

Sometime near 1789, Henry married Mary “Polly” Walker. Polly was the daughter of Joel Walker. Polly was born in central Virginia in 1754 and died on July 24, 1828 at their home in Vera. Henry and Polly Flood had one child, Joel Walker, born on July 11, 1799; a boy named for Polly’s father. Joel Walker Flood went on to become quite prominent in his own right. Henry and Polly sent their son off to study Latin and become a physician. Dr. Flood not only practiced medicine in Appomattox and Buckingham Counties, but also became a prosperous farmer and a Virginia State Senator. Dr. Flood married the daughter of a Revolutionary War hero; Major Thomas West and his wife, Elizabeth Bolling West. Joel and Elizabeth had only one child during their marriage. Henry Delaware Flood, named for Joel’s father Henry, was born August 16, 1816 at their plantation home at “Eldon”.

In 1930, in a book entitled, *Virginia Shorts*, by Marguerite Dupont Lee, Dr. Flood and his wife, Elizabeth are featured in a story called “A Mother’s Love”!<sup>1</sup> Miss Lee writes,

“About the middle of the last century there lived in Appomattox County, Virginia, Dr. and Mrs. Joel W. Flood, who when he was but a few weeks old, at the death of this mother<sup>2</sup>, adopted their grandson, afterwards Major Joel W. Flood of the Confederacy, and grandfather of Governor Harry F(lood). Byrd of Virginia.

The grandmother<sup>3</sup> placed the little crib in the very center of her large, old-fashioned bedroom, procured an efficient white nurse for him, who slept in the dressing room that opened into her chamber, and the frail little mite thrived lustily and grew into a magnificent baby. He was really a beautiful child and naturally a source of unending comfort and pleasure to his grandmother.

The doctor had a large practice and was often out late at night. On such occasions his wife would not sit up for him, but lighting the swinging lamp on the front porch, leaving the hall light burning, and placing a tray of biscuits and milk on his study-table, would betake herself to slumber.

One night after having been asleep some time, Mrs. Flood awakened with a feeling someone was in the room. Supposing it to be the doctor, she peeped out from between the curtains of her big four-poster bedstead and saw, not the doctor, as she had expected, but the form of a young woman bending over the crib and weeping as though her heart would break. The old lady, astonished and too terrified to speak, fell back on her pillow and covering her head continued to tremble and shiver until her husband came, when she clung to him and told him what she had seen.

The doctor, a practical, unromantic matter-of-fact Presbyterian elder, insisted she had been dreaming, asked what she had eaten for supper, and declared there were not such things as ghosts. His wife was highly indignant at such indifference to her fearful experience, and long after her husband fell asleep remained awake listening to the creaking of the shutters as the wind soughed through the bare branches of the trees, and dreading a return of her ghostly visitor.

At breakfast next morning the doctor made light of his wife’s experience to the other members of the family, but could not shake her belief that she had seen the mother of the baby.

A week or so after this the phantom appeared just as before, and again the grandmother was terrified, but the Spirit did not seem inclined to approach the big bed and its trembling occupant, but confined its attentions to the baby sound asleep in the crib.

The grandmother, in spite of her fear, was a woman of great dignity and common sense. Thoroughly convinced God had permitted the young mother to visit her baby, and ashamed of her own cowardice, she determined if the ghost reappeared to speak to it. Always devoted to her son’s wife, she felt no harm would befall her. Informing the family of her resolution, she calmly awaited another appearance of her daughter-in-law.

Before a great while the Spirit reappeared, and although unable to keep from trembling with fear, Mrs. Flood raised her head and said, “Daughter!” The ghost looked at her. “Don’t be so grieved, my dear, I promise you I will be a good, kind mother to your child.” The mother looked at

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<sup>1</sup> *Virginia Shorts*; 1930 by Marguerite Dupont Lee, pages 203-204

<sup>2</sup> Mary Elizabeth Trent Flood, (1822-1839)

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Bolling West Flood, (1798-1864)

her and smiling sweetly, bent over the baby for a moment, then disappeared. She was never seen again.

The grandmother lived to be an old woman, and to her dying day was firm in the belief that she had seen and spoken to the baby's mother; and the baby, who grew to middle age and past, would mention the occurrence with the greatest reverence and faith in its veracity."

Note of Beth Flood:

I had sent this story to some of you, years ago, when I found it in a different book, titled "Virginia Ghosts". I bought this book at a flea market for about 50 cents. It is marked "revised edition", and was published in 1966. Oddly enough, "A Mother's Love" is also on pages 203 & 204, in this book. The Library of Congress Catalogue Number is given as: 66-14984, and the book contains 255 pages. On the second sheet, under the heading, "Bibliographical Note", appears the following:

Mrs. Lee published *Virginia Ghosts* in 1930, and in 1932, she published *Virginia Ghosts and Others*. In the present, revised edition, all of the Virginia (and West Virginia) ghosts from the two earlier volumes are put into one "closet", and all non-Virginia ghosts are excluded.

At the beginning, there is a bio of Marguerite duPont Lee, and I found one paragraph really interesting, and will pass it on.....

Both parents died in 1977, leaving five orphans in their big house, which was actually the property of the DuPont Company. After the second funeral, Alfred duPont, their uncle, came to tell the children that the family council had decided to parcel them out one by one among their relatives. He found them armed to defend their home and fireside: Anna (17), held an axe; Marguerite (15), a rolling pin; Alfred (13), a shotgun; Maurice (11), a pistol; and Louis (9), a bow and arrow. Uncle Alfred was impressed, and the youngsters kept their castle.