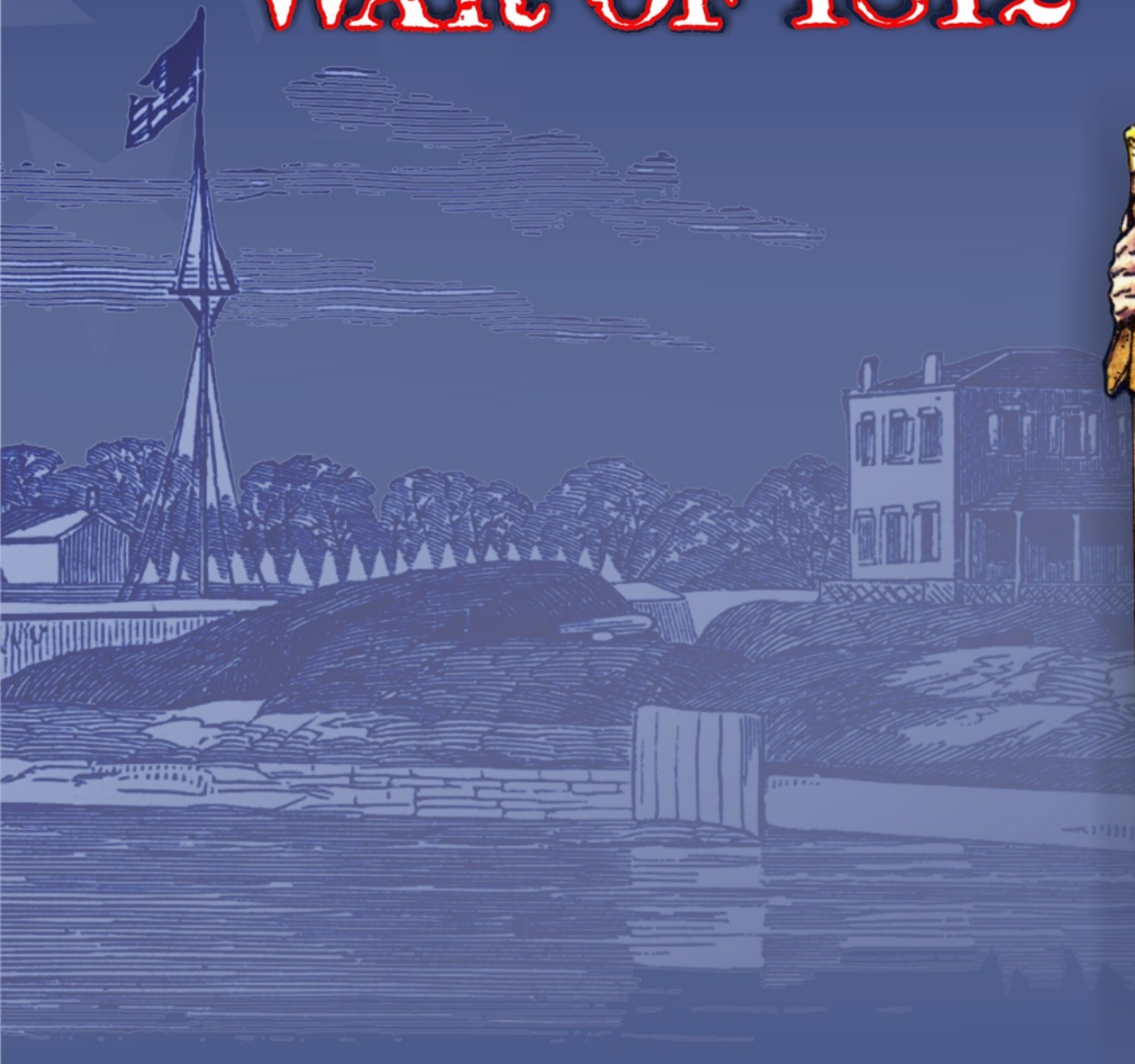


Edenton's Iredell Family *and the* **WAR OF 1812**



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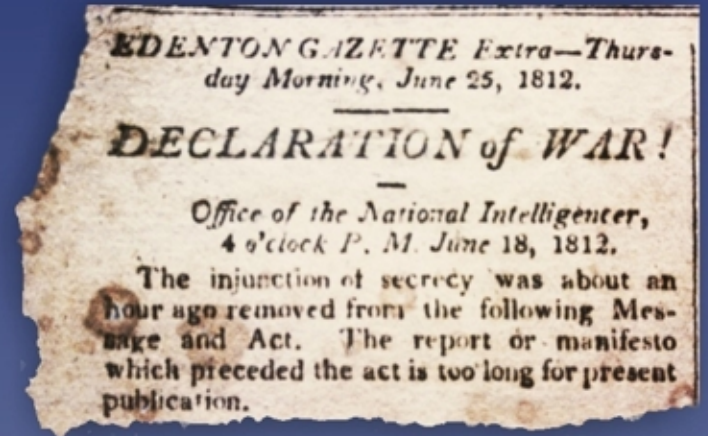
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Edenton and the War Of 1812

The United States declared war on Great Britain in June of 1812.

Not everyone was happy about the decision. Although Pres. James Madison's Democratic - Republican Party supported it, many members of the Federalist Party opposed it. The tension between the two parties appeared in Edenton during the election of 1812, when Federalists accused soldiers under the command of Capt. Jesse Copeland of intimidating voters at the Chowan County Courthouse.



The announcement of war from the June 25, 1812 Edenton Gazette. See page 3 for the full declaration.

A sailor, who had enlisted in the company, having courage enough to vote for the federal ticket, was advancing to do so, when he was seized by the gang of soldiers, headed by one of their officers, in the court-house, in the very presence of the Sheriff, and by violence withheld from the polls.

- Edenton Gazette, October 13, 1812

Although Democratic-Republicans denied that the events described took place, tensions remained, and Captain Copeland continued to come under fire from Federalists for several months afterwards.

By the summer of 1813, rumors of a British naval fleet approaching the North Carolina coast caused alarm in many coastal towns. Edenton, as a port town, was also anxious, and some residents left town seeking a safer haven from the feared attack.

The James Iredell family fled to the Hermitage Plantation in Martin County, owned by James Iredell Jr.'s uncle Samuel Johnston. Meanwhile, Edenton made plans to defend itself. In a letter dated June 18, 1813, Annie, James's eldest sister, reported seeing local troops in Edenton.

I have not yet seen the fortifications that have been erected; but it is thought they will defend the town from any force it is probable the English will send against it though indeed, there seems to be no inducement for them to send a force here at all. Militia to the amount of seven hundred had been assembled here before intelligence was of the departure of the enemy. One or two companies have arrived since, two or three corps of volunteers offered their services. It is proposed, I believe to retain a small body of troops here for some time. And a very strict guard is kept up every night.

