '76, Number VII</i>	187
--	-----

CHAPTER 19

<i>New Views on The Constitution</i>	195
--	-----



SECTION IV

221

APPENDIX

CHAPTER 20

<i>Jefferson's Letter to Madison Cited in Taylor's Speech</i>	223
---	-----

<i>"The Danger Not Over"</i>	227
------------------------------------	-----

<i>Taylor to James Monroe Introduction</i>	239
--	-----

<i>Taylor's Letter to James Monroe</i>	241
--	-----

INDEX

<i>Index</i>	247
--------------------	-----

Section I.



Prophet of Secession



John Taylor

1753 - 1824

CHAPTER 1



INTRODUCTION TO RANDOLPH MACON JOURNAL

THE JOHN P. BRANCH
HISTORICAL PAPERS
OF
RANDOLPH-MACON COLLEGE

Published Annually by the Department of History

Vol. II. JUNE,	1908	Nos. 3 and 4
----------------	------	--------------

CONTENTS

Preface — — — — —	185
John Cowper Granbery— Wm. E. Dodd —	187
Hugh Mercer— James Spottswood Keene —	198
John Taylor, Prophet of Secession — Wm. E. Dodd	214
John Taylor Correspondence — — —	253

Price \$1.00

Address WM. E. DODD, Editor, Ashland, Va.

RICHMOND, VA.

RICHMOND PRESS, Inc.

1908

(These introduction pages are a digital reproduction of the original)

**THE JOHN P. BRANCH
HISTORICAL PAPERS
OF
RANDOLPH-MACON COLLEGE**

JUNE, 1908

Preface

THE Branch Papers for this year embrace numbers 3 and 4 and complete volume II. For reasons not necessary to be stated here no "Papers" were published in 1907. In 1909 a complete edition of the available letters of Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina, for whom Randolph-Macon College was in part named, will be printed. These will fill a volume of some 300 pages. In addition, two or three short Virginia biographies (Thomas R. Dew, William C. Rives and John A. Broadnax) will be included. The price of the 1909 volume will be \$2.00 net. If libraries or others desire copies it would be well to send in subscriptions at an early date.

As to the contents of the double number before us, a word ought to be said : For the verified transcripts of the Taylor letters as they now exist among the Jefferson, Madison and Monroe papers in the Division of Manuscripts of the Library of Congress, I am indebted to Mr. Worthington C. Fold, chief of

the Division, and his assistant Mr. Wilmer Ross Leech, now assistant to the New York State Historian. The editor greatly appreciates the kind, effective interest which these gentlemen have so clearly and generously manifested. It is also with the warmest gratitude that I recall here the assistance and co-operation which the students of the History Department of Randolph-Macon have always so readily rendered.

Some few of the Taylor letters bearing upon domestic or purely personal affairs have been omitted. But all his political, even parts of the social, papers which have come into my hands have been reproduced verbatim. Of course this is not thought to be a definitive collection, and it is hoped that the appearance of this small portion of his writings may bring to light other and perhaps more important letters and papers of this very remarkable Virginian leader of a hundred years ago. The sketch of Taylor's career which precedes the correspondence is offered as a sort of commentary, with a view that it may lend somewhat to a better understanding of the Virginia Dynasty.

A REVOLUTIONARY CHARACTER

by Edward C. Dodd

John Taylor, of Caroline county, Virginia, was born in Orange county, Virginia, near the ancestral home of James Madison, in the year 1754. As a boy he associated with the future "Father of the Constitution"; but this association was cut short when Taylor, at the age of ten, like Washington and Robert E. Lee, was left an orphan. The change, however, brought its compensation, for the boy was adopted by his mother's brother, Edmund Pendleton, of Caroline county, already an eminent man in the colony.

