

Daniel Todd Patterson

(6 Mar 1786 – 25 Aug 1839)

The National Intelligencer, August 26, 1839

We regret to announce that our esteemed fellow-citizen Commodore Daniel T. Patterson, of the United States Navy, and Commandant of the Navy Yard and Station in this city, expired on the morning of Sunday, the 25th instant, at a quarter past 8 o'clock, at his residence in the said yard, after a short but severe illness of about 30 hours.

His friends and acquaintances generally, and particularly the officers of the Navy and Army now stationed or who may be in Washington, are invited to attend his funeral, which will take place on Wednesday, the 28th instant, at 4 o'clock p.m., from his late residence at the Navy Yard.

The National Intelligencer, September 23, 1839

The Late Commodore Patterson.

(From the Louisianian)

Commodore Daniel T. Patterson was in the naval service about forty years, and was a midshipman in the Philadelphia frigate when she was lost on the Tripolitan coast in the year 1803. With her officers and crew he endured the evils of captivity in the capital of that barbarous country for about two years. At the conclusion of that war he was ordered to New Orleans with a naval force under Commodore Porter, destined to co-operate with the army for the protection of that capital against the designs of Aaron Burr, who was suspected of being engaged in a plot to dismember the Union.

At the epoch of the invasion of Louisiana by the English in 1814, the naval forces on this station were under the command of Commodore Patterson, and he greatly distinguished himself by his zeal, his courage, and the efficiency with which he aided the commander-in-chief in his plans for the defense of the country. In the memorable night attack on the English camp on the 23d December, 1814, the commodore commanded in person the schooner Carolina, which vessel having dropped down the river to the point of attack in the dusk of the evening, the enemy, not aware of her character, hailed her repeatedly without receiving an answer. When she had obtained her proper position, the voice of Patterson was distinctly heard from the shore, shouting to his crew -- "Give them this for the honor of America!" A close and terrible fire of canister shot followed, which scattered the enemy in all directions. They rallied, however, and, without being able to return the schooner's fire, they sheltered themselves as well as they could behind the levee, where they lay till they were again disturbed by the advance of our troops. The schooner then ceased firing.

Four days afterwards Commodore Patterson was abreast of the lines in the ship Louisiana, which had been purchased into the service, and manned with seamen impressed in the streets of New Orleans and when the British army advanced to the attack of our lines, she opened a terrible fire upon the columns, and materially aided in repulsing them.

After this abortive attempt to carry the lines, the seamen with their officers were placed at the batteries on shore. On the 8th of January, when the final attack was made, Commodore Patterson had command of a few heavy guns on the opposite side of the river, which were intended to play upon the enemy's columns whilst marching to the assault, which everyone knew they threatened to make on that day. A strong detachment of British troops was transported across the Mississippi in boats and having routed the feeble band of militia under General David B. Morgan, stationed there for the defense of the battery, Commodore Patterson, having used the utmost exertions in vain to arrest the flight of the fugitives, was obliged to spike his guns and retire to this side of the river in order to preserve himself

and his men from being made prisoners. The assault on the lines of General Jackson being repulsed in a most signal manner, the British evacuated their new position on the opposite bank the same night, and Commodore Patterson resumed his station the next morning, and continued to annoy the British camp with an incessant fire of his heavy guns till the end of the campaign. In public orders and private correspondence, General Jackson bestowed upon his friend, the commodore, the warmest praise for the zeal, activity, and ability with which he had acted during that trying period. Since the peace, Commodore Patterson has commanded American squadrons in various parts of the globe, and always kept up the efficiency of the ancient discipline and maintained with jealous exactitude the honor of the service. His original education had been of the kind best adapted to the vocation for which he was intended, and in after years he carefully improved his mind by study and observation. Like all men who pass their lives in the stirring scenes of the naval service, he was full of information and anecdote, which he knew how to detail with tact and propriety. He was of a most amiable character in private life, and has left a widow (sister to Carlisle Pollock, Esq., of New Orleans) and a numerous family of children to deplore his loss.

Com. P. was a native of Long Island, and at his death was about 58 years of age.

Born on Long Island, N.Y., March 6, 1786. Acting Midshipman on U.S. Sloop of War Delaware, June 11, 1799 to August 1800, appointed Midshipman, U.S. Navy, August 20, 1800 (warrant subsequently altered to take rank from date of his original entry, June 11, 1799). Was one of the Midshipmen retained in the Navy under the Peace Establishment Act of 1801. Attached to the U.S. Frigate Constellation, in the Mediterranean, from February 1802 to March 1803. On May 24, 1803, he was ordered to the U.S.S. Philadelphia, under Captain Bainbridge, sailing for the Mediterranean in July. On October 31st he was taken prisoner when the Philadelphia was stranded and captured by the Tripolitans. During the long imprisonment he and the other younger officers profited by the excellent tutelage of Captain Bainbridge and Lieutenants Porter and Jones. On June 3, 1805, the prisoners were liberated and he returned to the United States on board the U.S.S. President. On January 20, 1806, was ordered to report on board U.S.S. Franklin, under Captain Shaw, with whom he proceeded to New Orleans station. Commissioned Lieutenant January 24, 1807. On July 28, 1807, was ordered to New York to place himself under the command of Commodore John Rodgers at that station. Was ordered to New Orleans under command of Captain David Porter, March 21, 1808. From January 1810 to February 1811 was in semi-independent command of twelve gunboats stationed at Natchez and operating in the Gulf, which transferred most of the troops for the occupation of Baton Rouge in 1810. Commissioned Master Commandant July 24, 1813, and on October 18th was ordered to succeed Commodore Shaw in command of the Naval Station at New Orleans. In September 1814 he commanded the flotilla of gunboats that destroyed the fortifications of the pirate Jean Lafitte at Baratavia Bay, La., capturing many guns, six schooners and several smaller craft. During 1814-1815 the naval forces under Commodore Patterson cooperated with General Jackson in the defense of New Orleans. Promoted to Captain February 28, 1815. He and his officers and men received a vote of thanks from Congress for their part in the Battle of New Orleans.

