

HISTORICAL DISCOURSES

Yesterday and Today

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{This essay is reproduced in its entirety from the M version of the Marvel history. It was compiled by the authors with the help of Ella (Armstrong) Yeakel [613346(10)] and others. Comments are enclosed in French brackets {} and the Marvel lineage code is given in square brackets []. The reader is cautioned that no evidence has been developed to support the contention set forth in this essay that a Marvel was on the Mayflower.}

In presenting the earliest records of any family it is necessary to give the historical setting first in order that the migration of people from one country to another may be accounted for reasonably.

In the dawn of history, prior to the sixth century, England was inhabited by a race of people known as the Celts. About this time there was an invasion of this land by tribes of Teutonic origin, known as the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. The Danes constituted a second wave of practically the same race and followed their predecessors into England during the Eighth and Ninth Centuries. The third wave of migration came with William the Conqueror and his army of Norman lineage.

Northmen of the same stock had settled along the Northwestern coast of France in the province of Normandy. The inhabitants were called Normans which is a contraction for the term "North men". These people spoke the Nordic branch of the Teutonic language. Originally they came as traders and adventurers along the coast of France where they eventually located and made permanent settlements. Mingling with the people of the French tongue they soon lost their original Danish language and learned to speak French.

Edward the Confessor reigned over England from the year 1042 to 1066. His early life had been spent at the court of Normandy in France and he was therefore more Norman than English in his tastes and ideas. Weak in mind he was swayed by others. Because of his partiality he wished to be succeeded by one of their number. So he bestowed his kingdom upon his cousin William, Duke and ruler of Normandy who was to be heir to the throne of England at his death. But upon the demise of Edward the throne was seized by Harold, son of the Earl of Wessex. William therefore gathered his forces into an army and invaded England. The battle of Hastings resulted in the year 1066. Harold was slain and his Anglo-Saxon army was put to utter rout. William, Duke of Normandy, France, became William the Conqueror of England. His coronation occurred at Westminster Abbey on Christmas day of the same year.

There is a little hamlet in Normandy named Merveille (Mervee'). At the present time the map of France shows the location of this village to be about twenty miles from the Franco-Belgian frontier. It might be added that at the beginning of the late war this town was occupied by the German Army. {The Merveille discussed here is in Flanders, France.}

Residing here was a man by the name of Robert, who was of Norman ancestry. Prior to 1300 it had been the custom for individuals to have but one name. For example William, Henry, Edward or Robert. When William of Normandy went to England many of

his subjects accompanied him and settled permanently in that land. Among these was Robert who was a member of the nobility. In order to distinguish this Robert from others of the same name he was called Robert of Merveille, or to use the French name Robert de Merveille.

About two hundred years following the Norman invasion of England was the formative period of the English tongue; a resultant of the gradual amalgamation of the Norman-French and Anglo-Saxon speech into the mixture that has since become modern English. Names of localities and geographical sites, names of personal characteristics and occupations afforded an origin for the name which was given a family and therefore constituted the second name. Customs of using a family name did not appear until 1300 A. D. In the course of time, particularly when population was growing so rapidly that a real necessity for family distinguishing names was needed, these descriptive names lost their original meaning of locality in the mouths of neighbors and became merely family designations. From then on the tendency was to make them easier of pronunciation and a natural development was the dropping of the various phrases such as "de" meaning "of the" which preceded them. For example Robert de Merveille became Robert Merveille. Until 1300, French, the language of the nobility and law courts of England, was in common use. At this time the Anglo-Saxon influence upon the language spoken throughout England was gradually reasserting itself. The Norman-French element was only retained in the modern English words which are now used in refined speech. The more elegant words with prefixes and suffixes are of Norman-French origin while our household terms and commonplace words which a child first learns to speak are almost wholly of Anglo-Saxon origin. The anglicized equivalent of the Norman-French family name Merveille became Marvell or Marvel, adopted at the time when the Anglo-Saxon influence became dominant in English speech and spelling. The southern provinces of England have hundreds of family names which are of similar origin. Our family found in Yorkshire an ancestral home. There was a Marvel coat of arms which has been handed down and is now in possession of a Mrs. Blaiggs in England.

