

# THOMAS SAPPINGTON'S LAST LONG SLEEP

HE ONCE SAVED GENERAL GRANT  
FROM BEING KIDNAPPED BY  
SOUTHERNERS.

Plot Concocted to Catch Him on a  
Visit to His Farm.

A thousand citizens of St. Louis County assembled at the old Sappington family homestead near Sappington, Carondelet Township, yesterday afternoon and attended the funeral of Thomas Jefferson Sappington, who died Friday afternoon.

Rev. J. B. Clayton of Kirkwood conducted the funeral services. The cortege was the largest ever seen in the county. The pallbearers were Jonah Sappington, J. H. Zelch, Henry Creelius, Christian Hawken, Aas Tesoon and Peter Seim, all of whom are prominent citizens of the county and were intimate friends of Mr. Sappington.

Old citizens of the county who were neighbors of Mr. Sappington, yesterday recalled an incident which was enacted during the war between the North and South, in which Mr. Sappington and General Grant were the principal actors. General Grant, while he lived on his farm in the county, was a near neighbor to Mr. Sappington, and they were warm friends and spent much time together. Mr. Sappington sympathized with the people of the South, but he did not approve of the secession of the States from the Union, and he enlisted in the Second Regiment of Missouri militia in defense of the flag under which his forefathers marched and fought in Revolutionary days and also in the war of 1812. He was First Lieutenant in Captain Singleton's mounted company, which was the only mounted company in the Second Regiment.

During the war General Grant several times visited his farm in St. Louis County and each time he also visited his friend, Jeff Sappington, as he called him. It was in 1864 that Mr. Sappington learned that a number of the most radical sympathizers with South, some of whom were at their homes in the county, on furloughs from the Southern Army, had planned to capture General Grant when he visited his farm and take him South as a prisoner. When Mr. Sappington learned that some of those who were to take part in the proposed capture had proposed that the General be shot or hanged, he determined to thwart the scheme. When he was convinced that the attempt to capture or kill his old friend would be made he hurried to St. Louis and met General Grant just as he was starting out to his farm. The result was a disappointment to the men who were lying in ambush for Grant.

Thomas, nephew  
John's son  
1832-  
1897

"Jeff"  
1864

# THOMAS JEFFERSON SAPPINGTON'S DEATH.

THE PIONEER OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY  
PASSED AWAY AT THE OLD  
HOMESTEAD.

Descendant of a Remarkable Family  
and Had Quite a Career.

Thomas Jefferson Sappington, aged 63 years, a native of St. Louis County and one of its best and most highly respected citizens, died Friday afternoon at the old family homestead, where he was born, near Sappington, Carondelet Township.

The funeral services will be conducted at the home of the family this afternoon at 3 o'clock, and the remains will be interred in the family burying ground near Sappington.

Thomas Jefferson Sappington was an honored member of one of the pioneer and most highly respected families of the county. His grandfather, John Sappington, was born in England and during the revolutionary period came to the United States in company with his brother James and settled in Maryland. Later he moved to Kentucky, where, on May 22, 1790, John, the father of Thomas Jefferson Sappington, was born. Besides John there were 17 other children, who later became citizens and heads of families in Missouri. In 1806 John Sappington and his wife and 16 children came to Missouri and settled on a 240-acre tract of land in Carondelet Township. He added purchases of land until his farm contained 2,000 acres, which was in after years divided and occupied by his children. In 1815 he established on his farm a tannery, the capacity of which was increased until it had 30 vats. In 1815 he quit the tanning business and devoted himself to farming the remainder of his life when not giving his time to the development of the county and the advancement of the interests of its inhabitants. In 1852 he received from the St. Louis Agricultural and Mechanical Association a premium for the model farm in the State.

In the war of 1812 John Sappington was a volunteer under Colonel Nathan Boone, son of Daniel Boone, the Kentucky and Missouri pioneer, and he was the first of the 150 horsemen to plunge into the Mississippi River and led the way across to Illinois, whither they went to join Governor Edwards. He had swam the Mississippi River when he first entered Missouri, and that was the reason for his selection to lead the gallant 1,500 in crossing the river.

John Sappington took an active part in politics. He was a Whig, and he was three times chosen to represent St. Louis County in the Legislature. In 1836 he was chosen an elector in the Third Congressional District, and was one of the men who cast the vote of the State for Van Buren for President.

John Sappington was married January 8, 1818, to Miss Sarah Wells, daughter of Joseph Wells, of Carondelet. They had 11 children, one of whom was Thomas Jefferson Sappington. John Sappington died March 17, 1861. Thomas Jefferson Sappington was born in November, 1832. His first wife was Miss Lemingwell, a sister of H. W. Lemingwell, of Kirkwood. They had two sons, Louis and Wallace, the latter now a doctor living on the Tesson Ferry road, three miles south of Affton, Carondelet Township. His second wife was a Miss Lemingwell, cousin to his first wife. They had three sons, John, Bird and Clarence, the first named a physician residing at Sappington, and the other two living at the old home.

