

GENEALOGY  
OF THE  
McKEAN FAMILY  
OF PENNSYLVANIA,

WITH A BIOGRAPHY OF THE

HON. THOMAS MCKEAN, LL.D.,

MEMBER OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS FROM DELAWARE,  
CHIEF JUSTICE AND GOVERNOR OF PENNSYLVANIA,  
SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDE-  
PENDENCE, AND PRESIDENT OF  
CONGRESS.

---

BY ROBERDEAU BUCHANAN

AUTHOR OF THE GENEALOGY OF THE ROBERDEAU FAMILY, AND GENEALOGY OF  
THE DESCENDANTS OF DR. WILLIAM SHIPPEN THE ELDER.

---

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY LETTER

BY THE

HON. THOMAS F. BAYARD, LL.D.

---

LANCASTER, PA.:  
INQUIRER PRINTING COMPANY.  
1890.

7. SARAH MARIA THERESA (McKEAN), MARCHION-  
ESS DE CASA YRUJO.—Born in Newark, Delaware, July 8,  
1777; baptized according to the rites of the Roman Catholic  
Church, April 8, 1780. Her great beauty and many accomplish-  
ments made her one of the leading belles in Philadelphia, then  
the seat of government.

A description of society at this time (during Washington's  
administration) has been given in that elegant work, *The Re-  
publican Court*, by Rufus Wilmot Griswold, 1867; illustrated  
by numerous likenesses of the most prominent ladies. Among  
these engravings is one of Miss Sally McKean, from the origi-  
nal portrait by Gilbert Stuart, now in the possession of her  
nephew, Henry Pratt McKean, Esq., of Philadelphia. The  
author of that work testifies to her great beauty, and it is a fact  
that all historical writers who mention her, speak also of her  
beauty. The country was just recovering from the revolu-  
tionary struggle, and society was never gayer than at this  
time. In the Scharf and Westcott's *History of Philadelphia*  
(ii. 905), may be found a description of Mrs. Washington's  
first reception, by Miss McKean, in a letter to a friend in New  
York. Another entertainment was a dinner given in June,  
1796, by a resident of Arch street, whose name is not men-

tioned, but suspected to be President Washington. "Among the first to arrive," says the narrator, "was Chief Justice McKean, accompanied by his lovely daughter, Miss Sally McKean. Miss McKean had many admirers, but her heart was still her own. She wore a blue satin dress trimmed with white crape and flowers, and petticoat of white crape richly embroidered, and across the front a festoon of rose color caught up with flowers. . . . The next to arrive was Señor Don Carlos Martínez de Yrujo,<sup>1</sup> a stranger to almost all the guests. He spoke with ease, but with a foreign accent, and was soon lost in amazement at the grace and beauty of Miss McKean." Sir Robert Liston, the British Minister, and Lady Liston, Volney the traveller, Gilbert Stuart, Mrs. Henry Clymer, and Mrs. William Bingham the beautiful daughters of Thomas Willing, and many others, were present.<sup>2</sup> The acquaintance thus commenced resulted in the marriage of Miss McKean to Señor Martínez de Yrujo, at Philadelphia, April 10, 1798.

Señor Don Carlos Martínez de Yrujo y Tacon was born at Cartagena, Spain, December 4, 1763. He was educated at the University of Salamanca; entered the diplomatic service, and, after having filled other minor posts, was appointed His Catholic Majesty's envoy extraordinary, and minister plenipotentiary near the government of the United States—Philadelphia being then the capital, before the laying out of Washington. He arrived in this country in June, 1796; and married Miss McKean as above related. He then resided at No. 315 High street (now Market street), on the north side between Eighth and Ninth streets; the house had been previously occupied in 1795 by Pierce Butler, senator from South Carolina. In 1802 he lived in a large house surrounded by spacious grounds at Mt. Pleasant, in what is now the East Fairmount Park. In March, 1797, President Adams was inaugurated. A contemporary describing the ceremonies mentions Señor Martínez de Yrujo as follows: "He was of middle size, of round person, florid complexion, and hair powdered like a snow ball; dark-striped silk coat, lined with satin; white waistcoat, black silk breeches, white silk stockings, shoes and buckles. He had by his side an elegant-hilted small-sword, and his chapeau, tipped with white feathers, under his arm."<sup>3</sup> His lawsuits for slander

<sup>1</sup> Name given wrongly, and here corrected.

