

**JOHN MARSHALL; AN
ADDRESS DELIVERED
ON FEBRUARY 4, 1901**

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John Marshall; An Address Delivered on February 4, 1901 by R. T. Barton

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R. T. BARTON

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JOHN MARSHALL C#

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An Address delivered on

February 4, 1901

Robert Thomas by
R. T. BARTON,
of Winchester, Virginia

before

Washington & Lee University

at

Lexington, Virginia

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JOHN MARSHALL



ASTENED between the leaves of one of the volumes of a very handsome edition of Marshall's life of Washington, in the State Library at Richmond, is the *fac simile* of a brief sketch of John Marshall written by himself.

This is what it says:

“Richmond, March 22, 1818.

SIR:—I was born on the 24th of September 1755 in the County of Fauquier in Virginia. My Father—Thomas Marshall was the eldest son of John Marshall who intermarried with a Miss Markham whose parents migrated from Wales and settled in the County of Westmoreland in Virginia, where my father was born.

My mother was named Mary Keith. She was the daughter of a clergyman of the name of Keith who migrated from Scotland and intermarried with a Miss Randolph of James River.

I was educated at home under the direction of my father, who was a planter, but was often called from home as a surveyor. From my infancy I was destined to the bar; but the contest between the mother country and her colonies drew me from my studies and my father from the superintendence of the same; and in September 1776 I entered into the service as a subaltern. I continued in the army until the year 1781, when, being without a command I resigned my commission, in the interval between the invasion of Virginia by Arnold and Philips.

In the year 1782 I was elected into the Legislature of Virginia and in the fall session of the same year was chosen a member of the Executive Council of that State.

In January 1783 I intermarried with Mary Willis Ambler, the second daughter of Mr. Jacquelin Ambler, then Treasurer of Virginia, who was the third son of Mr. Richard Ambler, a gentleman who had migrated from England and settled in York river Town in Virginia. In April 1784 I resigned my seat in the Executive Assembly" (meaning by this the Executive Council, as

his resignation took place after the close of his service in the General Assembly for the term to which he had been elected in 1782) "I came to the bar, at which I continued, declining any other public office than a seat in the Legislature, until the year 1797, when I was associated with Genl. Pinckney and Mr. Gerry in a mission to France. In 1798 I returned to the United States and in the spring of 1799 was elected a member of Congress, a candidate for which, much against my inclination, I was induced to become by the request of General Washington.

At the close of the first session I was nominated first to the Department of war and afterwards to that of State, which last office I accepted and in which I continued until the beginning of the year 1801, when Mr. Ellsworth having resigned and Mr. Jay having declined his appointment, I was nominated to the office of Chief Justice, which I still hold.

J. MARSHALL."

This brief and very modest outline of himself, in which he fails to mention that he had been offered and declined the position of Attorney General of the United States, and also a seat as Asso-

ciate Justice on the bench of the Supreme Court, was doubtless written at the request of some one who desired to use it in the preparation of a memorial of Marshall. I do not know the story of it and do not know if it is known. It will suffice for the mere biographical part of what I wish to say of my subject to-night. But no analysis of a great man is satisfactory without some view of his home and of his person. With a home Marshall has no very suggestive connection, because he lived longest in a mere house in a city which is still standing in pretty much the condition in which he left it. Moreover the things he did which made him famous for all time are, with one exception, not thought of as particularly associated with Richmond, or at least not with his dwelling there. For some reason too the surroundings and homes of great Philosophers, Scientists or Writers, affect us with deeper interest than do those of great lawyers.

But Marshalls personality—his appearance, manner, and disposition, are and always will be of great interest to those who wish to truly understand the moral and intellectual forces which made up the man:—we cannot separate two sets of qualities until science shall solve the problem of the connection between the physical and the psychological man.

The beginnings of the revolution found him at his father's home in Fauquier County, a student, and rejoicing in the possession of a copy of Blackstone then but recently published; but intermitting his studies with many calls for his services as surveyor. This graphic description is given of the young man not then twenty one years of age, when in September 1776, as a lieutenant in a military company from Fauquier County he joined Col. Patrick Henry in the expedition to protect Williamsburg from the expected depredations of the expelled Lord Dunmore—"He was" says the writer "about six feet high; straight and rather