Taylor was trained by private tutors in the home of his uncle and at William and Mary College at a time when the ablest teachers in America graced her lecture rooms. The men who taught Jefferson and Marshall and Monroe also directed the studies of young Taylor. Graduating in 1770, the young man "read" law in the office of his uncle at Bowling Green, receiving license to practice that profession in 1774. But Taylor's early manhood was not to be devoted to the hum-drum of the petit proceedings of his county court. His ardent nature and aspiring disposition, as well as his patriotism swept him into the reform movement which Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee had precipitated in 1766, when they almost forced upon the legislature the investigation which laid bare the corruption of the public life of Virginia at the time and broke down the powerful machine which Speaker Robinson had guided for twenty years¹

¹ Moses Colt Tyler, *Life of Patrick Henry*, (I; Journals of the Home of

The fearless and even drastic action of Lee and Henry caused many conservative heads to wag in despair before the great rift with England came in 1775 and 1776. Pendleton himself thought his “friends” were going too far with poor John Robinson. Not so young Taylor, who was from youth fiercely patriotic and honest beyond compare for that age. The young advocate laid down his books to join the first brigade of Virginia troops under command of his favorite, Patrick Henry, of Hanover. A little later when the committee of safety maneuvered Henry out of his position as a military leader and gave the command to William Woodford, a subordinate officer in the same regiment, but a more experienced militiaman, Taylor remained faithful to the cause and saw service as quarter-master at Great Bridge, where the combined forces of Virginia and North Carolina gained a decided victory in December, 1775.²

Next Taylor became, by election of the Continental Congress, a major in the army under Washington. As such he took part in the campaigns about New York and Philadelphia, and he was at Valley Forge where a reorganization of the little army became necessary on account of the many desertions of private soldiers or the expiration of the terms of enlistment. He became so disgusted with the management of the army that he regretted ever joining it, and when the rearrangement of officers incident to the change made at Valley Forge left no place for him, he resigned his commission and returned to Virginia, refusing, like so many others, then and after to enlist as a private.

Burgesses, 1766) 2013, Edited by Church, Mike.

2 Address of Dr. J. A. C. Chandler, published In *Richmond Dispatch*. July 8, 1900.

But Taylor's attitude was dictated largely by the views of Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry³ who at this time honestly believed Washington unfit for the command of the Continental army. He was desirous of bringing about Washington's retirement, though neither he nor his Virginia followers were supporters of Gates and the Conway cabal. They never had believed Washington's appointment a wise one; Washington was too much of a conservative for such democratic reformers as Lee, Henry and Taylor. The conservative party in the Virginia legislature and out rallied to the commander-in-chief and the growth of disaffection among the radicals was checked. Lee, who was chairman of the military committee of Congress went too far in his opposition to Washington, and the Virginia legislature of 1778 failed to re-elect him to the Continental Congress, a conservative taking his place.

It was at this juncture that Taylor returned to Virginia and was at once elected from Caroline county to the House of Delegates. The crisis passed, and in 1780 Lee was restored to his

3. This statement is contradicted by the writings of Henry. On 5 March, 1778, Henry wrote to Washington after he received an anonymous letter (later he learned it to be from Benjamin Rush), warning his old friend of the coup in progress and pledging his devotion and loyalty. "While you face the armed enemies of our liberty in the field, and by the favor of God have been kept unhurt, I trust your country will never harbor in her bosom the miscreant, who would ruin her best supporter. I wish not to flatter; but when arts, unworthy honest men, are used to defame and traduce you, I think it not amiss, but a duty, to assure you of that estimation in which the public hold you. Not that I think any testimony I can bear is necessary for your support, or private satisfaction; for a bare recollection of what is past must give you sufficient pleasure in every circumstance of life. But I cannot help assuring you, on this occasion, of the high sense of gratitude which all ranks of men in this our native country bear to you. It will give me sincere pleasure to manifest my regards, and render my best services to you or yours. I do not like to make a parade of these things, and I know you are not fond of it; however, I hope the occasion will plead my excuse. Wishing you all possible felicity, I am, my dear Sir, your ever affectionate friend and very humble servant." - *Patrick Henry, Statesman, American*, Tyler, Moses, Coit, Ed. Church, Mike, 2013

place. Washington had won, and his opponents probably recognized now that they had carried their campaign too far. At least Henry seems to have thought so. As to Richard Henry Lee and Taylor, there was never a rapprochement and the "Father of his Country" was distrusted by them to the end.