President Madison declared the war over in February of 1815. Although British troops invaded Ocracoke and Portsmouth Islands, they never appeared in Edenton.

The Edenton Gazette published this full page copy of the Declaration of War against England.

Edenton Gazette.

EDENTON: PRINTED BY JAMES WILLS.

Vol. VII.—Num. 334.

Declaration of War !!

EDENTON GAZETTE Extra—Thursday Morning, June 25, 1812.

DECLARATION of WAR!

Office of the National Intelligencer, 4 o'clock P. M. June 18, 1812.

The injunction of secrecy was about on four ago removed from the following Message and Act. The report or manifesto which preceded the act is too long for present publication.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.

I communicate to Congress certain documents, being a continuation of those heretofore laid before them, on the subject of our affairs with Great-Britain.

Without going back beyond the renewal of 1803 of the war in which Great-Britain is engaged, and omitting unrequited wrongs of inferior magnitude, the conduct of her government presents a series of acts hostile to the United States, as an independent and neutral nation.

British cruisers have been in the continued practice of violating the American flag on the great highway of nations, and of seizing and carrying off persons sailing under it—not in the exercise of a belligerent right, founded on the law of nations against an enemy, but of a municipal prerogative over British subjects. British jurisdiction is thus extended to neutral vessels in a situation where no laws can operate but the law of nations and the laws of the country to which the vessels belong—and a self-dress is assumed, which, if British subjects were wrongfully detained & alone concerned, is that substitution of force for a resort to the responsible sovereign, which falls within the definition of war. Could the seizure of British subjects, in such cases, be regarded as within the exercise of a belligerent right, the acknowledged laws of war, which forbid an article of captured property to be adjudged, without a regular investigation before a competent tribunal, would imperiously demand the fairest trial where the sacred rights of persons were at issue. In place of such a trial, the rights are subjected to the will of every petty commander.

