

Then & Now - David Everett Jr.

Famous Citizen and Resident

This is an article from our PHS archives written and researcher unknown.

The subject of this sketch, a native of Princeton, Mass., has been chiefly known, to many for several generations, as the author of a poem for juvenile declamation, beginning [You'd scarce expect one of my age,](#) while his greater work in a literary point of view, has escaped their notice.

This sketch is prepared with the design of setting forth briefly his character and work, in order that due honor may be rendered to his name. He was the son of David Everett and Susannah Rolph who were married in Princeton Oct. 29, 1767. They had five children, David being the second child and the eldest son. He was born Mar. 29, 1770.

The father came from Dedham and within a year of his marriage purchased a hundred acres or more, adjoining land already owned by his wife's father. It was in Lot No. Eleven (11) on the west side of Wachusett Mountain, on the old county road to Barre. On this land he erected two or three dwelling houses and a blacksmith shop, all of which he sold not long afterward, the larger part to some of his old neighbors from Dedham. Later, catching the spirit of the times, which was manifest even in remote localities, he joined the Continental Army with others of his town. His military service was, however, brief, for he died in the army June 26, 1775. The widow kept the family together, though doubtless with difficulty, as her husband left no real estate, and but little personal property, while all the money, as far as is known, that the widow received as pay for his military service was sixteen pounds.

The house was located at 56 Rhodes Rd., and burned in 1930 and then rebuilt. It was near the schoolhouse #8 at the corner of Thompson and Rhodes Rd. It was isolated although on the county road, the travelling being infrequent, and the boy's earliest associations were with the neighboring schoolhouse. He must have imbibed the patriotic spirit of the times, which shows itself in the productions of his mature years.

When he was about 10 years of age, he went to live with his grandmother, Mary (Everett) Gerould, in Wrentham. The journey must have been a great event in the boy's life. It may well be supposed that the educational advantages in Wrentham were superior to those in Princeton where his father's library, according to the inventory, consisted of "two old Bibles, and a few other old books," valued at six shillings. These new conditions more adequately met the wants of a "bright,

ambitious boy," as he is said to have been. By his perseverance and "indomitable ambition" he made his way to New Ipswich, N. H., being attracted by the opportunities offered by the Academy recently established there. The only evidence we have of this progress there is found in a manuscript preserved in the Academy, of an original drama entitled "The Honest Lawyer," composed in 1791.

During his stay in the town he taught one of the schools of the village, or town, probably with the view of obtaining means for a college education. It was during this period that he wrote for a public school exhibition the declamation so well known, beginning "You'd scarce expect one of my age to speak in public on the stage."

This will be spoken of more in detail later in these pages. Other writings of his, including schoolboy declamations, and also some more mature articles were probably produced during his stay in New Ipswich, and during his college course. Some of these were published in the first edition of the "Columbian Orator, issued in 1797, and show extensive reading, and a marked versatility of talent as a writer.

He entered Dartmouth College and graduated in 1795. On that occasion he had the honor of the valedictory poem in which he predicted the future of our country as follows:

"The Muse prophetic views the coming day, When federal laws beyond the line shall sway; Where Spanish indolence inactive lies, And every art and every virtue dies, Where pride and avarice their empire hold, Ignobly great, and poor amid their gold, Columbia's genius shall the mind inspire, And fill each breast with patriotic fire. Nor east nor western oceans shall confine The generous flame that dignifies the mind; O'er all the earth shall Freedom's banner wave, The tyrant blast, and liberate the slave; Plenty and peace shall spread from pole to pole, Till earth's grand family possess one soul."

After his graduation he went to Boston to study law, and was subsequently admitted to the bar. He taught for a time in one of the Boston schools. During this time he was a contributor to "The Nightingale" a "Mélange de Literature" published in Boston. Lemuel Shaw, afterward Chief justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, studied law under Mr. Everett, and when the latter removed to Amherst, N. H., where in addition to the law he did some literary work, Mr. Shaw went with him.