In 1780, when storms threatened from the South, Taylor raised a portion of a regiment of volunteers who were sent to swell the forces of La Fayette, whom Washington had sent to Virginia to form a sort of second army to oppose Cornwallis, who was then in North Carolina. Taylor was made lieutenant-colonel of the regiment and was stationed with some two hundred men in Gloucester county to ward off the attacks of foraging parties, one of which looted Richard Henry Lee's house and came near capturing the arch-traitor himself. While doing service in this capacity the war came to an end at Yorktown, and there was no more occasion for heart burnings, at least not on the military score. The war had cost Taylor a large part of his fortune and the only medium of repayment on the part of Congress or the State government was public land lying as a rule west of the Ohio river. Taylor received 5,000 acres as reward for his services, but nothing for his personal expense. However, he was fortunate in his accumulations from the law, to which he devoted himself assiduously during that fat period of 1781 to 1792, and retired from his profession in the latter year with a property of nearly \$100,000. From 1776 to 1781 he was in the legislature steadily and firmly opposing all measures looking toward the formation of "a more perfect union."

When Washington's wise plans for bringing about such reforms in the confederation as would start the growth of a compact nation began to take shape, Taylor, Richard Henry Lee, Henry, and James Monroe redoubled their activity. They were able to secure the election of some radical democrats to the

Philadelphia convention, but not to prevent the participation of Virginia in that famous assembly. When the plan of government was submitted to Virginia for ratification, George Mason, Taylor's beau-ideal in statecraft, published a pamphlet strongly opposing acceptance. Taylor now took up his pen and under one assumed name or another kept up the agitation until his Uncle Pendleton declared that Taylor thought he knew more about government than "all the rest of the world put together." Caroline county chose Pendleton rather than Taylor to represent her in the convention which assembled at Richmond in July, 1788, and Pendleton became an advocate—in accord with his past career—of the new scheme of government. It was Washington and the conservative party of 1766-1776, aided by not a few of those who had been out-and-out tories during the war, who now carried the Old Dominion, against her wishes, into the movement for a stronger national authority. Despite all the brilliant oratory of Henry and the powerful planning of Richard Henry Lee and Mason, the hated instrument was accepted and Virginia became a part of the American nation.

Taylor was not seen again in the legislature for several years. He turned his talents to agriculture, bought a handsome estate, Hazelwood, near Port Royal on the Rappahannock river, and became a close student of books bearing on his new vocation. In 1803 he published *Arator*, one of the first treatises on agriculture ever written in the United States. And his private correspondence was filled with the details of the management of a large plantation. His suggestions about the improvement of the soil as against the prevailing method of clearing new lands when the old began to wear out, about the treatment and housing of slaves and the rotation of crops deserved much more attention than they received. He predicted the ruin of the South under the operation of slavery and lamented the ruthless

destruction of invaluable forests and naturally fertile soil.⁴ The burden of his correspondence with Jefferson and others during these years and even to the end of his life was agriculture and the possible improvements in which he was always experimenting. He became the first president of the Virginia Agricultural Society; he encouraged discussion of all manner of subjects looking to the betterment of the condition of the one vocation of his State and section, for he early learned to think of the South as separate and apart from the nation.

Deeply absorbed as he was in his new calling; in the welfare of his slaves⁵, and in the rotation of crops, his heart was not weaned from politics—a peculiarly important matter for the agriculturists—he was prone to say. Virginia accepted the national constitution on the urgent recommendation of her great man, Washington, and cast her electoral vote unanimously for him; but she proceeded immediately thereafter to elect senators to Congress who were in entire accord with Patrick Henry, the other great man of the Old Dominion, and who then and for many years had been half-hostile to Washington. William Grayson and Richard Henry Lee were the first senators of Virginia. The leadership and wealth of Virginia were in favor of nationalism; but the people were overwhelmingly opposed to it. Taylor was with the popular party and he rejoiced in the election of Lee to the Senate. Four years later, when Lee was forced into retirement by the dread disease, tuberculosis, the Governor of Virginia appointed Taylor to serve out the unexpired term. Before the expiration of his term the legislature

4. *Arator*, undated edition in Virginia State Library. p. 71.

5. This essay was written at a time when the South was legally segregated, thus Dodd's reference here reflects that condition as well as helps flesh out the "prophet of secession" narrative as having causes ante-dating the political crisis of the 1850's.

chose him in regular order for the position. But Taylor declined, like Henry, all honors which contemplated a prolonged residence at the seat of the national government. He was disgusted with the trend of things in Philadelphia.