The practice, hence, is so far from affecting British subjects alone, that unless present searching for these, thousands of American citizens, under the safeguard of public law, and of their national flag, have been torn from their country and from every thing dear to them—have been dragged on board ships of war of a foreign nation, and exposed under the severities of their discipline, to be exiled to the most distant and deadly climes, to risk their lives in the battles of their oppressors, and to be the melancholy instruments of taking away those of their own brethren.

Against this crying enormity, which Great-Britain would be so prompt to avenge if committed against herself, the United States have in vain exhausted remonstrances and expostulations. And that no proof might be wanting of their conciliatory dispositions, and no pretext left for a continuance of the practice, the British government was formally assured of the readiness of the United States to enter into arrangements, such as could not be rejected, if the recovery of British subjects were the real and sole object.—The communication passed without effect.

British cruisers have been in the practice also of violating the rights and the peace of our coasts. They hover over and harass our entering and departing commerce. To this most insulting pretensions they added the most lawless proceedings in our very harbors—and have wantonly spilt American blood within the sanctuary of our territorial jurisdiction. The principles and rules enforced by that nation, when a neutral nation, against armed vessels of belligerents hovering near her coasts, and disturbing her commerce, are well known. When called on nevertheless by the United States to punish the greater offences committed by her own vessels, her government has bestowed on their commanders additional marks of honor and confidence.

Under pretended blockades, without the presence of an adequate force, and sometimes without the probability of applying our commerce has been plundered in every sea, the great staples of our country have been cut off from their legitimate markets, and a destructive blow aimed at our agricultural and maritime interests. In aggravation of these predatory measures, they have been considered as ill forerunners from the dates of their notification; a retrospective effect being thus added, as has been done in other important cases, to the unlawfulness of the course pursued.—And to render the outrage the more signal, these mock blockades have been reiterated and enforced in the face of official communications from the British government declaring, as the true definition of a legal blockade, "that particular ports must be ac-

tually invested, and previous warning given to vessels bound to them, not to enter."

Not content with these occasional expedients for laying waste our neutral trade, the cabinet of Great-Britain resorted, at length, to the sweeping system of blockades, under the name of the Orders in Council, which has been moulded and managed, as might best suit its political views, its commercial jealousies, or the avidity of British cruisers.

To our remonstrances against the complicated and transcendent injustice of this innovation, the first reply was that the Orders were reluctantly adopted by Great-Britain as a necessary retaliation on Decrees of her enemy proclaiming a general blockade of the British Isles, at a time when the naval force of that enemy dared not issue from his own ports. She was reminded, without effect, that her own prior blockade, unsupported by an adequate naval force actually applied and continued, were a bar to this plea; that executed edicts against millions of our property could not be retaliation on Edicts confessedly impossible to be executed; that retaliation, to be just, should fall on the party setting the guilty example, not on an innocent party, which was not even chargeable with an acquiescence with it.

When deprived of this flimsy veil for a prohibition of our trade with her enemy, by the repeal of his prohibition of our trade with Great-Britain, her cabinet, instead of a corresponding repeal or a practical discontinuance of its Orders, formally avowed a determination to persist in them against the U. States, until the markets of her enemy should be laid open to British products; thus asserting an obligation on a neutral power to require one belligerent to encourage, by its internal regulations, the trade of another belligerent; contradicting her own practice towards all nations in peace as well as in war; and betraying the insincerity of those professions which inculcated a belief that, having resorted to her Orders with regret, she was anxious for finding an occasion for putting an end to them.

Abandoning still more all respect for the neutral rights of the U. States, and for its own consistency, the British government now demands as pre-requisites to a repeal of its orders, as they relate to the U. States, that a formality should be observed in the repeal of the French Decrees no wise necessary to their termination, nor exemplified by British usage; and that the French repeal, besides including that portion of the Decrees which operates within a territorial jurisdiction, as well as that which operates on the high seas against the commerce of the United States, should not be a single special repeal in relation to the United States, but should be extended to whatever other neutral nations unconnected with them may be affected by those Decrees. And as an additional insult, they are called on for a formal disavowal of conditions and pretensions advanced by the French government, for which the U. States are so far from having made themselves responsible, that in official explanations, which have been published to the world, in a correspondence of the American Minister at London with the British Minister of Foreign Affairs, such a responsibility was explicitly and emphatically disclaimed.

