

THE HOLLOW

“The Boyhood Home of U. S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall”
Between 1764 and 1773 from the age of 9 to 18

Owner: Learning Tree Farms LLC since April 2000

Location: Approximately ½ mile north of Markham on the NE corner of Leeds Manor Road and Marshall School Lane

Description: Built between 1763 and 1764 by Thomas Marshall, the father of the fourth Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, and with the likely assistance of the elder’s slaves Jacob and Juba, The Hollow is a 1-1/2-story, 3-bay, weatherboarded-frame dwelling with a stone foundation, an exterior-end stone chimney and a gable roof.

Significance: Although worn with time and neglect centuries later, this colonial hall-and-parlor house is distinguished for its rare survival without invasive additions or alteration of its original 16-by-28-foot form.

Beyond its architectural significance, The Hollow has been recognized for its documented association with Col. Thomas Marshall who steadfastly rose from a backwoods planter to a respected gentleman surveyor, influential member of the House of Burgesses, Fauquier County Sheriff, Clerk of the Court, honored soldier and inventor.

While residing at The Hollow, Thomas Marshall invented a revolutionary true meridian surveying device. The General Assembly endorsed Marshall’s Meridian Instrument in two legislative acts for its ability to produce accurate land surveys.

Praised by his son as his only intelligent childhood companion, a watchful parent and an affectionate instructive friend, Thomas Marshall was the foundation of the nation’s most celebrated Chief Justice of the United State’s Supreme Court.

(Adams, John Stokes, ed. *An Autobiographical Sketch by John Marshall*, 1827. Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1937.)

13 people lived in the 4-room Hollow mansion in 1770!

Marshall Family Residing in this 4-room dwelling from 1764-1773:

Parents Thomas Marshall and wife Mary Keith Marshall

Children John (1755-1835), born at Germantown, Fauquier County

Elizabeth (1756-1842), born at Germantown; married Raleigh Colston

Mary (ca. 1757-?), born at Germantown

Thomas (1761-1817), born at Germantown

James Markham (1764-1848), born at Germantown in March before move to Hollow

Judith (1766- ?), born at The Hollow; married George Brooke

William (1767-1815), born at The Hollow, twin of Charles

Charles (1767-1805), born at The Hollow, twin of William

Lucy (1768-1795), born at The Hollow; married John Ambler of Morven

Alexander Keith (1770-1825), born at The Hollow

Tutor: Rev. James Thomson also lived in The Hollow dwelling during his 1770 deaconship for the ministry of the newly-formed Leeds Parish. As a vestryman, Thomas Marshall hired the young Scottish minister for the parish and provided lodging at The Hollow in exchange for tutoring his children.

Fall of 1773 – The expanding Marshall family moves into a slightly larger, 7-room frame dwelling that Thomas built and called The Oaks on 1,700 acres within four miles of The Hollow and on the Manassas Gap Road. This was his first fee-simple ownership of property, having leased the 330-acre Hollow during his service as agent for landlords Richard Henry Lee and Thomas Ludwell Lee of Stafford County who held title to the Goose Creek tracts.

At The Oaks, later renamed Oak Hill, five more children were born to Thomas and Mary Marshall: Louis (October 7, 1773-1866), Susan (1774-1858), Charlotte (1777-1817), Jane (1779-1866) and Nancy (1781- ?).

Chronology of The Hollow

1762 – In December, Thomas Marshall requested an unexplained leave of absence from his seat in the House of Burgesses, and the governing body granted his request. He would not return for twenty-three months. He earned additional income conducting surveys in northern Fauquier County and built his frame mansion during this sabbatical from travel and meetings in Williamsburg.

1763 – In the spring, the white oak trees were felled for the structural framing of The Hollow mansion.

1764 – By the end of fall, Thomas Marshall had finished construction of his fine Virginia house, at least making it livable for the move of his wife and five children from Germantown. In October, Colonel Marshall returned to his seat in the House of Burgesses.

1765 – Thomas Marshall signed the three-life lease, “whereon the said Thomas Marshall now lives,” of 330 acres from Richard Henry and Thomas Ludwell Lee on October 12th. His wife Mary and son John were listed as the other two lives. Further, as the agent for the Lee brothers, Thomas Marshall signed the leases of the other six new residents on the Goose Creek tract. None of their parcels had improvements, according to the leases.