During the short term he was in the Senate he manifested deep interest in the defeat of Hamilton's bank scheme; and the investigation of the Treasury Department as proposed by William B. Giles and Nathaniel Macon was therefore welcome to him. He was resolutely in favor of opening the doors of the Senate to the public. He was, indeed, in every way in accord with the party then being organized by Thomas Jefferson.

While in the Senate and afterward, his home at Port Royal, Virginia, was a rendezvous for members of Congress from Eastern Virginia and the South. The going and returning lawmakers of his way of thinking loved to stop with Taylor to talk over the plans of their party to be carried out both in Congress and in their State legislatures.⁶ At one such meeting a shrewd plan was laid to detach Benjamin Hawkins, senator from North Carolina, from Washington's administration. Madison's influence and great reputation were to be played upon. Macon, an intimate personal, but not political, friend of Hawkins, and Giles were helpers in the scheme. It did not succeed; but it shows how small politics were frequently played in the "good old times."

The most remarkable experience of Taylor while in the Senate, however, came from an informal conference with Rufus King and Oliver Ellsworth, representing a coterie of Federalist leaders, on May 8 or 9, 1794⁷. Taylor was about to resign

6. Letter to Madison, May 11 1798, in Madison Papers, Library of Congress.

7 *Disunion sentiment In Congress*, 1794; a pamphlet written by John Taylor of Caroline country, edited by Hunt, Gaillard: published in Washington, 1905.

his seat having opposed almost everything the majority of the Senate favored during the whole term of his service. Leading Federalists desired to bring about closer relations between the United States and Great Britain and to that end they had planned to send Alexander Hamilton as a special envoy to London to negotiate a new treaty. Washington would not consent to nominate his Secretary of Treasury. The Chief Justice, John Jay, a friend and supporter of Hamilton, was next proposed and the nomination was promptly sent in. Taylor opposed the confirmation on the very good ground that Jay in his official capacity would probably have to sit in cases in which rights under a treaty negotiated by himself were questioned. King, George Cabot, Ellsworth and others were exasperated at this conduct of Taylor, who was supported too by his colleague, Monroe.⁸

Taylor had been, next to Jefferson, the very soul of the opposition to Hamilton in Virginia. In 1793 he wrote a pamphlet which was circulated at the expense of himself, Jefferson and Madison⁹. Passages from Taylor's pamphlet were printed in Freneau's Gazette and finally copies of it were sent to leading Republicans in the various State legislatures. The Virginia Assembly had approved Taylor's attitude and, advancing a step further in opposition to the Federalist rapprochement with England, had "instructed" Taylor and Monroe to move a bill in the Senate ordering the sequestration of British debts due from Americans. This was intended as retaliation for the failure of England to observe the conditions of the treaty of 1783 as well as punishment for the exasperating practice of searching American ships upon the high seas. Taylor's speech in support

8 Ibid p. 8

9 Letters of Taylor to Madison, May 11, June 20, and September 25 . 1791-
Madison Papers, Library of Congress.

of the Virginia instructions was a severe castigation of the New England leaders for defending and apologizing for Great Britain;¹⁰ and what gave even greater annoyance was the fear that Taylor and Monroe would be able to defeat the Federalist programme notwithstanding the friendly attitude of the President.

Knowing well how much discontent there was in Virginia, and that the spirit of opposition to Washington's administration in that State and the South generally was growing, King and Ellsworth asked Taylor into a committee room at the time mentioned above, to consult with him "upon a very important subject." The object of the interview was to propose a dissolution of the Union and evidently to sound the Virginia senators before committing themselves. Listening attentively to King's outline of a plan for peaceful separation, Taylor replied that he did not think the crisis so pressing. There was only one real disagreement between the East and the South, and that was on the "debt question," which he hoped might be amicably adjusted. To this the New Englanders replied that the recent change of sentiment in South Carolina would add two other senators to the Southern interest and that would enable that section to control legislation. This would force the East to turn to secession as the only remedy. Why not let it be a quiet and peaceable affair, the leaders in Congress agreeing upon a boundary line to be drawn between the Potomac and the Hudson. But Taylor insisted upon a further trial of the "great experiment" and the conference came to an end.¹¹

Taylor regarded the revolutionary proposition of King and Ellsworth as serious, though Madison, now a friend whom he