It has become indeed sufficiently certain that the commerce of the U. States is to be sacrificed, not as interfering with the belligerent rights of Great-Britain, not as supplying the wants of her enemies, which she herself supplies, but as interfering with the monopoly which she covets for her own commerce and navigation. She carries on a war against the lawful commerce of a friend, that she may the better carry on a commerce with an enemy, a commerce polluted by the forgeries and perjuries which are for the most part the only passports by which it can succeed.

Anxious to make every experiment short of the last resort of injured nations, the United States have withheld from Great-Britain, under successive modifications, the benefits of a free intercourse with their market, the loss of which could not but outweigh the profits accruing from her restrictions of our commerce with other nations. And to entitle these experiments to the more favorable consideration, they were so framed as to enable her to place her adversary under the exclusive operation of them.—To these appeals her government has been equally inflexible, as if willing to make sacrifices of every sort, rather than yield to the claims of justice, or renounce the errors of a false pride.—Nay, so far were the attempts carried, to overcome the attachment of the British cabinet to its unjust Edicts, that it received every encouragement, within the competency of the executive branch of our government, to expect that a repeal of them would be followed by a war between the U. States and France, unless the French Edicts should also be repealed.—Even this communication, altho' silencing forever the plea of a disposition in the

U. States to acquiesce in those Edicts, originally the plea for them, received no attention.

If no other proof existed of a pre-determination of the British government against a repeal of its Orders, it might be found in the correspondence of the Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States at London, and the British Secretary for Foreign Affairs in 1810, on the question whether the blockade of May, 1806, was considered as in force or as not in force. It had been ascertained that the French government, which urged this blockade as the ground of its Berlin Decree, was willing, in the event of its removal, to repeal that decree; which being followed by alternate repeals of the other offensive edicts, might abolish the whole system on both sides. This inviting opportunity for accomplishing an object so important to the United States, and professed so often to be the desire of both the belligerents, was made known to the British government. As that government admits that an actual application of an adequate force is necessary to the existence of a legal blockade, and it was notorious, that if such a force had ever been applied, its long discontinuance had annulled the blockade in question, there could be no sufficient objection on the part of Great-Britain to a formal revocation of it; and no imaginable objection to a declaration of the fact that the blockade did not exist. The declaration would have been inconsistent with her avowed principles of blockade, and would have enabled the United States to demand from France the pledged repeal of her decrees; either with success, in which case the way would have been opened for a general repeal of the belligerent edicts; or without success, in which case the U. States would have been justified in turning their measures exclusively against France. The British government would, however, neither rescind the blockade nor declare its non-existence; nor permit its non-existence to be inferred & affirmed by the American plenipotentiary. On the contrary by representing the blockade to be comprehended in the Orders in Council, the United States were compelled so to regard it in their subsequent proceedings.

There was a period when a favorable change in the policy of the British cabinet was justly considered as established. The Minister Plenipotentiary of his Britannic Majesty here proposed an adjustment of the differences more immediately endangering the harmony of the two countries. The proposition was accepted with a promptitude and cordiality corresponding with the invariable professions of this government. A foundation appeared to be laid for a sincere and lasting reconciliation. The prospect, however, quickly vanished.—The whole proceeding was disavowed by the British government without an explanation which could at that time repress the belief, that the disavowal proceeded from a spirit of hostility to the commercial rights and prosperity of the U. States. And it has since come into proof, that at the very moment when the public minister was holding the language of friendship, and inspiring confidence in the sincerity of the negotiation with which he was charged, a secret agent of his government was employed in intrigues, having for their object a subversion of our government, and a dismemberment of our happy Union.

In reviewing the conduct of Great-Britain towards the United States, our attention is necessarily drawn to the warfare just renewed by the savages, on one of our extensive frontiers—a warfare which is known to spare neither age nor sex, and to be distinguished by features peculiarly shocking to humanity. It is difficult to account for the activity and combinations which have for some time been developing themselves among the tribes in constant intercourse with British traders and garrisons, without connecting their hostility with that influence—and without recollecting the authenticated examples of such interpositions heretofore furnished by the officers and agents of that government.