Judge Shaw always maintained a high opinion of Mr. Everett's character and ability, and felt "under great obligation to him." Yet Mr. Shaw did not rise rapidly to distinction, and judge Thomas in the American Law Review of Oct. 1867 remarks, "during these years of small beginnings perhaps the future chief justice found encouragement in the lines of Mr. Everett, "Large streams from little fountains flow."

The marriage of Mr. Everett to Dorothy, daughter of Isaac Appleton of New Ipswich, took place Dec. 29, 1799. She survived him, dying Jan. 1, 1859 at New Ipswich, to which place she had returned soon after his death. They had no children.

From Amherst, Mr. Everett returned to Boston and to the practice of law there. In 1808 he established the "Boston Patriot" devoted to the interests of the Democratic Party. It was in this paper that Ex-President John Adams, who had become disaffected toward the Federal party, wrote historical reminiscences and political essays. In 1812 he conducted "The Yankee" and engaged also in "The Pilot" which had only a brief existence.

Gov. Gerry, who on taking office had removed a number of officials throughout the State, appointed him in 1811 Registrar of Probate for Suffolk Co. On the accession of Gov. Strong, however, the former officials were reinstated, and, consequently, Mr. Everett held the office but eight months. This change in his prospects necessitated new plans for the future, and the condition of his health requiring a change of residence, he went to Marietta, Ohio, probably by the way of Wheeling, Va. At Marietta he, with others, doubtless by previous arrangement, established a newspaper called the "American Friend." But after eight months of connection with it he died, Dec. 21, 1813, at the age of forty-three years and nine months.

A month after his arrival at Marietta the first issue of the "American Friend" had appeared bearing the date April 26, 1813. In his address to the public, he says the editor "feels himself impelled by every principle that actuates his heart to give his utmost aid to the great cause in which we are engaged, in the vindication of the dear bought and invaluable rights of America against a haughty, powerful, persevering, and unprincipled foe. Believing in the sincerity of his soul that heaven is in our side, and will ultimately crown our struggles with success, he cannot forbear, on this and all occasions, to protest against that treachery to our own country, and that blasphemy against heaven, which extol her as the protectress of our rights, and the bulwark of our religion. While he pays particular attention to subjects of great national concern, it will be his aim to present his readers that variety of miscellaneous matter and current news which are expected in a public journal." The first issue of the paper after his death contained the following obituary notice:

Obituary

Died in this town on the morning of Dec. 21st 1813, Of a lingering consumption, which he bore with the fortitude of a philosophical mind, David Everett, Esq., the editor of the American Friend, aged 44 years. The interment of his remains was performed with Masonic honors, on the 22nd. inst., and his funeral attended by a large concourse of

friends, acquaintances and citizens, collected on the melancholy occasion, to pay the last sad duties to him whose virtues commanded the highest respect and esteem, and whose remembrance will ever be dwelt upon with melancholy sensations.

Mr. Everett was a native of Massachusetts, and was regularly educated to the profession of Law. For some years previous to his emigration to this State, he resided in Boston; where he conducted, as editor, several newspapers of distinguished celebrity.

From his youth he devoted his attention to literature, and to the culture of a mind naturally strong and capacious. His unremitting industry and the sedentary habits of his life gradually enfeebled his constitution. To endeavor to restore his health by the salubrious air of a milder climate, he left Boston in January 1813, and arrived at Marietta the March following. Here he re-commenced his labors as an editor, and his assiduity to effect the object of his highest ambition, to be useful to his country by disseminating, through the medium of a weekly newspaper, correct political principles, and general literature, completed the ruin of his health, and deprived the State of one of its most estimable literary characters, and the republic of a firm patriot.

Mr. Everett was the author of many valuable works, in which he displayed splendid talents, a prolific imagination, and an exalted genius. In some of his literary productions the force and sublimity of his thoughts, the purity and elegance of his style delight the reader of correct taste. In those of a political nature, his mind proves itself acute, penetrating and capable of illustrating the most abstruse subjects, - his arguments are strong, conclusive, and like a torrent bear down every opposing barrier, and force conviction upon the mind.

As an editor, he invariably wrote the impulses of an honest heart, with the boldness of an independent mind. He despised that servility, which would flatter, fawn around, and crouch to a man, invested with popular favor, or clothed with "a little brief authority." He detested the sycophant, and abhorred the demagogue. He was a republican in principle and a strenuous advocate for his country's rights; and his proud soul could never brook an infringement of those rights, by an insolent foe, without feeling and expressing the liveliest indignation.