<sup>2</sup> George C. Mason, biographer of Gilbert Stuart, in the *N. Y. Evening Post*, March 24, 1879.

<sup>3</sup> Scharf and Westcott, *Hist. Phil.*, ii., 913.

against William Colbett, have already been noted in the biography of Governor McKean.

In 1803, Señor Martinez de Yrujo was ennobled, being created Marquis de Casa Yrujo. Soon after this, in 1806 or earlier, he was living in the southeast corner of Pine and Second streets, in the large house of John Ross, a merchant.<sup>1</sup>

Some new and interesting facts of social and political life in these times have recently been brought to light by Mr. Henry Adams.<sup>2</sup>

“In Jefferson’s domestic, as well as his political household, the Marquis of Casa Yrujo was thoroughly at home, for he had a double title to confidence, and even to affection. His first claim was due to his marriage with a daughter of Governor McKean of Pennsylvania, whose importance in the Republican party was great. His second claim was political. . . . Thus Yrujo was doubly and trebly attached to the Administration. Proud as a typical Spaniard should be, and mingling an infusion of vanity with his pride, irascible, headstrong, indiscreet as was possible for a diplomatist, and afraid of no prince or president; young, able, quick, and aggressive; devoted to his king and country; a flighty and dangerous friend, but a most troublesome enemy; always in difficulties, but in spite of fantastic outbursts always respectable,—Yrujo needed only the contrast of characters such as those of Pickering or Madison to make him the most entertaining figure in Washington politics.”

The Marquis de Casa Yrujo protested strongly against the purchase of Louisiana, and in the midst or the rejoicing at the news that the purchase had been consummated, wrote to Mr. Madison, the Secretary of State, and with skillful diplomacy based his objections upon quite novel grounds—“that he had bought stolen goods, and Spain as the rightful owner protested against the sale.”<sup>3</sup>

Soon after this the Marquis opposed the purchase of Florida, and the correspondence on the subject increased in heat on both sides; until it culminated in an open quarrel, which was aggravated by some rules of etiquette promulgated by the President, but considered offensive by the foreign ministers. Regarding certain Franco-Spanish spoliation claims, the Marquis de Casa Yrujo sent to the Secretary of State an ad-

<sup>1</sup>*Pa. Mag.*, iv., 48.

<sup>2</sup>*Hist. U. S. during the First Administration of Thomas Jefferson*, 2 vols., 1889, i., 425.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, ii., 252, quoting Yrujo to Madison, Sept. 4, and 27, 1803; *State Papers*, ii., 569.

verse opinion by five prominent lawyers—Jared Ingersoll, William Rawle, Joseph B. McKean, Peter S. Duponceau, and Edward Livingston. When the correspondence with the opinion given by these persons was sent to the Senate, it caused much excitement, and a resolution was passed directing the President to institute proceedings against those gentlemen, “whose legal, social and political character, made a prosecution as unwise in politics, as it was doubtful in law.”<sup>1</sup>

“The passage of the Bill which made Mobile a collection district, and a part of Mississippi territory, gave Yrujo a chance to retaliate. About a fortnight after the President had signed this law, Yrujo one morning entered the State Department with the printed Act in his hand, and overwhelmed Madison with reproaches, which he immediately afterward supported in a note, so severe as to require punishment, and so able as to admit of none. He had at first, he said, regarded as ‘an atrocious libel’ on the United States government, the assertion that it had made a law which nsurped the rights of Spanish sovereignty; yet such was the case. He gave a short and clear abstract of the evidence which refuted the claim to West Florida, and closed by requesting that the law be annulled. Madison could neither maintain the law nor annul it; he could not even explain it away.”<sup>2</sup>

