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A SEAMAN'S NOTEBOOK: THE TRAVELS
OF CAPTAIN GEORGE DE LA ROCHE

EDITED BY
HOWARD J. STROTT

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A SEAMAN'S NOTEBOOK: THE TRAVELS OF CAPTAIN GEORGE DE LA ROCHE

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During the last decade of the 18th century and the first ten years of the 19th, there were few places in the Western world untouched by armed warfare of one sort or another. From the Napoleonic Wars through the Franco-Haitian conflict to the War of 1812, with fights against pirates and corsairs thrown in for good measure, both Europe and America felt the strain of these troubled days. But in times of disorder as in times of peace, men still had livings to earn and families to support as best they could. Seamen in particular felt the impact of the times, visiting as they did the ports of the world, and their accounts of their voyages give us a first-hand picture of the age. One such interesting, though brief, diary is that kept on his Atlantic travels by an American merchant captain, George Henri Frederick Franck de la Roche, a photostatic copy of which has been presented to the Maryland Historical Society by his great-grandson, Henry L. Page, Jr. The original manuscript is in the possession of another of his great-grandsons, Charles G. Page, the donor's brother.

Born in 1791 in Philadelphia, de la Roche was an American citizen, thanks to the efforts of his father in the American Revolution. Baron Frederic Franck de la Roche (1757-1805) had been an aide to General Lafayette at the Battle of Brandywine, serving until the surrender at Yorktown. The baron was a French nobleman born at the court of Trèves, Germany, a son of the Chancellor and Prime Minister to the Archbishop of that city. After serving in the American Revolution, for which he was naturalized in 1790, he returned to France again only to flee to Germany at the outbreak of the French Revolution. There he married the daughter

of the Elector of Trèves, Countess Elzina Maria de Lespinasse.* Shortly thereafter the nobleman and his wife settled in Philadelphia, where George was born.

As the following account relates, on the death of his father young de la Roche rose from seaman to captain in his own right, and served in the Chesapeake Bay campaign during the War of 1812 in capacities of some importance. Returning to the merchant trade for some time following the end of the war, Captain de la Roche went into the shipping business with a Mr. McNulty of Philadelphia. In 1816 he married his partner's daughter, and three years after her death in 1822, was married to a Baltimore girl, Jane Jacob Belt. George Franck de la Roche remained in the merchant trade for only a few more years, leaving the sea to become one of the civil engineers who built the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. In his later life, the Captain retired and lived in Georgetown, D. C., where he died in 1861.

MEMORANDUMS

of my various trips at Sea; all but the 1st of which, were taken from my old Sea Journal begun in 1802 when little over 11 years old.

My father, baron Frederic Franck de la Roche who had served as aid de camp to Lafayette during our revolutionary Struggle, having early in the French Revolution fled to the U. S. with my mother and my two sisters, was immediately declared a citizen for his services as above stated, and with the fortune saved, entered actively in Commercial Shipping business, and having made great losses up to 1797, by what are now called the "French Spoliations,"¹ returned to Europe that year, to claim identification therefore.

On the 14th of August, 1797, my mother, my two sisters and myself left Philadelphia for Bordeaux, in the packet Benjamin Franklin, Captn. Lloyd Jones, to join my father; and I, then only 6 yrs, 6 mths & 5 da.

* "Baron Frederick Franck was a son of Baron George Antoine Michael Franck and Sophie Marie (Von Gutterman-Von Guttershoven) de la Roche. She was a celebrated German authoress. Baron George Antoine Michael Franck was son of Baron and the Princess (Von Lichtenstein) de la Roche, son of Count de la Roche, of Provence, France (Huguenot)." — James E. Greenleaf, *Genealogy of the Greenleaf Family* (Boston: 1896).

¹ These were losses arising from seizures of our ships by France between 1793 and 1798. That government misunderstood the Anglo-American relations of the time and began to seize United States ships as prizes, as she had those of England.

old crossed from America to Europe for the first time, reaching Bordeaux about the 10th of October, 1797.