Thomas Jefferson Sappington spent his life as a farmer, but always took a lively interest in movements and work for the advancement of the interests of all classes in the county. He was a Democrat and served many years as a member of the County Central Committee. In 1838, when the Democrats put in the field a full ticket and when none even hoped for the election of any candidate, he made the race for State Senator. After the reparation of the county from the city in 1877, he was one of the three commissioners who selected the site for Clayton, the county seat. He was many years a director of the public school in Concord district, Carondelet Township.

SAPPINGTON HOUSE GUIDES: For your information. This excerpt pertains to the reverse painting on the Banjo Clock. Since we cannot walk visitors across the living room - at least we will know what the picture represents.

The painting shows the Eagle & Shield in the center with the name HULL at the bottom. Thirteen stars are painted below the Eagle. There are two ships - The Constitution and the Guerriere. We've heard of "Old Ironsides" forever but I wonder how many of us remembered that is the nickname for a ship called the "Constitution". So, the painting on the glass of the clock depicts the victory of the war of 1812, - between the two ships. "Hull" was the Captain of the Constitution.

CONSTITUTION, a United States frigate familiarly known as "Old Ironsides," is the most famous ship in the annals of American history. She was one of the first three frigates built for the United States navy; designed by Joshua Humphreys of Philadelphia, her keel was laid at Hartt's shipyard, Boston, in 1794. Construction was temporarily suspended in 1795 when a tenuous peace was reached with Algiers.

Work on the "Constitution" was undertaken again when the need arose to resist the depredations of French privateers then

infesting American waters. She was launched in 1797, and, under Captain Samuel Nicholson, saw her first service in the quasi war with France.

The over-all length of the "Constitution" was 204 ft., breadth of beam 43 ft. 6 in., depth of hold 14 ft. 3 in., displacement 2,200 tons, gun range 1,200 yards. She was originally built of well-seasoned live oak, red cedar and hard pine. Bolts which fastened her timbers and the copper sheathing on the bottom were made by Paul Revere.

Rated as a 44-gun frigate, she, however, generally carried more than 50 guns and a crew of over 450. Original cost of the vessel was \$302,718.84 including guns and equipment.

In the successful war against the Tripolitan pirates (1801-1805) the "Constitution" was Commodore E. Preble's flagship, and peace was signed aboard her. During the War of 1812 she achieved an enduring place in the American tradition. On Aug. 19, 1812, when morale in the United States was at a low ebb, the "Constitution," commanded by Capt. Isaac Hull won a brilliant victory over the British frigate "Guerriere." Tradition has it that during this engagement the American sailors, on seeing British shot failing to penetrate the staunch oak sides of their ship, dubbed her "Old Ironsides." This frigate duel was followed by numerous other victories hardly less notable, including destruction of H.M.S. "Java" (Dec. 29, 1812) when the "Constitution" was commanded by Capt. William Bainbridge.

The historic old ship was condemned as unseaworthy and it was recommended that she be broken up in 1828. She was saved, however, when the poem "Old Ironsides" by Oliver Wendell Holmes aroused public sentiment. Through subsequent rebuildings the "Constitution" retained, insofar as possible, her original appearance and characteristics.

After a restoration (1927-1931) she called at 90 U.S. ports on both coasts, and was visited by more than 4,500,000 people. Returning to Boston in 1934 she has been permanently berthed there and open to the public. "Old Ironsides" remained on the list of commissioned vessels in the United States navy.

See F. A. Magoun, *The Frigate Constitution and Other Historic Ships* (1928); and H. I. Chapelle, *The History of the American Sailing Navy* (1949).  
(J. B. H.N.)

#### CONSTITUTION AND CONSTITUTIONAL LAW.

The term "constitution" means in its wider sense the whole scheme whereby a country is governed; and this includes much else besides law. The constitutional lawyer must constantly keep glancing backward into constitutional history; he must also keep his eye on current political practice and the day-to-day working of political institutions. In its narrower sense "constitution" means the leading legal rules, usually collected into some document which comes to be almost venerated as "The Constitution." But no country's constitution can ever be compressed within the compass of one document and even where the attempt has been made it is necessary to consider the extralegal rules, customs and conventions that grow up around the formal document. (For the relationships of the U.S. constitution to constitutional law, see *United States*, below.)

Also mentioned in this excerpt is Paul Revere (1735-1818) the silversmith/coppersmith who made the copper sheathing on the bottom of the ship. Does that remind you of our Revere Ware pots and pans with their copper bottoms?

Many thanks to Elaine Moser for bringing us a copy of this from her Encyclopedia Britannica - 1961 Edition.

Aug 19, 1990  
ON THIS DAY

On Aug. 19, 1812, the warship Constitution, also known as "Old Ironsides," defeated the British frigate Guerriere in a naval battle east of Nova Scotia in the War of 1812. It was a victory that made a hero of Capt. Isaac Hull, and boosted American morale in the early part of the war.