1767 – John Marshall turned twelve, and by this time, he could transcribe Pope’s Essays on man and some of his moral essays. He attributed his accomplishment to his father who had “superintended my education, and gave me an early taste for history and for poetry.”

1769 – Thomas Marshall sent John, age fourteen, to his former tutor, Archibald Campbell, in Washington Parish.

1770 – John Marshall recalled that during his fifteenth year, “I was brought home and was placed under the care of a Scotch gentleman who resided in my Fathers family.” (Stokes, An Autobiographical Sketch by John Marshall.) The Reverend James Thomson arrived from Scotland for a year of deaconship training in 1769. Thomas Marshall, vestryman of the newly-formed Leeds Parish, assisted in the hiring of Reverend Thomson and gave him residence at The Hollow as a mutual benefit. Ministers, including Rev. Archibald Campbell of Washington Parish in Westmoreland County, typically served as educators in the eighteenth century. On November 15, 1770, the vestry advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* for a minister for Leeds Parish, apparently after James Thomson returned to Glasgow.

1773 – In October, Thomas Marshall assigned his lease on the 330-acre Hollow tract to John Webb.

1778 – Williamson Webb acquires the leasehold upon his father’s death.

1792 – William Withers receives the next assignment of the lease.

1794 – William Withers becomes the first fee-simple owner of The Hollow property.

1806 – Merchant Nimrod Farrow buys The Hollow property and constructs a mill on Goose Creek above the village that later became Markham. Already owning eighty acres on the northeast boundary of The Hollow, named Bergen when owned by Chief Justice John Marshall's son later in the nineteenth century, Nimrod and Dolly Farrow may have maintained their residence there since the Farrows are buried in the cemetery at Bergen. The Hollow dwelling returns to its original use as a tenant house.

1827 – Col. Turner Ashby bought sixteen acres containing Thomas Marshall's dwelling, Farrow's merchant mill and related buildings. Turner and Dorothea Ashby appear to have built their home named Rose Bank on the Manassas Gap Road (currently Route 55 – the John Marshall Highway) in the developing village. During the Civil War, their son, Gen. Turner Ashby commanded Ashby's Brigade, AKA Laurel's Brigade of the 7th Virginia Cavalry. He was killed in a skirmish on Chestnut Ridge near Harrisonburg, Virginia in 1862.

1850 – Edward Carrington Marshall, the grandson of the first owner and son of Chief Justice John Marshall, acquired The Hollow and Rose Bank. Newly elected first president of the Manassas Gap Railway Company, Edward renamed the property and village Markham after his great grandmother. However, he further demonstrated his emotional bond by also calling the estate "the home place." While living in the Markham dwelling facing the village, Edward could oversee his father's boyhood home from the back porch and the construction of the Manassas Gap Railroad from the south front.

1863 – The Markham/Rose Bank dwelling burned to the cellar during the Civil War that additionally left the railroad in ruins and plunged its president Edward Carrington Marshall into debt.

1871 – Baltimore merchant William A. Loney bought Edward Carrington Marshall's Markham land that he had increased to 240 acres including The Hollow and the former Rose Bank dwellings. Mr. Loney remained in Baltimore. The Hollow dwelling appears to have remained a tenant house.

1877 – Local farmer James R. Green purchased Loney's holdings in Fauquier. The Hollow dwelling sheltered his black farmhands.

1900 ca. – James R. Green built a 2-story, weatherboarded-frame house on a stone foundation about ten feet off of the front elevation, instead of enlarging the historic Thomas Marshall residence. Clearly aware of the historic significance of the colonial dwelling, Mr. Green carefully leaned a shed-roofed porch from the corners of the new house over to the 1-1/2-story, 1763-64 home. The porch roof came to rest on a weatherboard under the eave of John Marshall's boyhood home, and only tin flashing connected the buildings in the most non-invasive way.

Long after James R. Green's sale of The Hollow, his grandsons Alexander G. Green, Jr. and Henry C. Green kept a watchful, preserving eye over John Marshall's boyhood home. Leasing the farmland upon which the Marshall home stands over many years, the Greens have supported the Friends of the Hollow, founded in 1981, to forward its preservation and restoration. Several generations of the Green family have quietly and unselfishly repaired leaking roofs and vulnerable holes in the exterior walls to prevent profound deterioration while the property languished under the executorship of the Katherine Jones Lake Estate.