It being necessary to save my birthright, by the new laws of France, that I should not remain two years contiguously in the then Republic, to avoid being inscribed on the then forming conscription lists; on the arrival of our old friend Captn. Lloyd Jones, my mother placed me under his care to return to the U. States, to obtain a certificate from the Sec. of State; and thence began my preference for a sea life, which at the death of my father, Col. of 3 regt. of Huzzars in the allied army, who was killed at the battle of Austerlitz, when crossing a lake on the ice in Co. with two other regiments of cavalry to take Napoleon in flank; he Napn. ordered his artillery to fire on & break the ice, when this whole body of troops were submerged & lost; I had to decide on a profession for support. Of course only the data, without details is given.

May 21, 1802 left Bordeaux, for Point a Petre Guadeloupe in ship Ploughboy of Philadelphia, Capt. Lloyd Jones. Arrived there June 19th, during the Slave insurrection.²

August 19th left Point a Petre for Bordeaux again and arrived at entrance of River Oct. 4th, 1802.

December 8th, 1802 left Bordeaux for Philadelphia in Same ship, arriving there Feb. 6th, 1803, my first return since leaving there Aug. 19th, 1797.

August 29th, 1803 left Philadelphia for Bordeaux in the ship Thomas, Captn. Lloyd Jones and made Cordovan lighthouse Oct. 10th, 1803.

I remained at my studies in France until, May 8th, 1805. when I left Bordeaux for Philadelphia in the Same Ship Thomas, Capt. Lloyd Jones, & left the lighthouse May 15th arriving at the Capes of Delaware, July 3d, 1805.

August 7th, 1805 left Philadelphia for Bordeaux in the Same Ship & Captn. leaving the Capes August 17th and made Cordovan light house October 11th, 1805, and proceeded up to the City.

December 13th, 1805 left Bordeaux for New Orleans in Same Ship, passing the lighthouse January 5th, 1806 and touched at Pointe a Petre Guadeloupe february 24th to land some lady passengers. Left there March 11th, and reached the City of New Orleans, April 6th, 1806.

April 22, 1806 Captn. Lloyd Jones, part owner of the Thomas, left & gave command to Captn. Wm. Sayres, Jones going to Philadelphia.

June 25th, 1806 left New Orleans for Bordeaux in Same Ship, reaching Cordovan lighthouse August 15th & proceeded to the city.

October 18th, 1806 left Bordeaux for New Orleans and December 15 off South side of the Isld. of Cuba were made a prize of by H. B. M. Ship Lark of 20 guns, and the brig Mignonne, & ordered to Port Royal, Jamaica

² Franck de la Roche did not realize it, but what he passed off as "the Slave insurrection" was in reality conflict caused by the first step in Napoleon's plan for winning back a colonial empire for France. Had not the Haitians stopped the French generals here, Louisiana would have been invaded next with grave danger to the youthful United States.

where we arrived Decr. 21st where we were detained until february 9, 1807 & then permitted to proceed to New Orleans arriving there March 3d, 1807, shortly after which Captn. Lloyd Jones took charge of the ship Thomas again.

Left New Orleans for Philadelphia April 16, 1807 and arrived in Philadelphia, May 3d, 1807, when shortly afterward, owing to the Chesapeake & Shannon affair,³ the long Embargo was laid on commerce, which detained me on shore at my English studies until 1809.

May 5th, 1809 left Philadelphia, and on the 9th the Capes of Delaware for Cagliavi, in Sardinia in the ship Active, Captn. Lloyd Jones, where we arrived on the 25th of June and sailed thence June 26th for Palermo, Isld. of Sicily where arrived July 2d, 1809, where we remained until the 5th September when sailed for Philadelphia.

November 27th at th[e Ca]pes, & December 2d at the City.

June 22, 1810 [illegible] bound for Liver [illegible] Ship Thalia of Phila. Captn. Lloyd Jones, arriving there July 24th, 1810.

September 2d left Liverpool for Philadelphia arriving at the Capes October 31st, 1810.

January 10th, 1811 left the city & 12th the Capes bound to Savannah in ship Thalia, Captn. Tristram Gardner, arriving there January 17th.