Such is the spectacle of injuries and indignities which have been heaped on our country—and such the crisis which its unexampled forbearance and conciliatory efforts have not been able to avert. It might at least have been expected, that an enlightened nation, if less urged by moral obligations, or invited by friendly dispositions on the part of the United States, would have found in its true interest alone a sufficient motive to respect their rights and their tranquility on the high seas—that an enlarged policy would have favored that free and general circulation of commerce, in which the British nation is at all times interested, and which in times of war is the best alleviation of its calamities to herself, as well as to other belligerents—and more especially that the British cabinet would not for the sake of a precarious and surreptitious intercourse with hostile markets, have persevered in a course of

Mr. Erskine had arranged the dispute with America relative to the Orders in Council. In that arrangement nothing was brought forward with regard to this blockade. America was committed at that time to a certain course.

measures which necessarily put at hazard the invaluable market of a great and growing country, disposed to cultivate the mutual advantages of an active commerce.

Other councils have prevailed. Our moderation and conciliation have had no other effect than to encourage perseverance, and to enlarge pretensions. We behold our suffering citizens still the daily victims of lawless violence committed on the great common and highway of nations, even within sight of the country which owes them protection.

We behold our vessels, freighted with the products of our soil and industry, or returning with the honest proceeds of them, wrested from their lawful destinations, confiscated by prize courts no longer the organs of public law, but the instruments of arbitrary edicts; and their unfortunate crews dispersed and lost, or forced or inveigled in British ports into British fleets; whilst arguments are employed, in support of these aggressions, which have no foundation but in a principle equally supporting a claim to regulate our external commerce in all cases whatsoever.

We behold, in fine, on the side of Great-Britain, a state of war against the U. States; and on the side of the United States a state of peace towards Great-Britain.

Whether the United States shall continue passive under these progressive usurpations, and these accumulating wrongs; or, opposing force to force in defence of their natural rights, shall commit a just cause into the hands of the Almighty Disposer of events; avoiding all connections which might entangle it in the contests or views of other powers, and preserving a constant readiness to concur in an honorable re-establishment of peace and friendship, is a solemn question, which the constitution wisely confides to the legislative department of the government. In recommending it to their early deliberations, I am happy in the assurance that the decision will be worthy the enlightened and patriotic councils of a virtuous, a free, and a powerful nation.

Having presented this view of the relations of the United States with Great-Britain and of the solemn alternative growing out of them, I proceed to remark that the communication last made to Congress on the subject of our relations with France will have shown that, since the revocation of her decrees as they violated the neutral rights of the United States, her government has authorized illegal captures, by its privateers and public ships, and that other outrages have been practised on our vessels and our citizens; it will have been seen also, that no indemnity had been provided, or satisfactorily pledged, for the extensive spoils committed under the violent and retrospective orders of the French government against the property of our citizens seized within the jurisdiction of France. I abstain at this time from recommending to the consideration of Congress definitive measures with respect to that nation, in the expectation, that the result of a closed discussion between our Minister Plenipotentiary at Paris and the French government will speedily enable Congress to decide, with greater advantage, on the course due to the rights, the interest, and the honor of our country.

JAMES MADISON.

Washington, June 1st, 1812.

AN ACT

Declaring War between the United Kingdom of Great-Britain and Ireland and the dependencies thereof, and the United States of America and their Territories.

BE it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That WAR be and the same is hereby declared to exist between the United Kingdom of Great-Britain and Ireland and the dependencies thereof, and the United States of America and their territories; and that the President of the United States be and he is hereby authorized to use the whole land and naval forces of the United States to carry the same into effect, and to issue to private armed vessels of the United States commissions of letters of marque and general reprisal, in such form as he shall think proper and under the seal of the United States, against the vessels, goods, and effects of the government of the same United Kingdom of Great-Britain and Ireland, and of the subjects thereof.

June 18, 1812.

APPROVED.

JAMES MADISON.

NEGATIVES.

The Senators who voted against the war, were the six Federal Senators, and Messrs. Gilman, New-Hampshire, Howell, Rhode-Island, German, New-York, Lambert, New-Jersey, Reed, Maryland, Pope, Kentucky, and Worthington, Ohio.

Both Houses of Congress were sitting with closed doors on Friday.