He was detached from station at New Orleans June 23, 1824, and ordered to Norfolk, and then to the U.S.S. North Carolina, to serve as Fleet Captain in the Mediterranean Squadron of Commodore John Rodgers. On October 21, 1825, he was assigned to command of the U.S.S. Constitution, also in the Mediterranean, and remained there until May 30, 1828. On July 26th he was detached from that vessel, having been granted unlimited leave.

On March 19, 1829, he was appointed one of the three commissioners of the U.S. Navy, effective March 13, 1829; served in that capacity until May 21, 1832, when he was ordered to the command of the Mediterranean Squadron. Was appointed to the command of the Navy Yard at Washington, D.C., March 1, 1836, remaining there until his death on August 25, 1839.

The Washington Post, April 26, 1936

Grave Marker Laid in Honor of 1812 Hero Society Pays Tribute to Commodore Patterson in Local Rites

North Carolina delegates in the convention of the National Society of the Daughters of 1812, scheduled to begin here today, held memorial exercises at Congressional Cemetery yesterday afternoon for Daniel Todd Patterson, little known hero of the battle of New Orleans. A special marker placed on Commodore Patterson's grave was unveiled by his great-grand-daughter, Miss Elizabeth Pearson Patterson of Washington.

Commodore Patterson's ships stood off the British for several days, giving Andrew Jackson time to throw up fortifications at New Orleans from Mobile, where Jackson had expected the battle.

Before the War of 1812 Commodore Patterson was a noted pirate chaser. He reportedly captured six gun vessels and the operating base of Jean Lafitte, the "Terror of the Gulf."

At the ceremony yesterday afternoon addresses were made by Mrs. John Francis Weinmann, president of the national society; O. Max Gardner, former Governor of North Carolina, and Capt. William Dilworth Puleston, director of Naval Intelligence, U.S.N. Mrs. Sydney Perry Cooper, president of the North Carolina Society, directed the ceremony.

The national convention opens today and will continue through Wednesday. The formal opening services will be held at St. Thomas' Episcopal Church this afternoon in memory of members who have died during the past year. Members will then go to Washington Cathedral, where they will present the society's banner to Cathedral authorities.

Business sessions will get under way tomorrow morning at the Willard, the headquarters of the convention, with registration of the 500 delegates.

During the afternoon delegates will go to Baltimore, where they will present furniture to the National Park Service for use in the restoration of Fort McHenry.

Brig. Gen. R.P. Williams of the United States Marine Corps, and W.H. Drake Lester of the Department of Justice will speak before the convention tomorrow night. The annual banquet will be held Tuesday evening.

The Evening Star, April 19, 1936

Early Naval Hero Will Be Honored Exercises Are Planned for Commodore Patterson, 1812 War Veteran

Commodore Daniel Todd Patterson, U.S.N., who achieved fame at the Battle of New Orleans and in engagements with the pirates of Tripoli and later commanded the Washington Navy Yard, will be honored by the North Carolina Society, National Society, United States Daughters of 1812, at ceremonies at his grave in Congressional Cemetery next Saturday.

The exercises, to be held at 3 p.m., will consist of memorial services and the unveiling of a marker by the naval hero's granddaughter, Miss Elizabeth P. Patterson, 2339 Massachusetts avenue, Brig. Gen. David D. Porter, adjutant and inspector of the Marine Corps, a great-grandson of Commodore Patterson, also will participate in the ceremony. Miss Patterson has been designated to christen the new destroyer Patterson, named for her ancestor.

Mrs. John Francis Weinman, president of the National Society, Daughters of 1812, will place a wreath on the naval hero's grave, while Mrs. Sydney Perry Cooper, State president of the North Carolina Society, will take a leading part in the tribute.

Former Gov. O. Max Gardner of North Carolina will deliver a short address. Another talk will be made by Capt. William Dilworth Puleston, director of naval intelligence, who will discuss the naval career of Commodore Patterson.

Other descendants of the commodore who will attend the exercises include Misses Mary and Harriet Winslow of this city and Carlisle Patterson Winslow.

Among his many duties, Commodore Patterson commanded the Constitution and was in command of the Mediterranean squadron. He died at the Navy Yard here August 25, 1839.

The Washington Post, May 19, 1935, p. SA6

Daughters of 1812 Select Officers

. . . . The society has marked the graves of two outstanding soldiers of the War of 1812 during the past year – Lieut. Christian Hines, who is buried in Rock Creek Cemetery, and Robert Todd Patterson, who is buried in the Congressional Cemetery.

The Washington Post, April 26, 1936, p. M5

Grave Marker Laid in Honor Of 1812 Hero

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