

= Robert White ( judge ) =

Robert White ( March 29 , 1759 ? March 9 , 1831 ) was a distinguished early American military officer , lawyer , judge , and politician in the U.S. state of Virginia .

White represented Frederick County in the Virginia House of Delegates ( 1789 ? 1792 ) and served as a judge of the General Court of Virginia ( 1793 ? 1831 ) . Prior to his political and law careers , White served in the Virginia militia and Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War .

White was the grandson of Virginia pioneer settler and physician Dr. Robert White ( 1688 ? 1752 ) and thus a member of the prominent White political family of Virginia and West Virginia . He was the nephew of United States House Representative Alexander White ( 1738 ? 1804 ) and the brother of United States House Representative Francis White ( 1761 ? 1826 ) .

= = Early life and education = =

Robert White was born on March 29 , 1759 , in Winchester , Virginia . He was a son of John White , one of the justices serving on the first Bench of Magistrates of the Frederick County court , and his wife , Ann Patton White . White was also a grandson of Dr. Robert White , an early physician and pioneer settler of Frederick County . White received his primary education at a grammar school near Marsh Creek in Pennsylvania under the direction of Reverend Craighead , a Presbyterian minister . At the age of 16 , White undertook a hiatus from his education to serve in the American Revolutionary War .

= = Military career = =

In 1775 , White enlisted as a private in the Virginia militia company under the command of Captain Hugh Stephenson ( or Stevenson ) , which had been organized in Berkeley County , Virginia ( present @-@ day Jefferson County , West Virginia ) . Stephenson 's company departed for the Boston campaign " a few days " before Daniel Morgan 's company departed from Winchester . White , along with Stephenson 's company , departed on June 20 , 1775 , from Morgan 's Spring near Shepherdstown and marched to Boston to reinforce commander @-@ in @-@ chief of the Continental Army George Washington 's forces who had besieged the British Army forces there .

While in Boston , White 's " chivalric bearing " received the attention of Washington , who " saw in the boy the germ of that remarkable decision of character " . On March 17 , 1776 , British forces withdrew from Boston , thus ending the Boston campaign . In the summer of 1776 , White was elevated to the rank of ensign . White then fought as a lieutenant at the Battle of Germantown on October 4 , 1777 , under Major William Darke of Berkeley County . Throughout the spring of 1778 , White was engaged in attacking British Army detachments .

Later in 1778 at Short Hills , New Jersey , White suffered a fractured femur caused by a musket ball and received a wound to the head from the stock of a British Army grenadier 's musket . Following the engagement at Short Hills , White was taken as a prisoner of war by the British forces . White had fallen unconscious and was taken to the tent of " an amiable and accomplished " British officer who had rescued him from death . He was later exchanged , and in the autumn of 1778 White returned to Winchester " by slow and painful efforts , exceedingly lame , weak and emaciated by acute and protracted suffering " . His wounds had not yet healed by the time of his return to Winchester , but following the removal of bone fragments , the wound began to close . White remained permanently physically disabled as a result of his injuries .

While " not fully recovered from his wounds " , White received the commission of a captain of cavalry in 1779 . He commenced the recruitment and training of American troops in Philadelphia to fight in the war , but due to the severity of his injuries , he retired from military service at the age of 20 and returned to Winchester . White was inducted as an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati for his military service during the war .

= = Law and political careers = =

Following his military service and return to Winchester in 1779 , White studied jurisprudence under his uncle , Alexander White , one of the most preeminent lawyers practicing in the Shenandoah Valley . During the course of his four years of law studies , White read the legal treatises of William Blackstone and Edward Coke among others while lying on his back or propped up on a couch recovering from his injuries . White was admitted to practice law at Winchester in December 1782 , after which he engaged in the practice of law for eleven years .

White 's health continued to improve , and his law practice was " an extensive and profitable " one . In a May 1837 biographical sketch of White published in the Southern Literary Messenger , White was described as " an able lawyer , clear and cogent in argument , but not eloquent , his voice rather harsh and shrill , and in the impetuosity of debate his enunciation was sometimes affected even to stammering " . White maintained a " lofty eminence " within the Frederick County bar for over a decade . During this time , White served as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates from 1789 to 1793 representing the multi @-@ member district of Frederick County . White ran for election against Matthew Page and Joseph Holmes for the seat in 1791 , and won alongside Page with 310 votes to Page 's 335 votes . White ran for election to his seat in 1793 against Page , Thomas Buck , and James Singleton . White received the largest total of votes with a result of 388 .

= = Judicial career and later life = =

White was appointed as the first judge serving Virginia 's tenth judicial district , which was composed of five counties , including Hampshire County . Winchester was chosen by an act of the Virginia General Assembly as the " center point " of this judicial district , where all judicial records were kept . His appointment as a judge of the tenth judicial district paid a meager compensation of 1 @, @ 600 dollars per annum .

White was then appointed a judge of the General Court of Virginia on November 16 , 1793 , and he continued to hold that office until his death in 1831 . In that period , White served as the president of the General Court of Virginia for several years before his death . Serving on the General Court of Virginia required White to travel to Richmond in June and November of each year . Until 1825 , White served as both a judge on the General Court of Virginia and a judge of Virginia 's tenth judicial district .

During the War of 1812 , White took a dislike to the " encroachment of military power " as Winchester began to attract a sizable number of recruits going off to fight in the war . White refused to permit military officers to appear before him in his courtroom with their swords by their sides . Several of White 's judicial opinions became well known as " powerful specimens of sound learning and extensive research " including the Hyers case , in which the defendant was tried for murder , and the Preston case , in which there was a legal question regarding estoppel . From his office , White conducted the teaching of jurisprudence to John Buchanan , a notable Maryland jurist who later served in the Maryland House of Delegates and as an associate justice on the Maryland Court of Appeals .

In the spring of 1825 , White was en route to serve on the court of Loudoun County and stayed the night at a tavern along the Shenandoah River . He was discovered by the proprietor the following morning suffering with paralysis . White remained stricken with paralysis for several weeks and returned to his home in Winchester on a litter . His position as judge of the tenth judicial district was assumed by two judges : William Brockinbough and John Scott . White remained paralyzed for the remainder of his life . On July 1 , 1825 , White gave power of attorney to his son , John Baker White , for the management of his affairs . White later died at his residence in Winchester on March 9 , 1831 .

= = Personal life and family = =

White married Arabella Baker , the daughter of John Baker and his wife , Judith Wood Baker ( born February 15 , 1761 ) , of Shepherdstown , Virginia ( now West Virginia ) . White and his wife had

three children together :

White and his family resided in Winchester on Washington Street south of Cecil Street " for many years " until White 's death in 1831 . White 's house , one of the " earliest built brick houses " in Winchester , was destroyed by fire , after which George H. Byrd built a residence on the same site . Byrd deeded the property to his brother , Colonel William Byrd ; henceforth that house has been known as the " Byrd House " .

= = Legacy = =

In the 1970s , three restored portraits painted in 1799 of White , his wife Arabella Baker White , and their son Robert Baker White and daughter Juliet White Opie , were donated to the Historical Society of Winchester by Baker Hall of Huntington , West Virginia , and Louisa Tabb Hall of Charles Town , West Virginia . All three portraits were painted by renowned painter Charles Peale Polk , a nephew of the well @-@ known painter Charles Willson Peale .