James Iredell, Jr

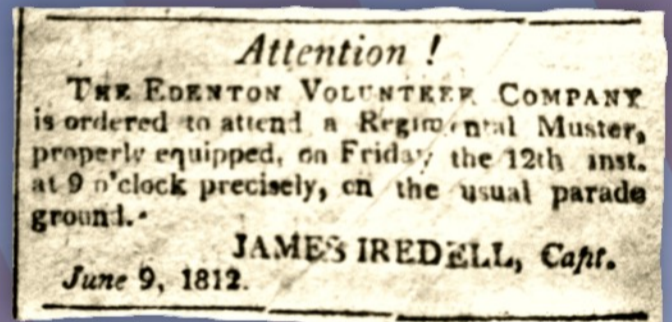
James Iredell, Jr. (November 2, 1788- April 13, 1853) was the son of James Iredell (October 5, 1751 - October 20, 1799), an early North Carolina Attorney General and an Associate Justice on the first United States Supreme Court, as appointed in 1791 by George Washington. James Jr.'s mother, Hannah Johnston Iredell, was the sister of Samuel Johnston, a North Carolina governor and United States senator.



James Iredell Jr. late in life, circa 1850.

James Iredell Jr. attended Edenton Academy, the College of New Jersey (Princeton University), and was admitted to the North Carolina Bar in 1809.

By 1812 James Iredell Jr. was a 24-year-old attorney when he was commissioned as a captain in the Chowan County Militia, but he never saw active duty in the Chowan Regiment.



A militia muster announcement from Iredell. Edenton Gazette.

In August of 1814, after the British burned Washington, D.C., Pres. James Madison ordered fifteen hundred militia troops from North Carolina to defend Norfolk, Virginia.



The U.S. Capitol after being burned by the British, 1814. Library of Congress.

Capt. Iredell commanded the "Bertie Detachment," assigned to North Carolina's First Regiment. He wrote his mother, October 5, 1814, informing her he was "to march for Norfolk, Virginia, and expected to arrive Sunday next." Hannah Iredell, upset by James's choice to march off to war, responded on October 15, 1814.

I feel unceasing uneasiness & pain in thinking of you my Dear James and of your imprudence in placing yourself in a situation so little consistent with your duty & in which you can acquire nothing by any means to the sacrifices you have made, to your own profession, you had fair prospect of gaining a reputation, your independence. Let me ask you what you expect as Capt. of a militia company or what great service you can render to your country or yourself that justify you, in having quitted the business of your clients, which they have trusted to your care and of throwing it away for six months in scenes where you can acquire very little useful information. You may contract habits that may be injurious to you for the rest of your life. Business of clients, which they had trusted to your care, & of throwing away another to reflect on your indiscretion, to prevail on you to return to your other duties the first moment you can with honor...

By November 3, Captain Iredell had arrived in Norfolk and wrote of his daily routine to his sister, Annie.

[O]n my return from a seven hour tedious attendance on a General Court Martial which is sitting in Norfolk and for which I act as Judge Advocate You need not be afraid that the amusements of Norfolk will distract my mind, for if there are any in the place we have little opportunity of partaking in them. I seldom go there except on business.... Indeed the duties of my station confine me closely to the Camp. We are roused between daylight and sunrise by the Reveille.... From nine until eleven the officers drill their companies and from then till sunset the Regiment is exercised—this together with making our reports and returns, forms the ordinary routine of our duty. Every other day one of the captains is selected as officer of the Guard, at the outpost, which is three miles from this place. I have fortunately escaped this disagreeable service, thus far, having been engaged for this last fortnight having Court Martial duty.

Iredell's troops never saw battle. Measles invaded the camp of the First Regiment, and two hundred men died from the disease. Captain Iredell returned from the War of 1812 as a brigadier-general of the North Carolina Militia and was discharged in 1815. He resumed his law practice and his political career, eventually becoming a North Carolina legislator, governor, and United States senator.

Iredell married his cousin Frances Tredwell in 1815. Together they had eleven children, with three sons serving with the Confederates during the Civil War. Maj. James J. Iredell was killed in 1864 near Spotsylvania, Virginia; Campbell T. Iredell died in 1863 from wounds received in the Battle of Gettysburg; and Capt. Cadwallader J. Iredell was wounded twice and recovered.