10 Taylor, from Hunt, Gaillard pamphlet, *Disunion Sentiment* p, 8

11 Taylor, from Hunt, Gaillard pamphlet, *Disunion Sentiment*, pp. 21-33.

consulted, thought the purpose of the interview was to frighten Virginia from her course¹² Three days later the gist of the conversation with the New England senators was committed to paper. This document, in the handwriting of the Virginia senator, was long a portion of the Madison papers, but was extracted from them before they were turned over to the government by Mrs. Madison in 1836. It came to light for the first time in 1905, more than a century after the event it records.¹³ Taylor resigned the senatorship, as already noted, at the close of this session, returning, like his friend Jefferson, to the delights of private life on a great Virginia plantation.

In Virginia, at the time Taylor and Jefferson were busily engaged in cultivating their potatoes, the radically democratic forces of 1776 were again in the ascendancy, but Henry was not their leader and Richard Henry Lee was dead. Jefferson and Madison, the but recently widely known champion of conservatism, were at the helm. Henry, repelled by personal dislike of Jefferson and by his disgust perhaps with the conduct of Madison, was turning to the support of Washington. Before 1796 he was regarded as a good Federalist.¹⁴ But Virginia was overwhelmingly Jeffersonian, the younger democrat having for himself something of that amazing popularity which had been the possession of Henry for thirty years.

John Taylor played his part in the realignment of the Virginia democracy. He contributed articles to the newspapers and circulated pamphlets denouncing in unmeasured terms the policies of Washington's administration and lauded the statesman of Monticello to the skies. He was the publicist of

12 Ibid p. 33

13 Taylor, from Hunt, Gaillard pamphlet, *Disunion Sentiment*, Preface

14 Tyler's "*Patrick Henry-American Statesman*" p. 344 Ed. Church, Mike

the Virginia triumvirate, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe, which was destined to give shape to Virginia public life for a half century and to control the national administration for twenty-five years.

Jefferson failed in the campaign for the presidency in 1796 by a narrow margin, which only meant the renewal of the fight for 1800. Realizing clearly what this intense democratic activity in Virginia meant, Washington, soon after his retirement in 1797, cast his great influence into the scales against it. He mobilized the forces of conservatism in his beloved State and brought Henry and Marshall, the contending champions in the convention of 1788, into harmonious co-operation against Jefferson and Madison. There was bitterness of feeling, sharp discussion and shrewd manipulation in the Old Dominion during the last years of Washington's life, and John Taylor, his opponent in the War of Revolution, was still animating the radical forces who willingly honored the general of Yorktown, but not the recently retired president.

Washington's withdrawal of Monroe as the American Minister of France in 1796 had led to the suspension of friendly relations with that country and added one other able leader to the forces of opposition in Virginia. Taylor and Monroe were life-long friends. Together they made it appear that the cause of the recall was the anti-republican tendency of the President. An example therefore became necessary in order to teach "diplomatic men the distinction between public good and the will of the government."¹⁵ France now practically began hostilities. President Adams made a manly appeal to loyal Americans of all parties to rally to their own government in the coming crisis. A commission, of which Marshall was the Virginia mem-

15 Taylor to Monroe, March 26, 1796, Library of Congress

ber, was sent to Paris in the effort to re-establish peaceful relations. This commission was practically dismissed the country after a vain effort on the part of Foreign Secretary Talleyrand to extort a loan for the French "government and bribes for high officials. The replies of the commissioners to these appeals for money were published in the United States under the title of the X Y Z papers, and aroused a generally friendly sentiment to the President and the administration. Washington was called once more to the service of the country; he began the organization of an army of defense against France and volunteering, even in Virginia, went briskly on. The congressional and local elections showed great gains for the Federalists, and the Congress which assembled in December, 1797, proved in 1798 to be made up of poor politicians, for they, carried away with the growing popularity of the administration, enacted a series of repressive laws not unlike those of "William Pitt's ministry two or three years before.

