

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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MARY E. TAYLOR'S PORTRAIT OF WASHINGTON

"My life size portrait of Washington I give to Orleans County together with \$200.00 or so much thereof as shall be necessary to procure a gold gilt frame thereof eight inches wide. I desire to have this painting hung in the Court House at Albion". So states the last will and testament of Mary E. Taylor who died at age 81 in June 1925. To that end her will was carried out and her portrait of Washington has hung ever since in a gold gilt frame in the Grand Jury Room of the Court House. It is not known when Mary Taylor actually painted the portrait but it may have been done in the 1890's. It measures 6'8" by 5'1" and is an oil on canvas.

Actually it was Gilbert Struatt who first painted Washington in this pose and setting in 1796. That original now hangs in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Many amateur painters such as Mary Taylor frequently emulated the works of great masters during the last Century which explains the facsimile to Stuart's Washington. Currently on display at the Swan Gallery in Albion is an exhibit of Victorian paintings similar to Mary Taylor's work. When you come right down to the "nitty-gritty" there are very few people who ever make bequests to their government. It was indeed a nice thing for her to do.

Miss Mary E. Taylor and her two maiden sisters Anna and Melissa, resided together during their life times having originated from a pioneer family which settled south of Knowlesville; thereby Taylor Hill Road gets its name.

It is said of these three maiden ladies that because they were never married they wished to be laid out in white upon their deaths which was also carried out to their end.