February 2d, 1811, left Savannah for Lisbon arriving there March 22 and discharged. May 2d, 1811 left Lisbon for Savannah arriving there June 8th and on the 25th left the Thalia at Five fathom hole.

July 5th, 1811 left Savannah for New York in the ship Atalanta of that Port, Capt. Joseph Burnham, arriving there July 10th. July 15 left New York for Savannah as 1st officer of the Packet brig Champlin Capt. Zebulon Miller, arriving there July 22d. July [(illegible) left Savanna]h for New York [illegible] when the Captn. left.

August 12th, 1811 left New York for City of [illegible] as Captn. of Packet Champlin, arriving there August 17th when gave her a thorough repair.

September 16, 1811 left for New York where arrived on the 23d and the yellow fever raging at Savannah she was laid up, on the 28th.

October 5th, 1811 engaged as 1st officer of ship Flora of New London, but Captn. Blake and myself disagreeing, about the 20th I left h[im].

October 21st, 1811 engaged as 1st officer of the Brig Aurora, of & bound to New Orleans. Capt. Saml Lake, leaving New York for N. O. December 2d, 1811 & arriving there Decr. 23d.

There being then every prospect of war with England, and fear of be-

³ The writer means the *Chesapeake-Leopard* affair of June, 1807, in which the British ship *Leopard* attacked the United States ship without warning in Lynnhaven Bay near Norfolk, Virginia, forced her to strike her colors, and impressed four of her seamen. This was the first time that impressment had been extended to an American vessel, and it caused such an outburst of rage in the United States that President Jefferson was only narrowly able to avert war. The *Chesapeake-Shannon* incident occurred on June 1, 1813, during the War of 1812, in which the British ship issued a challenge to the *Chesapeake* and defeated her in Massachusetts Bay after a brave battle.

ginning any Mercantile operations, I left the Aurora January 25th, 1812 and sailed for Philadelphia in Ship Ohio, Captn. [illegible] on the 27th January, arriving there Febry. 12th, 1812, where I again joined my old friend Captn. Lloyd Jones.

February 14th, 1812 I became of age & consequently free from my indentured engagement with my old and tried friend Captn. Lloyd Jones & turned my attention to the U. S. Navy for employ.

May 12, 1812. Received the appointment of first Master's mate of the frigate Constellation⁴ of 36 guns rate, but carrying 48 and ordered to the New York Station to await a draft of men for her, & Stationed on board Gunboat No. 99, Sailing Master Benn. Briant.

September 1st, 1812 left for Washington to join the Constellation, repairing there, being partly in charge of a draft of 96 seamen.

October 10th the Constellation anchored off of Greenleafs point.

Nov. 15th. Proceeded down the River Potomac.

January 16th, 1813 sailed from the Potomac to Annapolis, the bay being full of floating ice.

Jany. 26th, 1813. Stood down the bay from Annapolis.

Febry. 2d anchored in Hampton Roadstead.

February 3, 1813. Stood out to Sea, but when off Cape Henry were chased back by four British frigates. Ran up and moored the frigate between forts Norfolk & Nelson in Elizabeth River for the defences of Norfolk, being blockaded by the British Squadron.

February 18th, 1813 was the only officer saved from one of the frigates largest boats (sent out to relieve a vessel chased by the British boats) and which was upset by a flaw of wind. Lieut. Jos. Biggs & Midsn. S. Davis being drowned.

May 11th, 1813. Altho' still attached to the frigate was made Acting Master, and took Command of Gunboat No. 74 anchored near Craney Island, principally manned from the frigate.

