

## **Charlotte Hall School History**

### The founding and early history of Charlotte Hall School

#### Extracted verbatim from the Charlotte Hall School 1939 Sentinel yearbook

At the first meeting of the trustees appointed by law for Charlotte Hall on the first day of July 1774, there were sixteen members present representing St. Mary's, Charles, and Prince George's counties. At the meeting, a committee of eight members was appointed for the purpose of surveying the land grant of the said school and to report upon documents relating strictly to its foundation.

The trustees decreed the school and All Faith's Parish should be closely alienated and that the first principal (headmaster) should be the Rector of that Parrish. On account of the Revolution, the school did not commence active work until 1796, but boasts an unbroken record of service from that time 'til the present day.<sup>[1]</sup>

The basic purpose of the fathers of Charlotte Hall School was "To provide for the liberal and pious education of the youth of the province to better them for their duties either in regard to church or state". The history may be traced directly back to the free public schools founded in the county of St. Mary's under the general act of 1723; "For the encouragement of learning and erecting schools in the several counties of the province." In 1774 the free schools of the counties were united, their funds merged and a school for three counties was ordered to be erected at the "Coole Springs" to be known as Charlotte Hall School, in honor of Queen Charlotte of England.

The progress of the school's foundation, greatly retarded by the American War of Independence, became an important issue to the school's forefathers: namely, the first trustees. With the signing of the treaty of peace between the warring factions the legislatures in the interest of the school lost no time in stimulating its growth. With the erection of the school's first building the actual schooling began with the meeting of the board on July 18, 1796, at which time a resolution was made which stated:

"Resolved, that Charlotte School be open under the direction and management of two headmasters, and that the Latin, Greek, and French language, English grammar, and a complete system of mathematics shall be taught therein."

"Resolved, that the resolution of the last meeting declaring the salary of one thousand dollars exclusive of the use of the lands, be given the masters be rescinded so far as relates to the use of the lands."

"Resolved, that the price of tuition at said school be six pounds current money for each boy per annum payable quarterly."

"Resolved, that the Reverend Hatch Dent, of the State of North Carolina, be hereby appointed Principal of Charlotte Hall School and professor of languages in said school, and Henry Lyon Davies, A. B., late professor of languages in Dickinson College in the state of Pennsylvania be hereby appointed instructor of mathematics and the French language in said school, whose duty it shall be to aide and assist the professor of languages."

The social life at the school after its foundation and first days of progress revolved mainly around a certain inn of colonial days known to lovers of southern Maryland's historic folklore as "Locke's Tavern" – the most renown of these social events being the romantic June-Ball. This ball which ends the school year is a noted social event dating back to early years in the last century. Reverend Neal Hammil Shaw, an officer of the school in 1799, has left records in which are mentioned payments to Mr. Locke, the keeper of the tavern for the use of the two long rooms in his inn for the Charlotte Hall School.

This house, now called the "Briscoe House," where the early balls were held, has an interesting story. We read in the archives as early as 1699, that Captain John Dent of Charles County, petitions the Assembly for the right to keep an inn at "Ye Coole Springs." The ancient archives and town traditions bear out the fact that this was a house or part of the house he erected. Later the inn was kept by Mr. Locke and still later by Mr. Kiljour.

The house which is of really fine and stately proportions became a residence when it was purchased by William Thomas Briscoe later principal of Charlotte Hall School. Mr. and Mrs. Briscoe made of this ancient house a home of comfort and beauty. The elms, box trees, eponymous, and lilacs planted by Mrs. Briscoe eighty-two years ago remain today in the lovely garden of Mrs. Wyche, the present owner of this house. This has been restored with all its quaint and charming details.

While the balls in Mrs. Briscoe's time were held in the school hall, Mrs. Briscoe delighted in filling her large halls with guests for this gala occasion.

Exhibition day at Charlotte Hall School which consisted of commencement exercises in the morning and the ball at night was a yearly social event that Southern Maryland delighted to attend. Over a thousand people crowded into this little village each year for this festive occasion. Always a really fine band came from Baltimore and music took on added lure in the lovely rural setting of the school. It has been gallantly said that the musicians were always inspired to their best efforts the beauty of the Southern Maryland belles.

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Charlotte Hall School closed in June 1976 due to financial difficulties.

Charlotte Hall Military Academy Alumni  
Association  
P.O. Box # 587  
Charlotte Hall, Maryland 20622  
OR  
John E Drury  
President, CHMA Alumni Assoc.  
Secretary CHS Trustees  
5820 Buxton Drive  
Chester VA 23831



White House 1946

The old White House and the Dent Chapel  
are still in existence on the grounds of  
Charlotte Hall Vetrans Home.

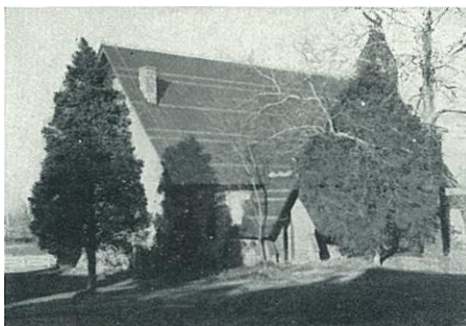
This Brochure was designed and produced by R. J.  
Werheimer with much help from the book  
“Charlotte Hall School” by DR J. Roy Guyther.  
Although all information is believed to be accurate  
the Alumni Association is NOT to be held  
responsible for any errors or omissions.