1917 – J. Tulloss and Edith Virginia Jones bought the farm from James R. Green. The Joneses continued to utilize The Hollow dwelling for tenant housing.

1936 – Katharine Rogers Jones, the daughter of Edith Virginia Jones and James R. Green Jones received The Hollow property from her parents. Katharine married farmer Theodore Lake.

1937 – Frances Foster, Works Progress Administration surveyor photographed The Hollow showing a black boy leaning on the porch of the adjoining dwelling. It is known that at least from the 1920s until the Fauquier National Bank became the executor of the Katharine Jones Lake Estate in 1970 black tenants resided in the 2-story house joined by the tin flashing to the front of the boyhood home. The Bingham and Ewell families were the last residents.

1970 – The Fauquier National Bank is appointed executor of the Katharine Jones Lake Estate.

1985 ca. – Jimmy Green, with permission of the owner, demolished the abandoned 2-story house.

1987 – Warren K. Montouri becomes the trustee of The Hollow and surrounding property. Henry C. Green continues to stock the fields with cattle.

2000 – Learning Tree Farms LLC purchases The Hollow on 322 acres.

Hollow Dwelling Stabilization & Preservation Events

1981 – The Friends of the Hollow formed as a non-profit charitable organization with the express purpose of preservation and restoration of The Hollow. Make tax deductible contributions to Friends of the Hollow, Inc., 4283 North 38th Street, Arlington, VA 22207.

1982 – The Friends of the Hollow brought architectural historian Dell Upton of Winterthur, Delaware to The Hollow. His brief two-hour site visit and assessment of interior wainscoting with a narrow bead in the west parlor suggested a possibility of a 1760 or 1815 date of construction. The latter date led his conclusion that the house probably postdated Thomas Marshall's leasehold.

1996 – The Friends of the Hollow bring dendrochronologist Jack Heikkenen to The Hollow to date the oak timber frame. His samples yielded a 1763 last year of growth of the felled trees.

2000 – Intensive research, multi-phased, multi-disciplined evaluation of the historic, architectural and archaeological significance and integrity of The Hollow began. Participants: Cheryl H. Shepherd, architectural historian with Millennium Preservation Services in Warrenton, Colonial Williamsburg architectural historians Carl Lounsbury, Peter Sandbeck and Michael Bourne, archaeologists Doug Sanford and Josh Duncan of the Center for Historic Preservation, Mary Washington College, and dendrochronologists Bill Callahan and Ed Cook. Intent: Find certain evidence that the house dates to 1763-64 and is associated with Thomas and John Marshall. Cheryl Shepherd conducted all of the research focusing on primary resources. Provincial stonemason Edward Ashby and preservation/restoration carpenter and timber framer Ken Foster assisted in architectural investigations.

Summary conclusion of the thorough research, architectural and archaeological evaluation since 2000 overwhelmingly supports the 1763-64 date of construction for The Hollow on its present site.

2003 – Listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register for local architectural significance and association with Thomas Marshall.

2004 – Listed on the National Register of Historic Places for local architectural significance and association with Thomas Marshall.

A copy of this National Register nomination by Cheryl H. Shepherd is accessible on <http://www.geocities.com/thehollow.geo/hollow.htm>.

Agreement between Dr. David C. Collins of Learning Tree Farms LLC and APVA Preservation Virginia to stabilize and preserve The Hollow. Dr. and Mrs. Collins are funding the project with additional contributions by the Friends of the Hollow. Tax deductible contributions from individuals interested in helping are greatly appreciated and may be made to the Friends of the Hollow. (See date 1981 above for the address of the Friends.)

Louis J. Malon, APVA Director of Preservation Services, and Cheryl Shepherd are managing the project. Visit: <http://www.apva.org> or call **804-648-1889** for information on the APVA and its properties.