Among the members of the Marvel family was Andrew Marvell, poet. writer of short stories and member of English Parliament. He was born March 31, 1621, at Winstead, Yorkshire, graduated at Trinity College, Cambridge, travelled for several years in Europe, returned to England about 1650, was employed by Oliver Cromwell as a tutor to his ward, William Dutton. He became secretary to the poet John Milton in 1657, and was elected to Parliament from Hull in 1660.

Without fortune or influence, possessing no commanding talent as a speaker, he maintained a character for integrity so genuine and high that his constituency felt itself honored by his conduct and allowed him a handsome pension as long as he lived. His death occurred Aug. 18, 1678. His satires in verse and in prose relate mostly to matters of temporary interest in church and state. Of another, class, however, are several choice pieces of verse as, "The Garden", "A Drop of Dew", "The Bermudas", and a splendid patriotic ode on "Cromwell's Return from Ireland." He has been called, "The Poet of Gardens" because of his poems about flowers. 1921 was the third centennial year of his birth. A modern English poet, Daniel Henderson, has paid him a beautiful tribute in the following poem in which he refers to Nunappleton, which was the Yorkshire home of Lord Fairfax. It was here that Marvel lived for a time as tutor to Fairfax's daughter Mary, who is doubtless the maiden referred to in Mr. Daniel Henderson's poem.

"THE POET OF GARDENS"

Marvell, still your fragrant rime,
Prosper on the bough o time!
Far beyond Nunappleton

Have your lovely lyrics run
Backward to Theocritus,
Forward to the hearts of us!

Walk this new world, splendid ghost!
 Watch Manhattans surging host!
 Would you dream our hearts are closes
 For your tulips and your roses?
 That your lillies [sic] and rosemary
 Give our souls a sanctuary?
 That the bird of silver wing
 Nests in our remembering?

Time will dull us; life will harden!
 But our thoughts shall keep your garden
 Green as when you taught a maid
 Latin verses in the shade!
 Green as when its wall shut out
 Roundhead Brawl and royal rout!
 Green as when there came to birth
 Milton's heaven, Marvell's earth.

The early record of the migration of the first member of the Marvel family to America is laid in a historical setting. A society in England named the Pilgrims had withdrawn from the fellowship of the established church. They organized churches of their own where they preached the truth as they understood it. The result of this was persecution by their reigning powers in the church and civil government of England. Many died as martyrs to their cause and this led to the embarkment of many individuals to Holland. Here they remained eleven or twelve years. Spurred on by burning desires to find a new home in America where they might worship according to the dictates of their consciences. They sailed in a ship. "Speedwell" from Holland to England. After many vicissitudes they sailed for America in the Mayflower from the English port of Plymouth. There were one hundred and two souls on board, among whom were John Carter, the first governor and Miles Standish, later immortalized in Longfellow's "Evangeline". Sixty-four days passed before they sighted land at Cape Cod, Mass. After many wanderings and perplexities the Pilgrims finally landed Dec. 21, 1620, on the famous rock which they called Plymouth in honor of the port from which they sailed in England.

Among those on the Mayflower who sought a new home in America was a man by the name of John Marvel, who signed after his name the term, "gentleman", which in those days signified that he was a man of leisure. In the sailing list we find the company classed as to occupation into gentlemen, laborers, jewelers, gold refiners. etc. Folks of these occupations were obviously not the best stuff to fight the hardships of the great American wilderness.

Why had they come? Some had it warmly at heart to convert the Indians to Christianity, some looked to the extension of the British empire, but perhaps the majority expected to easily pick pearls and gold. They expected to dig gold, wash gold, refine gold, and ship gold back to England. When the Mayflower returned to England not a man went back. One-half of the colony perished during the first year, but the remainder kept their faith and looked for a golden future. They had to wait long for harvest, but they accepted their scanty food and always felt that they had reason for thankfulness to God. Harvest came by and by, a better future opened, then began the building of the church, schoolhouse, and homes, then began a life which opened and broadened until Plymouth Colony found incorporation in the Confederation of colonies and the confederation of the colonies transformed itself into the American Republic. Thus was founded the Massachusetts branch of the Marvel family. Many descendants of this family today live in Massachusetts and neighboring states.