R. Joseph Wertheimer; December 2009

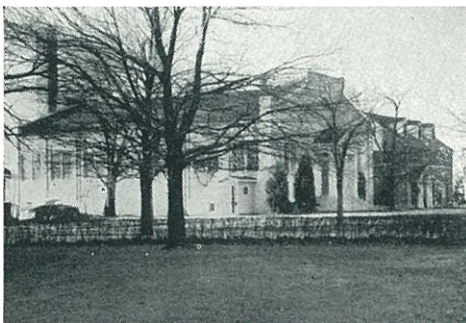
Updated July 6, 2021  
John E Drury



School Hall 1946



Dent Chapel 1946



Gym and Keech Hall 1946

## Charlotte Hall Military Academy

1774 – 1976



### Founding of the School

Charlotte Hall School, founded in  
1774 to provide for the liberal and  
pious education of the youth of  
this providence, to better fit them  
for the discharge of their duties  
either in regard to the Church or  
State.

### A Short History

For over two hundred years, there  
existed on the site of the Charlotte  
Hall Veterans Facility, one of the  
oldest educational institutions in  
the United States.

In fact, the school predated the  
founding of our country by two  
years.

Many of our graduates distinguished themselves in politics, education, religion and military service. Others contributed greatly to local and national communities.

### Famous Graduates, Faculty, Attendees

James Thomas 23rd Governor of Maryland 1833  
TO 1836; CHMA 1804

James Francis Coad – Faculty – 1887-1938

Phillip Briscoe - Graduated 1805 Principal  
1817 - 1826 & 1837 – 1840

Miel D. Burgee Faculty, Coach 1927 - 1936  
Headmaster 1938 - 1974

The Right Reverend John Clagett  
First Episcopal Bishop consecrated in U. S.

John Marshall Scott-Cousin  
Called by President John Quincy Adams “The  
most talented man in Congress”

Edward Bates – Lincoln’s Attorney General

Daniel Jennifer - Minister to Austria

Admiral Raphael T. Semmes Commander of the  
CSS Alabama

Richard Alvery Maryland Supreme Court Chief  
Justice

Governor Robert Bowie 1803-1806; 1811-1812

Governor James Thomas 1833 - 1836

U.S. Surgeon General Thomas Parran

Leon Febres-Cordero – Graduated 1949  
President of Ecuador 1984 – 1988

Senator Henry J. Fowler Sr. 1951 – 1970  
Graduated 1925

Colonel Norwood Sothoron First Four Letter  
Sports Athlete University of Maryland,  
Commandant and Coach 1947-1969

J. Roy Guyther, MD Graduated 1937 Author,  
Alumni Association Historian

John F. Wood Jr. Graduated 1955 MD Delegate  
1987 - 2019.

Robert Bowie 1750–1818 Governor of Maryland

Roger B. Taney, fifth Chief Justice of the  
Supreme Court remembered for the Dred Scott  
decision. CHS Trustee July 30, 1800

William Bareton Wade Dent 1806-1855

John Thompson 1787-1850

William B Rochester 1789-1838

Owsley Stanley 1935-2011, LSD cook, sound  
man and financier for the Grateful Dead

James Thomas 1785-1845 Governor of  
Maryland

Richard Thomas (Zarvona) 1833-1875

George Watterson 1783–1854 third Librarian of  
Congress

David Herold 1842-1865 One of the Lincoln  
Assassination Conspirators

Sylvester Stallone (Rocky) attended 1961

Please contact us for more information.

[info@chma.org](mailto:info@chma.org)

**PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITE**

[WWW.CHMA.ORG](http://WWW.CHMA.ORG)

The Alumni Association invites you to join  
us; graduates, attendees, former faculty, and  
friends.

NAME\_\_\_\_\_

ATTENDED\_\_\_\_\_

GRADUATED\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE\_\_\_\_\_

STREET\_\_\_\_\_

City, ST ZIP\_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail\_\_\_\_\_

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**NEXT CHMA REUNION October 9, 2021**  
**On the CHMA Campus**  
**Alumni Dues are \$ 20.00 every two years.**  
**Alumni Board Meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**Saturday of March, June, and November at**  
**the CHMA White House.**

### Alumni Board as of June 30, 2021

John Drury '61 President Ben Bolinger '60

Walter Brown III '61 Larry Gerber '59

Bill Hinman '67 Russell Howard Jr. '54

Janis L. O'Donnell '75 Jerry Newell '68

Alan Philip '62 Charles Reithmyer '55

### PERPETUAL MEMBERS

Sonny Burch '52 Bud" Eklund '60

Ernie Green '49 DR J. Roy Guyther '37

CAPT Harold Hook CAPT Joe Wertheimer '61





CHMA Main Entrance



CHMA Main Building





CHMA School Hall Front



CHMA School Hall East Side





CHMA Water Tower – Main Campus, Headmaster House (background)



CHMA Water Tower – Gym, Keech Hall, Dent Chapel, Faculty Residences





CHMA Water Tower – White House, Post Office, Charlotte Hall Road



1952 Graduation Class