

John Marshall boyhood home now landmark

Site in Fauquier wins designation

BY CALVIN R. TRICE

TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

The state has designated a boyhood home of John Marshall as a historic landmark, boosting restoration prospects for the isolated, long-neglected house in Fauquier County.

The Board of Historic Resources voted Wednesday to add the 240-year-old wood frame house, called The Hollow, to the Virginia Landmarks Register.

And a second group, the State Review Board, nominated the home for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The votes came at the boards' joint meeting at the Valentine-Richmond History Center, said officials with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Marshall was the fourth chief justice of the United States. His landmark decision in *Marbury v. Madison* established the Supreme Court's authority to review laws and declare them unconstitutional.

The decisions by the state history boards mark "a quantum leap forward" for The Hollow, said Tom deButts, a direct descendant of the chief justice.

Nonprofit organization

DeButts is president of Friends of the Hollow, a nonprofit organization that has worked since 1981 to confirm the house's historic significance for restoration.

David Collins, a Fauquier County resident who bought the home three years ago for preservation, said he also plans to work with historians and preservationists across the state to establish a children's park on the site.

"I'm hopeful that I will be able, with their guidance, to create a park that both educates the children and provides a robust recreational experience,"

said Collins, founder and chairman of Learning Tree International.

The 1½-story structure is situated in Fauquier's community of Markham near an Interstate 66 exit ramp. It was Marshall's home from age 9 to 17. Until recently, the house had been neglected and held for development speculation as doubts lingered over its age and authenticity.

Historical records

However, historical records pointed to its use by the Marshall family. Also, several scientific analyses performed since 1996 date the timber used to build it to 1763, deButts said.

Marc Wagner, national register manager for the Department of Historic Resources, said the home is almost completely unchanged from its original construction. Its integrity made it an especially strong candidate for the historic designation, Wagner said.

"We want something that Thomas Marshall and John Marshall would recognize if they came back from the dead and saw the building — and with this house, they would," said Wagner.

The Hollow was built by Thomas Marshall, father of the future chief justice. The Marshall family lived there from 1764 to 1773 before moving to Oak Hill, on the Fredericksburg-Winchester Road in Fauquier.

John Marshall was born in 1755. He served in Congress and as secretary of state before becoming chief justice in 1801.

The State Review Board is a panel of experts in history, archaeology and other fields appointed by the director of the historic resources department. The body advises the director, Kathleen Kilpatrick, on nominations to the National Register, a program of the National Parks Service.

The Board of Historic Resources is a citizens' panel appointed by the governor to decide on applications for the state Landmarks Register. The two bodies hold joint meetings four times a year.

• Contact Calvin R. Trice at (540) 574-9977 or ctrice@timesdispatch.com

FRIENDS OF THE HOLLOW

WEB SITE

www.geocities.com/thehollow.geo/hollow.htm