Such was David Everett - a philanthropist - a patriot - and a man of undoubted integrity and honor.

Although he died in middle life, his literary work was quite extensive. Beside his labors as editor he made contributions to various papers, and delivered addresses upon national topics.

Everett was evidently familiar with the Latin classics and when he wrote these lines he may have had in mind a passage in the poet Juvenal, Satire X, 114-117, in which Cicero

and Demosthenes are held up as models of oratory for the ambitious boy. These lines of Juvenal have been thus translated: "The urchin whom a slave conducts to school, has scarce acquired his first and earliest rule, Ere ardent hopes his little bosom seize, To rival Tully or Demosthenes."

It is noticeable that while Everett's urchin modestly disclaims rivalry, Juvenile's urchin seeks it.

In addition to this juvenile poem of Everett the Columbian Orator contains the following from his pen:

- ***Slaves in Barbary***, a drama in two acts.
- ***The Conjuror***, a dialogue.
- ***A general description of America*** - An extract from a poem, spoken at Dartmouth on Commencement Day, 1795.
- ***The Last Day***, an extract from a manuscript poem.
- Dialogue between an inhabitant of the United States and an Indian.
- Dialogue between Edward and Harry.
- Forensic dispute on the question, "Are the Anglo Americans endowed with capacity and genius equal to Europeans?"
- List of his other writings is as follows:
- ***Common Sense in Dishabille***, appearing first in a series of papers in the "Farmer's Weekly Museum," 1797, and afterwards published in book form.
- ***Duranel, the Persian Poet***, a tragedy in five acts performed at the Federal St. Theatre, in Boston.
- ***Demonstration of the truth of the Scriptures as fulfilled in the Prophecies*** (devoted to proving the people of the United States to be distinctly alluded to by Daniel and St. John).
- ***Poem igoi***, before Phi Beta Kappa, Cambridge.
- ***Oration July 4, 1804*** at Amherst, N. H.
- ***Oration July 4, 1808***, before Bunker Hill Association.
- Play (in manuscript) entitled, "***The Honest Lawyer, to New Ipswich***".
- ***Essay, 1807, On the Rights and Duties of Nations***. (Relative to Fugitives from Justice considered with reference to the Chesapeake case.)
- (An Appendix to this, 1808, is titled the 56th edition, and an Addition is made entitled, "***Embargo on Common Sense, Taken off by U. S.***") *
- A satirical poem also appears beginning as follows:

"Hail Britannia, wondrous land, Whose floating bulwarks guard our strand or bear thy thunders o'er the wave And greatly deal thy bolts to save. Cannon! Proclaim your sovereign might, and tell the world that power is right." Etc.

Resources

Am. Antiquarian Socy's Proceedings, Oct. 1889, by Dr. A. P. Peabody. Buckingham, Vol. II, Am. Law Review, Oct. 1867, Genealogical Memorial Biographies, Vol. IV.1 The Hundred Boston Orators. History of Marietta, Ohio. History of New Ipswich, N. H.

Judges Thomas and Shaw.

Built: house, c. 1767, on Thompson Rd. - house now gone

David Everett - b. 1745 - m. 1767 Susannah, daughter of Stephen Rolph and sister of Solomon and Rev. John - bot. 100 A adjoining S. Rolph in Lot # 11

opp. School house # 8 - died 1775 in Army

David Everett Jr. - b. 1770 - moved to Wrentham in 1780, then to Academy at New Ipswich, N.H., Dartmouth College, admitted to bar in Boston - m. Dorothy Appleton, daughter of Isaac Appleton of New Ipswich - died in Marietta, Ohio 1813

Author of well-known poem:

"You'd scarce expect one of my age
To speak in public on the stage;
And if I chance to fall below
Demosthenes or Cicero
Don't view me with a critic's eye
But pass my imperfection by.
Tall oaks from little fountains flow."

(Published in Columbian Orator in 1797 - spoken by Ephraim Farrar, 7 years old.)