

# THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



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The Hobbs House, North Ave. - owned by Gen. Marshall, who succeeded Mrs. Sam'l Hobbs. Mrs. Sam'l Hobbs was the daughter of Rev. Dr. Kendal, and resided here until her death in 1883. Gen. Marshall named this residence "Kendal Green".

## JAMES MARSHALL, PART II

The story of James Marshall deserves telling, quite apart from his involvement with the Hampton Institute. James Fowle Baldwin Marshall was born on August 8, 1818 in Charlestown, the son of a prosperous banker, Thomas Marshall, and Sophia Kendal Marshall. James' grandfather, Christopher Marshall, fought at Bunker Hill and his great uncle, Colonel Thomas Marshall of Highland Street in Weston, was Colonel of the Massachusetts' Tenth Regiment. [Colonel Thomas Marshall has been described incorrectly as "a member of George Washington's staff." Washington had on his staff a personal friend, Colonel Thomas Marshall of Virginia, father of Chief Justice John Marshall. Weston's Thomas Marshall saw service at Fort Ticonderoga and in New Jersey with General Washington, and then retired on January 1781.] On October 23, 1789, Weston's Colonel Thomas Marshall was greeted by President Washington as the President passed through Weston. Thomas Marshall's house on Highland Street was moved in 1881 to Central Avenue (Boston Post Road). Then, in 1888, it was again moved by Charles H. Fiske to 22 Church Street where it stands today.



On his maternal side, James Marshall also had Weston roots. He was the grandson of Rev. Samuel Kendal, DD, minister of the First Parish in Weston from 1783 to 1812. Kendal's daughter Abigail (1793-1883) married Samuel Hobbs in 1834, moving to 87 North Avenue, the house to which James Marshall was to retire (see March 1984 *Bulletin* regarding Mrs. Hobbs).

Sixteen-year-old James Marshall entered Harvard College in 1834 but was forced to drop out during his second year because of poor eyesight, a lifelong problem. In 1838 Marshall moved to Honolulu, Hawaii, eventually becoming a partner in one of the islands' largest trading firms, the predecessor of C. Brewer and Co., Ltd. Charles Brewer of Boston was, in the 1840's, shifting the firm's emphasis from whaling to sugar.

Marshall was to play an important role in Hawaiian diplomacy in 1843, at the age of twenty-four. To tell that story, we must begin with the spring of 1841. On a March evening, Marshall was sitting with James Jarves, editor of *The Polyne-sian*, and Mrs. Jarves on their Honolulu veranda. Richard Charlton, the overbearing and unpopular British consul described by Marshall as "coarse and illiterate," attacked James Jarves with a horsewhip. Aroused, the usually placid Marshall jumped upon Charlton, bruising the hip and breaking the finger of the consul. Charlton threatened prosecution, but instead he became the object of a citizens' protest meeting and was fined by the governor.

Two years later, in 1843, the Hawaiian government-in-exile chose Marshall to present its case in London when Lord George Paulet, an over-zealous frigate commander was aroused by Charlton and others to annex the islands provisionally to Britain. Marshall, ostensibly on a trading mission, was permitted to sail in March 1843 on the only ship allowed to depart the harbor, the vessel had been the yacht of the Hawaiian king. Marshall carried a secret commission and instructions from the government-in-exile, written in the dark of night in the royal tomb, atop the coffin of a widow of King Kamehameha I. Under cover of darkness, the exiled King Kamehameha III was brought from Maui in a frail canoe to sign Marshall's document.

Marshall sailed to New Orleans and then to Boston, where he met Secretary of State Daniel Webster who "promised to raise a fuss" if necessary; Marshall continued to London, where he successfully presented his arguments in July to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen. Partly as a result of Marshall's mission, Britain and France recognized Hawaii's independence!

Following this success, Marshall sailed for Boston on August 20, 1843 and on November 9 married Eunice Sophia Hooper in Charlestown. Three days later the Marshalls and Sophia's sister embarked for Hawaii. "Our wedding journey," a five-month trip around Cape Horn to Hawaii, "I commend to all young married couples as the most efficient method of getting acquainted with each other" wrote Marshall. On April 8, 1844, to honor Marshall's return, King Kamehameha III sent his royal double canoe to bring the party ashore. Thus Marshall returned to his business interests. Sophia, apparently, did not live long, for on August 16, 1846, just days after his twenty-eighth birthday, Marshall wrote to Rev. George Ellis of Charlestown: "I never felt the loss of my sister



and boy until now . . . I received great comfort from letters from home received in response to the news of [Eunice] Sophia's death." Marshall appears to have sought solace in teaching Sunday school, lecturing on temperance, reading the classics, and working; a lecture Marshall had delivered was published by the Oahu Temperance Society in March 1847. Marshall married Martha A. Twicross Johnson (1824-1891), also of Charlestown, in October 1848. Marshall had become a partner with Henry A. Peirce in a sugar venture by 1849. Marshall managed the new Lihue plantation, bringing in its first crop in 1853 and thereby establishing a model for extensive irrigation. Marshall was elected President of the Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society in 1855. He was elected to the legislature, becoming chairman of the Education Committee. As a legislator, Marshall worked actively on behalf of native rights, agricultural improvements, temperance, and abolition of land tenure [the Great Mahele in 1848]. During this period, Samuel Armstrong was Marshall's Sunday School pupil. Richard Armstrong, Samuel's father and pastor of "Kawaiahao", the First Church in Honolulu, was the King's Minister of Public Instruction from 1848 until his death in 1860 and worked closely with Marshall. Armstrong was one of the few foreigners in Hawaii to be fluent in the Hawaiian language; whether Marshall spoke Hawaiian we do not know.