Concerning the crisis which Taylor saw coming, he wrote to a representative in Congress from Virginia, Archibald New, suggesting the old Henry idea of an alliance between Virginia and North Carolina. New showed this letter to Jefferson which produced the very letter of the latter to Taylor on June 1, 1798¹⁶, about which there has been much controversy. Jefferson strongly discouraged the idea of secession as contained in the letter to New. Taylor replied at great length on June 25th, declaring that the time had come when party lines were geographically drawn and when the oppression of one section of the country by the other seemed a settled condition. "If in case of a scission of the union, party spirit will still be natural, how can it be said that our present situation, the characteristic of

16 Ford's Writings of Jefferson, VII, 263, 2661

which is party spirit, is unnatural. • • • A transference of this ascendancy [of the East] to other individuals [the South] will change the tyrant, but not remove the evil. Did the British people ever gain by a change of ministry. Saturated are preferable to hungry flies. A Southern aristocracy oppressing the Northern States would be as detestable as a Northern domineering over the Southern States. And what is the proper time for opposing this ascendancy? Shall it be suffered to run through its natural course? How many years will bring it to decrepitude? Let England and all personal ascendancies reply. Let the ancient and modern system of villenage illustrate. Let them prove that such usurpation upon the rights of man are more assailable the more they are matured. • • • You will evidently see that the perfection and not the scission of the union was the object of the letter you refer to, to which end an appreciation of the strength of its [the Union's] soundest parts will probably tend, a probability of which the reigning power is so well convinced that it omits no means of its depreciation.”

He then goes on to elaborate his ideas as to what ought to be done, concluding: “These measures [the Alien and Sedition laws] ought to lead to an amendment of the Constitution, if party and persecution are its offspring. A variety of alterations might apply to the evil: 1. An extension of the right of suffrage and an abbreviation of the tenure of service; 2. Rotation in office. If kings find it necessary to change vicegerents to preserve power, let the people proffit from the prudence of princes. Is not merit in office more likely to seduce the people than to deceive kings? 3. A new mode of abrogating [national] law. Why ought not the mode of repeal be naturalized with the mode of legislating? The concurrence in favor of existence ought to be the same with that necessary for creation. • • •

The limits of a letter forbid an enumeration of other remedies for the evil of party. *The right of the State governments to expound the constitution* might possibly be made the basis of a movement towards its amendment. If this is insufficient the people in state conventions are incontrovertibly the contracting parties and, possessing the infringing rights, may proceed by orderly steps to attain the object.”¹⁷

Here then is a part of the programme which was adopted by the Republican leaders who met at Jefferson's home in October to prepare the Kentucky resolutions. Taylor was probably a member of the little party of five or six who set in motion a movement that was to have far-reaching effect on the history of the United States. Resolutions were drawn by Jefferson himself declaring that laws of Congress which were deemed unconstitutional might be set aside by individual States, or that they were of themselves void and of no effect. Breckenridge, a member of the party, carried the resolutions to Kentucky, where they received the stamp of approval in November following and in December Taylor introduced similar resolutions, drawn by Madison and approved by Jefferson, into the Virginia Assembly. The agitation thus began spread over the Union and occupied public attention for near two years.

Not satisfied with the mere resolutions, Taylor desired to have a law passed formally declaring the alien and sedition acts unconstitutional. “That would have placed the State and general government at issue,” which he thought would force the calling of a State convention. But Jefferson disapproved of this and Taylor contented himself with a speech in the legislature, of which he was a member, which exasperated, if it did not rout his opponents.¹⁸ In these, as in most other matters,

17 Letter to Jefferson. June 25, 1718. Library of Congress

18 A letter to Jefferson dated merely 1798, but which was written during the

Taylor was in closest accord with Jefferson. Taylor was asked to manage affairs so that the vacancy caused by the death of Senator Tazewell, of Virginia, might be filled with a good Republican. Jefferson suggested Monroe; but Taylor favored Madison, reserving Monroe for Governor at the next turn. Taylor tried also to persuade his uncle, Edmund Pendleton, who had but recently issued an address to the people of Caroline county, to enter the national lists as a champion of the Jefferson party, but in this he failed. Jefferson collected the various documents bearing on the French negotiations and mailed them to the aged judge. A flattering and most enticing letter was likewise sent. Pendleton was out of sympathy with Marshall and the Federalists, but he declined to participate personally in the conflict.¹⁹

In October, 1799, Taylor wrote Jefferson that he gave up all for lost. "The malady of all government is monopoly. This is creeping and creeping into ours." But the dawn of a new day for him, at least, was approaching. The Federalists were about to break up into angry factions, while Jefferson's popularity was constantly on the increase.