Stabilization and Preservation Plan for The Hollow

While The Hollow retains its 16-by-28-foot rectangular form of 1763-64, the dwelling exhibits alterations beginning in circa 1800 through the mid-twentieth century. The team of multi-disciplined investigators from the Piedmont and Tidewater have greatly benefitted from the enlightening analysis and documentation of construction techniques and materials through the centuries on this extraordinary dwelling built by Thomas Marshall during his rising status in a largely unsettled area of Fauquier County. Realizing the significant educational value of this architectural laboratory and historic Marshall family site in the training of architectural historians, architects, craftsmen, archaeologists and historians, the APVA has chosen an unusual concept involving stabilization and preservation of the dwelling with minimal restoration. The idea is to appeal to Virginia's educational institutions, ranging from middle through graduate schools, to partake in organized training sessions at The Hollow. Before the future sessions can begin, necessary work to stabilize the long-neglected house has been underway during the warmer seasons since 2004.

Archaeological Potential

Thomas Marshall would have had several outbuildings within his domestic site. However, only the meat house ruin has been discovered under a dump of household and barn waste. The summer kitchen likely stood nearby, along with a stable and possibly a tobacco house as required by other leases from the Lee brothers. While two phases of archaeology have occurred on the Marshall leasehold, the potential remains for further evaluation with future training opportunities for archaeologists and anthropologists.

Pictorial of Stabilization and Preservation Work 2004 – 2008



April 2004. *The picture at left* shows the south front elevation of The Hollow and the leaning stone chimney on the west gable end. Causing a major threat to the structure of the house, the chimney leaned 26 ½ inches out of plumb into the building. The first measure taken to stabilize the building during 2004, the chimney was carefully disassembled during a slow process of evaluation and documentation by stonemason Edward Ashby and architectural historian Cheryl Shepherd with supportive photography by Fonda Ashby.

This view further demonstrates the nineteenth-century change of a window to the right of the central door to create a second entrance for a multi-family tenant house use. The window frame on the left retains excellent integrity, but no sashes remained in the window openings.

April 2004. *At right,* Cheryl and Edward study the peg holes in the original studs flanking the chimney. Cheryl later measured their alignment and determined they indicate that Thomas Marshall first built a wooden chimney as cold weather quickly approached on this windy hill in the fall of 1764. Then, perhaps during the next year, he constructed the stone chimney.



April 2004. *The image below* shows the south rear elevation and the west gable with the chimney to the ground, and the strategically-laid stones in the foreground for future reconstruction by the same stonemason.



June 2005. APVA carpenter Mike Adams in the blue cap and stonemason Edward Ashby in the blue shirt brace and raise the north rear elevation for repair of the failing previously-repaired foundation and rotted replacement sill. Replacing this sill and repairing the foundation were the primary goals of that summer's stabilization plan. However, the removal of weatherboards exposed profound lower decay of the oak framing timbers and loss of tenons needed to fit into mortises cut into the new oak sill. These studs, down braces and corner posts had suffered prolonged water intake in a skewed lean of the house. Thus, the work plan was revised and expanded to repair, patch and replace in kind heavily decayed wood and try to level the house under constant documentation.



June 2005. Each removed framing member, such as this stud *shown below left*, received a number matching the mortise in the upper plate for reinsertion in its proper location.



In the picture at right, Mike half laps the solid part of an original stud to a matching recycled oak replacement for the irreparable portion.



July 2005 *Below left photo:* Mike prepares a necessary replacement end piece for the southeast corner of the front sill. *Below right photo:* Mike hammers a wooden peg into the intricate bevel lap joint he made to connect the solid historic sill with his replacement end.



August 25, 2005. The skilled craftsmen slide the freshly-cut white oak replacement sill into place on the back elevation of the house. Mike Adams had earlier precisely measured and cut the rectangular mortises to match the connecting tenons in the spliced upright corner posts and studs. As can be seen by the open wall space, many of the studs still had not been returned to their original position hanging down from the plate.



Weeks before, Mike had applied the visible plywood V-panels to the plate under the roof eave to stabilize the framing members that hung loose while waiting for repair and fastening into the new sill.

September 19, 2005. Stonemason Edward Ashby chemically analyzed the 1764 mortar used by Thomas Marshall and re-created the recipe for restoration of the foundation. *At right,* he is bringing the foundation back up to the replacement sill.



This back foundation had been reconstructed in the late-nineteenth or early twentieth century.