June 20th, 1813. proceeded with 14 other gunboats to attack a British frigate, anchored alone in Hampton roads. Began to fire on her at peep of day, being formed in two divisions of boats, one off of her broadside, and the other raking her. In less than one hour we had silenced her, and compelled her to careen, to plug shot holes; when a breeze sprung up, just as we were approaching to capture, or set fire to her, which brought up to her assistance the Majestic Ragee[?], and Narcissus frigate, by which we were beat off and had to return to our anchorage. The frigate

⁴ Older than any other fighting ship of the United States Navy, the *Constellation* was launched in Baltimore in 1797. Her first commander was Commodore Truxton who had supervised her construction. Under him the ship won glory for her victories over the *Insurgente* and *La Vengeance* in the Caribbean during the Franco-American naval war. With Murray in command, the vessel saw action in the War with Tripoli. When the War of 1812 broke out, the frigate was being rebuilt at Washington, and was consequently blockaded in the Chesapeake. The *Constellation* made up for the fame lost here, however, in her later history, serving actively until after the Civil War. The old vessel was subsequently a training vessel, and today continues as an exhibit representative of the early days of the American Navy.

was the Junon, rated 44, which had several killed, & many wounded. (our loss one killed, and several wounded).

June 27th, 1813. At the request of Genl. Taylor⁵ Military commander of this division of country, Captn Jos. Tarbell⁶ of the *Constellation*, allowed one hundred and fifty officers, seamen and marines to land on Craney Island,⁷ to defend it against an anticipated attack during the night, and we landed there at sunset, and were stationed at a heavy battery near the Channel, where all the guns were mounted on iron, three wheel carriages. Bivouack't there that night.

June 22d, 1813 at break of day the British were discovered landing about 4 miles above us, and two divisions of boats preparing conjointly with the land forces, to attack the Island at its other extremity, where only one 24 one 18 and four 4 pounders could be brought against them, but they were beat off with many killed and wounded, and the loss of four boats, one of them the Admiral's own, the *Centepide* [*Centipede*], 58 ft. long, Mldn. B. Dulany, myself & eight men wading off to where she was sunk, and bringing in 26 prisoners from her. The British were about 2500 by land and water, and our force about 550 men of all arms.

August 1st, 1813. Having been promoted for this action, was ordered to Baltimore as Sail-Master of the Sloop of war *Erie*, building there Captn. C. G. Ridgely,⁸ late 1st Lt. of the *Constellation*.

March 12th, 1814, the *Erie* being ready and manned dropped below fort McHenry & anchored.

March 20th, 1814. Stood down & anchored off Annapolis.

March 23. Stood down the bay bound to sea, but when off of Gwinn's Island, was chased up again by a seventy four gun ship, & her tender.

March 26. Reached Baltimore again, when men being much wanted on lake Ontario, Capt. Ridgely and the officers and crew (excepting myself, left in command, two officers and twenty men) proceeded there.

August 24th, 1814. Received orders to be aid to Commodore Spence (Robt. T.)⁹ commanding this Station, and see to erecting marine batteries.

⁵ Brigadier General Robert Taylor of the Virginia Militia.

⁶ Captain Joseph Tarbell (c. 1780-1815) was appointed midshipman on the *Constitution* in 1798 and served on her in the naval war with France. In 1800 he was promoted to lieutenant, serving in the War against Tripoli, 1801-5. Tarbell was master of the Washington Naval Yard in 1806. During the War of 1812, he commanded first the *Constellation* and later the gunboat flotilla. He was finally made captain in 1813.

⁷ This island at the mouth of the Elizabeth River was fortified to command Norfolk harbor. The American victory here saved Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Gosport from attack by the British.

⁸ Charles Goodwin Ridgely (1784-1848), a native Baltimorean, entered the Navy as midshipman in 1799 to fight France. For his gallant conduct in the Tripolitan War, he received a vote of thanks and a sword. During the War of 1812 he served in the Great Lakes campaign and was promoted to commander in 1813. Later he commanded the West Indies squadron and the Brazil squadron and retired to private life after acting as commandant of the Baltimore Naval Yard.

⁹ Robert Trail Spence (c. 1785-1826) of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, became a midshipman in 1800 and was a hero of the War against Tripoli, being promoted to lieutenant in 1807. During the War of 1812, he was praised by Commodore John

September 8th, 1814. Ordered to anchor the Erie under my command, below Fort McHenry to defend the entrance of the Western Branch received officers and men from the Flotilla of Gunboats, and had the boats anchored both a head & a stern of the Erie.

