

Birthday

*John Q. Barrett**

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Robert H. Jackson was born on the Jackson family farm near Spring Creek in Warren County, Pennsylvania.

He descended from early United States settlers. In 1797, Jackson's great-grandfather Elijah Jackson built the first white settlement in Spring Creek Township. In 1829, Elijah's and Mary Watt Jackson's son Robert Rutherford Jackson was born there. In 1862 (or thereabouts), Robert's and Mary Eldred Jackson's son William Eldred Jackson was born there. And on February 13, 1892, Will Jackson's and Angelina Houghwot Jackson's son Robert Houghwot Jackson was born there—in the same house, in the same room, where his father had been born. (Yes, it seems that Justice Jackson spelled his middle name Houghwot—pronounced “HOW-it”—with one more “u” than his mother and her people used to spell her maiden name/their surname Houghwot. I don't know why.)

Robert Jackson's 2013 birthday will be celebrated with official events, including in the schools and in the courthouse in Warren, Pennsylvania, the seat of Warren County.

I hope that it also will be celebrated in woods and small towns, in quiet reading spots, with writing instruments, in well-crafted phrases, by eloquent voices making powerful arguments, with deep respect for law, by lawyers and judges, by citizens and officials engaging seriously in politics, by world actors defending high principles, by regular folks who are devoted to their families and friends, by all who live with determined individuality, by people smiling and laughing, and with charm. All of that would be appropriately Jacksonian.

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