In Accomack County, Virginia, situated north of the Chesapeake Bay and south of the state of Delaware there settled sometime between the years 1650 and 1660 the progenitor of those belonging to the Delaware branch of the Marvel family. His name was John Marvel [6] and the church records of Virginia show his two sons names to have been Thomas Marvel [61] and John Marvel [62]. They remained in Virginia for a number of years, then moved to Sussex, Somerset County, Virginia, which became a Part of Delaware about 1680. The record of the descendants of John [62] are unknown and are probably lost, but the records of the son Thomas [61] show that he had four sons, namely, Thomas Marvel, Jr. [611], Philip Marvel [612], David Marvel [613], and

Robert Marvel [614]. Thus there were three generations of the Marvel family in Delaware.

Thomas Marvel, Jr. [611], is the ancestor of the Marvels residing in Indiana. Philip Marvel [612] is the ancestor of most of those residing in Delaware and adjoining states. Robert Marvel [614] is the ancestor of the family whose guests we are today, while David Marvel [613] was the father of the Prettyman Marvel, Sr. [6133] line of which the writer of this sketch is a descendant. There are numerous families of this same line in Indiana, Illinois, and other western states.

David Marvel [613], while a native of Sussex County, Delaware, married a Miss Prettyman and moved to Kent, the middle county of Delaware. He turned his attention to fruit raising and fine horses. From the first these early settlers made their brandy from the peaches, grown in their own orchards. This was considered an indispensable article for family and public gatherings. David Marvel [613] was fond of well-trained saddle horses and in his estimation speed was an addition to their other good qualities. No young man in all that country rode a finer horse or richer mounted saddle than did David Marvel [613], who always dressed in the finest broadcloth.

To return again to the ancestral home of our family in Delaware. We shall not fail to note the fact that when the French and Indian War of 1750 to 1760 was in progress two members of the Marvel family served in this war on the English side. It was this unity and homogeneity of race blood which made them the power they were in the formation of the American Republic. The foundation of their religious teachings gave them the spirit that led them to live in accord with correct principles of life and if need be to make the supreme sacrifice for human rights, for justice, for freedom, and for truth, in order that a new nation might be born into this world, a beacon to the other nations of the earth. We pay our respects today to those ancestors of ours who helped to lay the broad foundations for this nation and by whose sacrifices we are privileged to enjoy the comforts of today. We have, indeed, many things to be thankful for and to be proud of in our nation, something to be loyal too and something to perpetuate through history. We can look upon our nation as God's great loom for the interweaving of the peoples of the earth. The noble women and noble men from different races of the old world are the threads of silk and gold. The fabric woven is the American Republic, beautiful with its holy freedom, its constitutional rights and its magnificent and elating institutions, both civil and religious. The fabric of our American civilization which is distinctly American is therefore complex. No matter what the source be, let the highest type of citizenship be built into the structure of this great American Republic.

We can best honor our heroic forefathers by faithfully fighting the battles of today in our daily lives as they fought their battles in their day. On the brow of the hill overlooking the bay where the Mayflower was moored at the distant day over three hundred years ago, where the waters continue to beat in volleying thunder upon its sandy slopes, they have erected a colossal statue of national significance. On four corners of the pedestal repose four figures or statues representing Law, Morality, Freedom, and Education. But above these stands erect the gigantic figure of Faith, 30 x 6 feet she rises from the floor which rests of a slab of granite from Plymouth Rock. With one hand she grasps an open Bible and with the other she points heavenward, signifying that only through faith in the precepts of this Book of books has the light of liberty led us in the path of right through the past and will the true light by which we can make future progress be found.