The Marquis de Casa Yrujo soon after left Washington without taking leave of the Secretary of State. The fall of 1805 he passed in Philadelphia; and on the appearance of the President’s Annual Message, which contained a general and loose statement of the grievances against Spain, the Marquis wrote under date of Dec. 6, 1805, a keen note to the Secretary of State criticising, not without justice, the assertions made by the President. To this the Secretary made no reply, holding that executive communications to Congress were not open to diplomatic discussion. The quarrel between these officials still continued, and the recall of the Marquis had been asked by the Secretary of State. In the meantime it was supposed that the Marquis would remain away from the capital; but on January 15, 1806, society in that city was startled by learning that the Marquis had arrived in Washington. The same evening it was intimated to him by the Secretary of State that his appearance at Washington was a surprise, and it was hoped that his departure from the country would not be unnecessarily delayed. This note “aroused him to passion only equalled by

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, ii., 258, 259.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii., 260; letter of de Yrujo to Madison, March 7, 1804, MSS. State Dept. Archives.

the temper of John Randolph of Roanoke." He retorted to Madison's insult by replying, "I intend remaining in the city, four miles square, in which the Government resides, as long as it may suit the interests of the King my master, or my own personal convenience." A few days after he sent a formal protest to the Department "that the envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of his Catholic Majesty near the United States, receives no orders except from his sovereign."

The Marquis continued to reside in the country by way of bravado, and annoyed Mr. Madison by attacks on him from time to time through the Federalist newspapers.<sup>1</sup>

His last letter to the Secretary of State is dated February 4, 1806, but his successor did not present his credentials until July 7, 1807. In 1809, Mr. Madison, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson, mentions that the Marquis de Casa Yrujo was then at Cadiz, where he had erected large mills upon a plan brought from Philadelphia. He was the first one in Spain who applied steam to the grinding of corn.<sup>2</sup>

The Marquis de Casa Yrujo was not long after this appointed envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary at Rio Janeiro. He returned from this mission in 1813, stopping in Philadelphia on his way home. Ex-Governor McKean, writing to Mr. Adams in August, 1813, speaks of his visit: "The Marquis de Casa Yrujo, with my daughter and their children and servants, made me a visit on his return from an embassy to the Prince Regent of Portugal in Rio Janeiro in Brazil."<sup>3</sup> It was at this time that others of Governor McKean's grandsons remember the Marquis and their aunt, and recall their cousin as a playmate of their boyish days.

In 1821, the Marquis was appointed minister at Paris, and subsequently became first Secretary of State (Foreign Affairs), which last post he held at the time of his death. He did not hold the office long, but was attacked with apoplexy and died in Madrid, January 17, 1824.

He was a Knight Grand Cross of the Orders of Charles III, Ysabel la Catolica, St. Ferdinand and St. Januarius of Naples; the Danneborg of Denmark; a *Gentilhombre de Cumara* (Gentleman of the Bedchamber) to H. C. Majesty, and an Honorary

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. U. S., during the Second Administration of Thomas Jefferson*, 2 vols. 1889, i., 184 to 187, 209.

<sup>2</sup> Letters of Madison, 1865, ii., 437; *Revolutions in Spain*, W. Walton, London, 1837, i., 343.

<sup>3</sup> Adams' *Works*, x., 60.

Councillor of State. In 1804, or earlier, while minister to this country, was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society.

Portraits of the Marquis and Marchioness de Casa Yrujo by Stuart are in possession of the present Marquis at Madrid; other portraits of them, also by Stuart, are in possession of Mr. Henry Pratt McKean, of Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup> A crayon of the Marquis by Sharpless, taken about 1800, hangs in the old State House, Independence Hall, Philadelphia. He is here represented in a scarlet coat. Wood cuts of the Marchioness, after the steel engraving in the Republican Court, may be found in Scharf and Westcott's *History of Philadelphia*, and Scharf's *History of Delaware*.

The Marchioness survived her husband some years, and died in Madrid, January 4, 1841. Her will is dated July 28, 1840.