So warm and active was Taylor on behalf of the great reform movement of 1800 that he was frequently accused of aiding and abetting anarchy. But against such charge his distinguished and conservative uncle, Pendleton, staunchly defended him. Feeling ran so high in 1798 to 1801 that representatives of the opposing parties refused to stop at the same hotels or to drink in the same bar-rooms. Marshall was insulted by the people of Fredericksburg in their own theatre, and neither Jefferson nor Madison would have been safe against ill-treatment

session of the legislature.

¹⁹ Taylor to Jefferson, February 16, 1799.

had they risked a visit to Richmond on behalf of their cause. Money was freely used. Jefferson contributed \$50 to a Scotch writer living in Richmond named Callender for the purpose of scandalously abusing the Federalists.²⁰ Marshall was said to have expended \$6,000 in his campaign for congress in the spring of 1797, and he won then by the narrowest margins.²¹ But Jefferson and his radical party won by overwhelming majorities in the South, and gained votes enough in Pennsylvania and New York to secure the control of the country ; and the Virginia leaders did not lose their hold on the nation until the appearance of Andrew Jackson in 1828.

20 Chandler's address, *Richmond Dispatch*, July 8, 1900; Fleming's *Life of Marshall* 112.

21 Jefferaon's Writings VII., 888.

ALSO FROM
FOUNDING FATHER FILMS
and
MIKE CHURCH



PRINTED WORKS

Patrick Henry - American Statesman

*An Argument Respecting The Constitutionality of The Carriage Tax
Is Davis A Traitor-Was There A Constitutional Right to Secession
Previous to the War of 1861?*

*Article V Amendment Convention Symposium-A Federal Solution for
a Federal Crisis*

FILM/DVD

The Road To Independence-The Movie

The Spirit of '76 - The Movie

CD/AUDIO BOOK

The Road to Independence

The Spirit of '76

The Fame of Our Fathers

What Lincoln Killed-EPISODE I

The Spirit of '76-The Story Continues

Available at amazon.com

Available at mikechurch.com

JOHN TAYLOR

OF CAROLINE COUNTY

American Statesman

Why assemble another biography “founding father”? Chiefly be- to paint a lifelong picture of our own, voluminous works. Even cessfully undertaken there re- Taylor doesn’t appear on Liz tion of being very difficult to is said to have once quipped. if we can just translate it into Eng-



John Taylor

1753 - 1824

of an obscure, 18th century Virginian cause there has not been an attempt subject, predominantly using his if this daunting task were suc- mains the principal reason John Cheney’s radar. He has a reputa- read, John Randolph of Roanoke “Taylor’s writing is profound, now lish.” Taylor has received little credit

for his significant skill at writing satire about the principal target of his ire: Federalists. Taylor spent a career proving the anti-federalists of the 1780’s correct and the nationalists wrong. All Americans can learn and be entertained by the works of John Taylor-American Statesman.

Praise for “John Taylor - American Statesman”

With this new edition of selected John Taylor works, some never republished before, Mike Church does the signal service of reminding us of the foremost Jeffersonian publicist—and one of the Early Republic’s most principled politicians.

-Kevin Gutzman, Author, James Madison & The Making of America

“Mike Church has resurrected the ghosts of secession past by bringing to light both the great John Taylor of Caroline and the Northerners who insisted the sections should part ways...in 1794! Taylor was the greatest political thinker of the early republic and a needed counterweight to the modern nationalist centraliza- tion hysteria of both mainstream political parties.

Every politically active American should know John Taylor.”

-Brion McClanahan, Author, The Founding Fathers Guide to the Constitution

John Taylor of Caroline County-American Statesman is not a history book, it is an exciting biography & collection of works from the “brains of the operation” behind the political dynasty of the Jeffersonian [r]epublicans.zz

This collection combines historically accurate biographies of John Taylor of Caroline with Taylor’s own, previously little known, rare and unpublished works.



ISBN 978-0-9903324-0-4 \$34.95
5 3495 >



©2014 by Mike Church

Published by Founding Father Films Publishing

Printed in the USA • 3rd U.S. printing www.mikechurch.com

9 780990 332404