Ultimately during this stabilization project, only sections of the foundation retained structural integrity and did not require reinforcement.

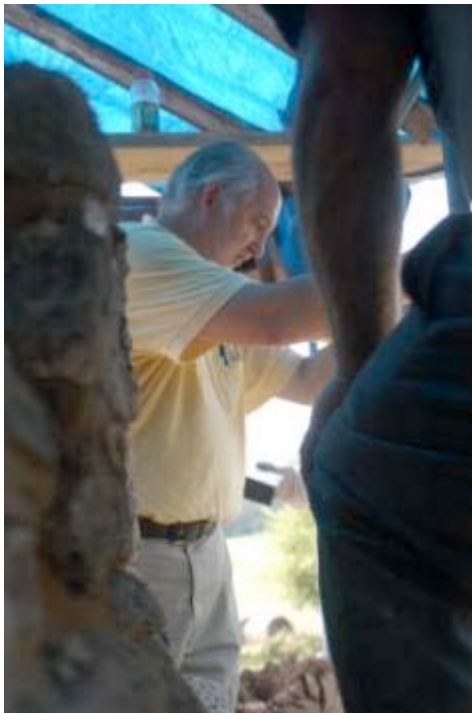


June 2006. *At left,* Ashby Masonry has started the restoration of the stone chimney on the west end using the historic mortar recipe. Edward Ashby carefully studied the rock and photographic documentation and placed the original corner stones accordingly.

Unlike the first-period builder who used uneven round stones as a foundation that contributed to its slippage and lean into the house, Edward laid flat stable stones deeper into the ground for a solid base. He would have to restore the fireplaces on the first and second floors and build their two separate flues lined with clay.

July – August 2006. *Below left,* APVA’s Director of Properties, Louis Malon, stands high on the scaffolding for an update on the chimney reconstruction and the technique Edward used to divide the flues.

Below right, Edward applies finishing touches to the arched brick lintel in the hall’s fireplace. Although tenants had enclosed the fireplace openings on both floors, evidence allowing this lintel reconstruction was found during the analytical chimney dismantling process in 2004. Edward first made a wooden template to support the lintel during construction. He would remove it after the mortar had hardened sufficiently and continue the stonework above.



At right in July 2007, APVA carpenter Karl Newago joins Mike Adams, and they are shown removing the standing-seam metal from the roof. The eaves on both gable ends were extended over the side elevations when the metal was applied to protect the weatherboards from water. Mike and Karl would trim back these overhanging eaves to their eighteenth-century style before applying tapered rake boards and wood shingles.



At left, Mike begins shaving the new poplar rake board on the west end to duplicate the 1764 taper to the ridge. The carpenters had previously finished molding the boxed cornice and end trim on the back elevation. They did not have to replace all of the back cornice because some of the original remained at the northeast end that further served as the model for duplication.

August 2007. *At right*, Mike fastens the rounded oak shingles to the roof sheathing using the new flush end rake board as a guide. He maintained the eighteenth-century practice of hewing and applying the shingles. Additionally, hewn shingles should repel water penetration better than quarter-sawn wood.





August 2008. The planned stabilization and preservation work this summer involves applying new poplar weatherboards now that the roof is fully shingled. Yet, the weatherboards must meet finished trim around windows and doors. Thus, the carpenters are restoring the trim that was missing or reapplying framing after patching deterioration to the openings. The front southwest window has served as the template for the rear window frames, such as the one unpainted frame shown setting within the studs in the picture *at left*.

By the first week of October, all exterior trim will be in place, and the awaited 28-foot-long poplar should arrive so Mike and Karl can carry their weatherboard pattern around the house.

August 2008. The photograph *at right* shows the new beaded poplar weatherboard and beaded corner board beside the heavily weathered original weatherboards at top. Enough of the bead remained on the old boards to match the width. Atypically, the original weatherboards were not beveled as the involved historians have found on houses of this period locally and in the Tidewater. Since Thomas Marshall beaded the weatherboards, he would have beaded the corner boards.

And so, the stabilization and preservation of The Hollow shall continue to assure its historical value for many generations to come.



This report was prepared by Cheryl H. Shepherd of Millennium Preservation Services, Warrenton, Virginia, September 2008.