September 12th, 1814 having at daylight discovered that the British had succeeded in forcing three frigates inside of the Man of War Shoals 15 miles below, and were coming up with a fine breeze, contrary to our expectations, I sent word to Commo. J. Rodgers¹⁰ then in command, and as our own broadside was too light to withstand frigates, was ordered to bring the ship near Baltre. again. Began to sink ships in the channel, and then was given by Commo. Rodgers the command of the most advanced battery between the Philadelphia & Sparrows Point road, three hundred yards in advance of all others, of three 12 pounders, thirty two officers & men, and military corps for small arms.

September 14th, 1814. The British having been foiled at all points retreated to their fleet and then proceeded down the bay, and I again took command of the ship Erie.

The winter proved very severe and the Erie was frozen up until february 15th, 1815 when hawled her to Donnell's wharf to refit her.

Peace having been made with England and the Erie being ordered to the Mediteranean, March 25th. Capt. Ridgely, the officers & men returned to the ship from the lake, and all haste was made in preparing for sea.

April 15th, 1815, having been offered the command of several vessels from Baltimore, I obtained a furlough and left the Sloop of war Erie. I first agreed to go as Captain of the Ship Baltimore, but after sometime there, her owner J. Byois and self disagreed and I left her & took charge, as Captn. & Supercargo, of the Brig Eugene of Baltimore belonging to Messrs. Rescaniere & Pascal to proceed to Tappahanock, and there be loaded by Geo. Tyson for Cadiz.

July 2d, 1815. Sailed from Baltimore and on July 5 anchored at Tappahanock and made immediate preparations to take in cargo while here discovered that owing to the age of the brig, she had numerous small leaks.

July 21, 1815. Got underway from Tappahanock & stood down the river Rappahanock for sea.

July 25th. Ran into Hampton Roads & proceeded to Norfolk to ship men which accomplished.

Rodgers for his services in obstructing the British fleet off Baltimore. At the end of the war he was made captain. Ordered to the West Indies fleet in 1826, he died at his seat in Baltimore County before he could take command.

¹⁰ John Rodgers (1773-1838) was born at Lower Susquehanna Ferry, and early entered the merchant trade. He became a second lieutenant on the *Constellation* during the naval war with France, and was made captain in 1799. He returned to the merchant trade in 1801, but entered the Navy again the next year. As commander of the blockading fleet off Tripoli, he fought in the War with the Barbary Corsairs. At the end of the war, Rodgers received command of the New York flotilla and Naval Station. He was a popular hero in the War of 1812, being the ranking officer in active service. When the new Board of Navy Commissioners was created in 1815, the Commodore was appointed to it, and continued to serve in Washington in various capacities until his death.

July 29th. Proceeded to sea, for Cadiz, Spain. Having been much damaged in hull & rigging and the brig leaking dreadfully from the heavy gales in August 1815 I was compelled to bear away for the Western Islands and on August 27, 1815 Anchored at Tayal, where owing to the damaged state of the vessel had to unload & repair, and was detained until October 29 when proceeded on from here for our destination, Cadiz.

November 21st, 1815. Arrived at Cadiz, and I consigned the brig & Cargo to Messrs. Bloomfield & Tunis.

January 1st, 1816. Having finished loading for Baltimore, sailed from Cadiz, this day, and February 17th, 1816 passed Cape Henry & stoop [sic] up bay reached Baltimore city on the 20th February.

Remained in command until March 13th, 1816.

March 26 was married to Miss Anna Maria McNulty and took a regular wedding travel on shore to Washington & elsewhere.

June 8th, 1816, took command of the Schooner Traveller, laying at Geo. Town, D. C.

June 10 left Geo. Town for Baltimore in Schr.

June 21. Reached Baltimore & made preparations to load for the West Indies.

July 12th, 1816. Sailed from Baltimore for St. Thomas.

July 16th. Got to sea.

August 7th. Arrived at St. Thomas' to try the Market.

August 12th. Sailed for Aux Cayes Isld. of Haity.

August 15. Anchored at Aux Cayes, and prepared to unload & reload remaining here until September 7th, 1816 when left Aux Cayes for Baltr.