The Marshalls returned to Boston with a modest fortune shortly before 1860. Marshall continued his interest in the Islands, attempting to influence U.S. policy and expressing an interest in becoming the American Ambassador there. "My long residence at the Islands, I think would enable me to be of great service to them and to our Government than a stranger," Marshall wrote to the U.S. District Attorney Richard Henry Dana, Sr. In 1862 Marshall spoke with President Lincoln about American interests in Hawaii, and he wrote letters to influential friends including Bishop Lawrence and Edward Everett Hale.

During the Civil War, Marshall served as paymaster general of the Massachusetts' militia and as an agent of the state Sanitary Commission in charge of a hospital train; Marshall was not a "General" in the usual soldiery sense. There are frequent references in his Hampton Institute days to Marshall as "the kindly old gentleman" or "the wise, gentle General." In addition to his temperament, Marshall's eyesight never was sufficient for him to carry a gun or to command troops—Governor Andrew did say of Marshall's service in the war "no man known to (me) between the two ends of the rainbow" ever gave more of himself. At the War's conclusion, Marshall again took up his interest in Hawaii, writing to Representative John H. Clifford: "The bugbear of Slavery which has hitherto been used by the British politicians to frighten that infant nation [Hawaii] from more intimate relations with us, no longer exists . . . we are a powerful and redeemed nation . . . The people of the Islands owe their Christianity and their Civilization to Americans." In January, 1866, Marshall was among the founders of the Hawaiian Club of Boston" . . . to advance the interests of the United States at the Islands and the welfare of the Hawaiian nation . . ."

The Marshalls, frequent visitors to Marshall's "Aunt Nabby" Hobbs on North Avenue, were living on Evergreen Avenue in Auburndale in 1869 when



they agreed to move to the Hampton Institute. The Boston City Directory, published annually as of July 1, lists Marshall's business address in 1869 as "Treasurer, 15 Pemberton Square;" and in 1870 and 1871 as "Treasurer, Albion Coffee Huller Co., 96 Washington St." While the Marshalls lived on the Hampton campus in Virginia for fourteen years, the list of trustees for the Hampton Institute shows their address as "Boston." During his years at Hampton Marshall was Armstrong's closest adviser. "Marshall Hall" at Hampton was dedicated in his honor in 1882. "Nabby" Hobbs died in 1883, and Marshall, fearing oncoming blindness, retired from Hampton in 1884 to Mrs. Hobbs' home on North Avenue (see March 1984 *Bulletin*). In May 1884, Hampton Alumni Association President Booker T. Washington presented Marshall with a gold-headed ebony cane, commenting: "... that the graduates of this institution love you, you are perfectly aware..." The Marshalls remodeled their retirement home at 87 North Avenue, naming it "Kendal Green." The general



James Fowle Baldwin Marshall, ca. 1889.

neighborhood was growing because of Mr. Hastings' plan for an organ factory. When a post office was added two doors to the west of the Marshalls', the General successfully suggested the name "Kendal Green." In a December 1885 letter to the newspaper Marshall explained that his choice was not so much a reference to "Good Parson Kendal . . . the last of the colonial village pastors" as to Shakespeare's *King Henry IV*, Act II, Scene IV: "How couldst thou know these men in Kendal Green, when 'twas so dark thou couldst not see thy hands?" "The town of Kendal . . . is noted for having the ruins of the castle of Catherine Parr, one of the wives of Henry VIII, and for its manufacture of green cloth called 'Kendal Green,' which was adopted by Robert, Earl of Huntington, when he was outlawed and took the name of 'Robin Hood,' as uniform for himself and followers" wrote Marshall. Prior to the naming of the Kendal Green Post Office, the neighborhood was known as "North Village." To the west of the Marshalls' home is a short roadway, "Marshall Way."

During the seven years the Marshalls were to live in their North Avenue "retirement" home, Marshall regularly took the train to Boston. He remained an active officer of the American Unitarian Association—a responsibility which caused many to believe that Tuskegee was a Unitarian school, a belief reinforced by the continuing relationship between Booker T. Washington and Marshall.