The Summer Uniforms of the North Carolina Militia, 1813

Left to right: Infantry Colonel, Artillery Major, Cavalry Major, Major General, and Aide-de-Camp.



During the War of 1812 the State of N.C. published guidelines for uniforms in local papers, and militia officers purchased their own uniforms made to those specifications. At the time of his discharge in 1815, Iredell's Brigadier General uniform would have been similar to the Major General's uniform pictured second from right.

Geoffrey G. Blair

Accompanying James Iredell Jr. in his military service was Geoffrey G. Blair (sometimes referred to as Geoffrey Iredell). He had been the property of Hannah Iredell's nephew, William Blair. Blair inherited Geff from his mother, Jean Johnston Blair, who died in 1789. Geoffrey was sold at auction in June of 1812, with Iredell as the highest bidder at \$600.00. The same month, Iredell prepared a petition to the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions for the freedom of Geoffrey G. Blair. The petition stated:

That the desire arises solely from an intimate knowledge of the integrity of the said Geoffrey, of his long and faithful services, of the affection & attachment he has always displayed towards his late master & of his unremitting attention to him, while laboring as he has been for a few years past under almost continual bodily indisposition.

The entire petition follows on page 8.

In a November 3, 1814 letter to his eldest sister Annie, Iredell described the importance of Geff to his own well-being and comfort.

We live quite comfortably in our hut which is just large enough to contain us and which constitutes at once our bed-room, dining room and drawing room. We have obtained a kitchen just back of our hut and have hired a cook for whom Geff is an excellent provider. We are even so extravagant as to indulge occasionally in the luxury of a pudding... I am writing on a table, which Geff purchased for a quarter of a dollar. We have four chairs and a bench. Two bedsteads and my cot hanging from the joists, occupy two sides of the room. On the third are hanging our surtouts (frockcoats), cloaks and swords. On the fourth side are hanged on a shelf, a coffee pot, teapot, baker pot, plates, etc... Under these are the basket and barrel, which Geff use. Deposited beyond these, half a side of bacon, ham, a quarter of mutton, a string of onions and another of sausages. Next... our side board which is simply a plank nailed to the logs on which we have our pitcher, two tumblers and a junk bottle instead of a decanter. Under these items again are a jug of Brandy...

Geff continued working for James Iredell Jr. after the war and is mentioned in family letters as he performed errands for the Iredell family.



Fort Norfolk, built in 1794, played an important role in the defense of the Virginia coast. Iredell and his militia troops were encamped nearby in Norfolk, Virginia.

A copy of the original petition for Geoffrey's freedom included 35 signatures from Edenton men who supported Iredell's request.

State of North Carolina Court of Pleas & Equities Superior
 Chowan County June Term 1882
 To the Worshipful the Justices of
 the said Court The Petition of James Iredell
 Sheweth That your Petitioner is legally entitled
 to a certain negro slave called Geoffrey, late the
 property of William Blair Esquire & is desirous
 of manumitting the said slave - That this desire
 arises solely from an intimate knowledge of the
 integrity of the said Geoffrey, of his long faithful
 services, of the affection & attachment he has
 always displayed towards his late master & of
 his unremitting attention to him, while labouring
 as he has been for a few years past under almost
 continual bodily indisposition. Your Petitioner
 therefore prays that on account of the honesty,
 fidelity and meritorious conduct of the said
 Geoffrey, Your Worshipful would be pleased to
 pass an order directing his manumission -
 J. Iredell

The subscribers are well acquainted with the
 above-mentioned Geoffrey and believe the charges
 there given him to be correct -

Edm. Horkins

J. McDonald

Geo. Blair

Joseph Norman

J. S. Greer

Saml. Iredell

Ed Jones

J. A. Brown

J. M. E. Sawyer

Wm. Stanton

W. M. Bunt

Willads

John Brown

W. L. H. Johnson

Gov. W. H. H. H. H.

J. M. Hathaway

John Popetston

John Littlejohn

J. Pearley

W. H. H. H. H.

L. M. H. H. H.

John H. H. H.

Henry Wills

Andrew Knowlton
 Charles Bishop
 James R. Cantel
 Wm. H. H. H.
 Wm. H. H. H.
 Job Leary
 Richd. Horkins
 Peter H. H. H.