Sept. 13th then off of Cape Tiberon, was taken possession of at 7 A.M. by a piratical Schooner manned with whites & blacks, and after most cruel, and shameful treatment, too long to recite here, and which doubtless was only the precursor of taking our lives, which they swore they would do, a chance providentially occurred at nightfall owing to a vessel approaching us, of which they were at first afraid, for us to escape in our two small boats, in which we were on the open ocean with only a bag of bread, only arriving September 15th at Jeremie where an English merchant T. B. Smith, Esq. received us most kindly, 10 in number.

Sept. 21, 1816 left Jeremie with all hands for Aux Cayes in a coasting boat without deck.

Sept. 25, 1816 reached Aux Cayes, made protest and then prepared to return home to Baltimore. Finding there would be no vessel from here for the United States Shortly, I proceeded across the Island to Port Aux Prince in hopes of then Succeeding better but after waiting until the 20th October, 1816, I took passage in the Haitian brig la Confiance, Capt. McHenry for Baltimore where we arrived November 15, 1816. & remained in Baltimore with my family until April 5th, 1817 when I sailed as passenger in ship Philip, Capt. Hancock for Hamburg, being appointed Agent of the Baltimore Insurance office, to proceed to Europe to reclaim & bring home the Schr. Plattsburg from Christiansand and in Norway which had been run away with by the crew who had murdered the Captain, Mate & Supercargo.

May 18th, 1817. I arrived at Hamburg and examined one of the mutineers & recd. some of the cash.

May 30th, left Hamburg for Keil enroute for Copenhagen.

June 1st. Left Kiel and arrived at Copenhagen.

June 2d, 1817 having had a fine passage fm. Kiel, Called on Mr. Säabie, U. S. Consul from whom received every facility & kindness, saw the six mutineers in jail here, & then prepared to leave for Christiansand where the Plattsburg was & shipped a crew for her, here with which June 14th, 1817 left Copenhagen in a Norwegian cutter belong to a Mr. Rosenchild of Christiansand.

Baltimore's Defender Against The King's Navy

Baltimore Sunday
SUN, 5/5/47

By ALFRED JONES

SHARP-FOCUS glimpses of the battles for Baltimore and Chesapeake Bay in the War of 1812 are given in the diary of Capt. George de la Roche, a photostat of which has been presented to the Maryland Historical Society by his great-grandson, Charles G. Page, of Baltimore.

The diary, written in the clear but rather ornate penmanship of the period, comprises a brief sketch of Captain de la Roche's family background, his life as a seaman and begins with the record of land and naval engagements in the bay early in 1813.

The diarist, son of Baron Frederick de la Roche, who was aide to Lafayette during the American Revolution, was born in 1790 in Philadelphia, where his family lived for some years after the war. American citizenship had been granted Baron de la Roche as a reward for his services to the colonies and he engaged in the shipping business.

Following financial reverses suffered by his father, young de la Roche became an apprentice seaman. He was released from his indenture when he became of age at the opening of the War of 1812 and became master's mate of the frigate *Constellation*, 48 guns.

British Blockade Too Tight

On February 3, 1813, young de la Roche first met the enemy. His entry for that day tells how the *Constellation* tried to break through the British blockade but failed:

"Stood out to sea, but when off Cape Henry were chased back by four British frigates. Ran up and moored the frigate (the *Constellation*) between Forts Norfolk and Nelson in Elizabeth River for the defense of Norfolk, being blocked by the British squadron."

The incident was the beginning of some brisk fights in the lower bay and five days later the captain makes this entry:

"Was the only officer saved from one of the frigate's longest boats (sent out to relieve

a vessel chased by one of the British boats) and which was upset by a flow of wind"——

On June 20, 1813, young de la Roche, then acting master of gunboat No. 74, proceeded with fourteen other gunboats to attack a British frigate anchored in Hampton Roads.

Breeze Saves Shattered Frigate

"Began to fire at the peep of day," he writes, "being formed in two divisions of boats, one on her broadside and the other raking her. In less than an hour we had silenced her and compelled her to careen to plug shot holes . . . breeze sprang up just as we were approaching to capture or set fire to her, which brought up to her assistance the *Majestic* Roger and *Narcissus*, frigates, by which we were beat off and had to return to our anchorage . . . our loss one killed, several wounded."

