

John Donaldson Ford

19 May 1840 - 8 April 1918

By Samuel Stephenson

(Edited by Douglas Fix)

John D. Ford was born in Baltimore, Maryland on 19 May 1840 to Thomas C. and Isabella Logie Ford.(1) Ford was educated in Baltimore public schools and graduated from the Maryland Institute School of Design in 1861 and the Potts School of Mechanical Engineering in 1862.(2)

Ford entered the United States Navy as 3rd assistant engineer on 30 July 1862, beginning what was to be a long and distinguished career. He was subsequently promoted to 2nd assistant engineer on 13 February 1864 and to 1st assistant engineer on 6 June 1868, then passed assistant engineer on 24 February 1874, chief engineer on 27 December 1890, commander in 1897, commanded commander on 3 March 1899 (for his "eminent and conspicuous conduct in battle"), captain on 5 March 1902, and rear admiral on 19 May 1902. Ford took part in a number of battles during the U. S. Civil War, including the capture of Baton Rouge in March 1863 and the battle of Mobile Bay in 1864; he was aboard the *Arizona* when it was destroyed by fire off Poverty Point, Mississippi River on 27 February 1865.(3)

On 30 April 1866, he married Laura Jane Darling of Baltimore, Maryland.(4)

Ford's service then took him to the East. He was in the *Sacramento* when it wrecked on the Coromandel coast of India in June 1867, and subsequently he served on many expeditions and at many stations throughout the 1870s. Ford was then detached and ordered to start the Baltimore Manual Training School on 13 March 1884.(5) Soon after visiting Takao aboard the *U.S.S. Alert* in 1894, Ford was subsequently employed at the Maryland Agricultural and Mechanical College from 1894 till 1896.(6)

After serving aboard the *U.S.S. Brooklyn* from 1896 to 1898 and the flagship *U.S.S. Baltimore* in 1898, Ford became fleet engineer at Pacific Station and joined the Asiatic fleet. He took part in the destruction of the Spanish fleet off Cavite and the batteries at Cavite and Sangley Point, and participated in the capture of the forts at Corregidor and of Manila. Ford finally retired to Maryland in 1902. However, he did continue on duty

as inspector of machinery and ordnance at Baltimore and Sparrow's Point, Maryland until 25 December 1908. Ford lived out his final years in Baltimore and died at the age of 77 on 8 April 1918.(7)

Selected Publications:

Several pamphlets on "Manual Training in Public Schools" (1884-1889).

An American cruiser in the East: Travels and studies in the Far East. New York: A.S. Barnes, 1898.

Honors and Memberships:

Peabody Prize, Maryland Institute School of Design (1861).(9)

Notes

1. *A dictionary of North American authors deceased before 1950*, W. Stewart Wallace, comp. (Toronto, Canada: Ryerson Press, 1951), p. 154; *Who was who in America, special library edition* (Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, 1943), p. 412.

2. *Who was who in America, special library edition*, p. 412; *Who was who in America, A biographical dictionary of notable living men and women of the United States*, Albert N. Marquis, ed. (Chicago: A. N. Marquis and Co., 1916), Vol 9, p. 845

3. *Who was who in America, special library edition*, p. 412.

4. *Ibid.*; *Who was who in America, A biographical dictionary of notable living men and women of the United States*, p. 845.

5. *Who was who in America, special library edition*, p. 412.

6. *Ibid.*; Otness, Harold M., *One thousand westerners in Taiwan, to 1945: A biographical and bibliographical dictionary* ([Taipei]: Institute of Taiwan History, Preparatory Office, Academia Sinica, 1999), pp. 53-54.

7. Otness 1999, p. 54; *A Dictionary of North American authors deceased before 1950*, p. 154; *Who was who in America, special library edition*, p. 412.

8. *Who was who in America, A biographical dictionary of notable living men and women of the United States*, p. 846.

9. *Who was who in America, special library edition*, p. 412.