He vigorously aided the Association's projects on Indian reservations as the Association's Secretary for Southern and Indian Educational Work; the Montana Industrial School for Crow Indians, a school modeled on Hampton, Tuskegee, and the Hilo Manual Training School, received his particular attention. Tuskegee Normal School in 1886 reprinted in pamphlet form Marshall's *Boston Transcript* article "Does It Pay to Educate the Negro?" In 1888 Marshall wrote a spirited letter to Representative John D. Long requesting that six young Crow Indians reportedly imprisoned at Fort Snelling "... be sent to Carlisle or Hampton for a course of Industrial and other training (in order that they) ... might be fitted to return and become leaders of their people in the ways of civilized life," and requested to be kept informed of proposed legislation affecting Indians. Marshall's letter to Long followed his letters on the same subject to the Secretary of War and the Court of Indian Affairs. Thus, the near-blind Marshall and aging Martha were active in Boston and Weston until their health began to decline at the end of the 1880's. In June 1890 the Marshalls visited the Montana Industrial School for Crow Indians, and before or after returned to visit Hawaii.

Booker T. Washington visited the Marshalls at 87 North Avenue in November, 1890 and spoke in Weston Town Hall. On May 6, 1891 Marshall died at home, followed two days later, by Martha. Of Marshall, Armstrong wrote in his 1891 Report: "He organized our system of accounts, trained students to be efficient clerks, and the good condition of our business affairs is largely due to him. But his influence and value extended far beyond his office duties. He gave tone to the entire work, and impressed his noble, kindly character on hundreds of students, who will always look on him as a father and true friend ... He will be remembered and mourned by many in this and other lands." Judge James W. Austin, Edward Everett Hale, and the Rev. George Ellis, speaking in Chauncy Hall, Boston, at a memorial service for the Marshalls emphasized their devotion to others. Marshall was "never more than moderately successful" in a financial sense, said Ellis, because he had "a purpose of serving others than for gain to himself."

Donald G. Kennedy

## MEETING YOUNG JOHN HANCOCK

The Charter Anniversary dinner of the Weston Historical Society took place on Thursday, May 8, 1986 at the undercroft of St. Peter's Church. The social hour was lively, and we wish to record that it was especially gratifying to welcome among us Betty Travis, the widow of our former President Red Travis.

It is good to see that attendance at our annual dinners is consistently large. This time *sixty* people attended. Much of the credit must go to the splendid organization of Mrs. Victor Harnish, who has been in charge of these dinners for three years now. Our thanks and deep appreciation go to her and to her capable assistants, Mrs. Dorothy Ellis, Mrs. Martha Ashbrook, Mrs. Kitty Chisholm,



and Mrs. Julie Hines, as well as to our talented dispensers of liquid refreshments, Mr. Ken Bennett and Mr. Eddy Marshall.

The binder did not make the deadline for the LAST copies of Brent Dickson's *Once Upon a Pung*, the charming collection of Weston tales, which should be in every Weston home. The books will be available at the time of our first fall meeting; the cost is \$7.50. Remember that it is the best present for newcomers, and especially for the young!

The invocation was offered by our member, the Reverend Ted Jones, Vice-Chairman of WCRB and Associate Minister of the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Waltham.

Our speaker at the dinner was William Fowler, professor of history at Northeastern University and Editor of *The New England Quarterly*. He was coopted into the Massachusetts Historical Society on the very afternoon of our get-together. His kudos are numerous, as Steve Riley informed us in his introduction. Among Fowler's accomplishments are several books, including one on John Hancock.

Professor Fowler is a highly accomplished and knowledgeable speaker. He presented a scholarly and humorous lecture on young John Hancock (1737-1793). "Johnny" Hancock was the grandson of a Lexington minister and the son of a Braintree minister. He was educated as a child in a Dame School, where he first met John Adams, and then he studied at Boston Latin School. When his father died in 1744, his mother remarried soon after. Young John Hancock was raised in the home of his well-to-do Uncle Thomas, the richest merchant in Boston at the time.

Hancock must have heard absorbing conversations at his Uncle Thomas' and Aunt Lydia's dinner table, where the mighty of the day often gathered to discuss politics and business.

He was ready to attend Harvard College in 1750, at age 14! He ranked fifth at Harvard, an honor which had nothing to do with his academic achievements, but instead reflected the social standing of his family, i.e. his Uncle Thomas. At one stage of his Harvard career he was demoted to the rank of nine because of a youthful prank: he and his pals managed to look too deeply into their cups, and their behavior endangered the life of a Negro servant!

Amid much pageantry in July, 1754, John Hancock received his Bachelor's degree. It must have been quite a spectacle, with the governor and the sheriff in attendance and much Latin speechifying—even the Stockbridge Indians came and camped out!

John Hancock did not follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather after college. Fate and his predilections destined him for the counting house rather than the meeting house.

The story was fascinating in itself, but made more so by Dr. Fowler, who has the facilities of a born speaker, interweaving limericks and verses with witty asides in his scholarly presentation. Now everyone wishes to hear the rest of the history of John Hancock's checkered life.

Dr. Vera Laska