Next day de la Roche was one of 150 officers and men put ashore on Craney Island to defend it against an anticipated attack by the British during the night.

" . . . At the break of the day," he says, "the British were discovered landing about 4 miles above us, and two divisions of boats preparing conjointly with the land forces to attack the island at its other extremity—but they were beat off with many killed and wounded, and the loss of four boats, one of them the admiral's own, the *Centipede*, 58-feet long. Midshipman B. Dulaney, myself and eight men wading (waded) off to where she was sunk and bringing in 26 prisoners from her. The British were about 2,500 by land and water and our force about 550 men of all arms."

To Sloop-Of-War Here

On August 1, 1813, de la Roche was promoted because of this action and he was ordered to Baltimore as sailing master of the sloop-of-war *Erie*, then being built here.

She was to be commanded by Captain C. G. Ridgely, who had been first lieutenant of the *Constellation*. The *Erie* was completed and manned by March 12, 1814, and she was sailed down the river below Fort McHenry, where she anchored. Busy days followed for Sailing Master de la Roche as a series of brief entries in his diary show:

"March 20, 1814. Stood down and anchored off Annapolis.

"March 23. Stood down the bay bound to sea, but when off Gwinns Island was chased up again by a 74-gun ship and her tender.

Some Sent To Lake Ontario

"March 26. Reached Baltimore again, when men being much wanted on Lake Ontario, Captain Ridgely and the officers and crew (excepting myself, left in command, two officers and twenty men) proceeded there.

"August 24, 1814. Received orders to be aid to Commodore Spense (Robert P.) commanding this station, and see to erecting marine batteries.

"September 8. Ordered to anchor the *Erie* under my command below Fort McHenry to defend the entrance of the Western Branch, received officers and men from the flotilla of gunboats and had the boats anchored both ahead and astern of the *Erie*.

"September 12. Having at daylight discovered that the British had succeeded in forcing three frigates inside of the Man-of-War Shoals 15 miles below and were coming up with a fine breeze, contrary to our expectations; I send word to Commodore Rodgers, then in command, and as our broadside was too light to withstand frigates, was ordered to bring the ship near Baltimore again. Began to sink ships in the channel [Note: presumably to block the enemy approach] and then was given by Commodore Rodgers the command of the most advanced battery between the Philadelphia and Sparrows Point road, 300 yards in advance of all others. . . .

"September 14, 1814. The British having been foiled at all points retreated to their fleet and then proceeded down the bay, and I again took command of the ship *Erie*.

"The winter proved very severe and the *Erie* was frozen up until February 15, 1815, when hauled her to Donnell's wharf to refit her. Peace having been made with England, and the *Erie* ordered to the Mediterranean March 25."

That marked the end of Captain de la Roche's war career. He entered commercial shipping again and subsequently went into business with a Mr. McNulty in Philadelphia. He married his partner's daughter, Anna Maria. She died in 1822, and in 1825 he married a Miss Belt, of Baltimore, from whom Mr. Page and his brother, Henry L. Page are descended.

Captain de la Roche is believed to have lived for a time in Baltimore, before making his permanent residence in Georgetown, D.C., where he died in 1861.

From French Nobility

Captain de la Roche always had keen interest in his family history and records compiled by him—in addition to the short diary just quoted in part—show that one of his ancestors was the Count de la Roche, who fled Provence, France in 1572 as a result of religious persecution (he was a Protestant) and lived in Germany. He married the Princess von Lichtenstein. Another ancestor, Baron Antoine Michael Franck de la Roche was Chancellor and Prime Minister to the Archbishop of Treves.

Captain de la Roche's father was a son of the Prime Minister, and after reverses in the shipping business in Philadelphia he joined the allied forces fighting Napoleon I. He was killed at the Battle of Austerlitz when leading his troops across a frozen lake to attack Napoleon's flank. The Emperor, seeing the hostile troops advancing, ordered cannoners to fire and break the ice under them.