

# The RECORD

Publication of the Historical Society of Charles County, Inc.

December 1965

## FOREWORD

The material for this issue was prepared by Mr. Gene Jenkins, Past President of the Society. The Editor is grateful to Mr. Jenkins for his cooperation.

### CHARLES COUNTIANS WHO HAVE SERVED IN CONGRESS

The Biographical Directory of The American Congress includes every man who has served in the Continental Congress and in The United States Congress since September 5, 1774. That Directory is the principal source of data for this article.

Twenty-one Charles Countians have served in Congress; five in the Continental Congress and seventeen in The United States Congress under the Constitution. One man, Benjamin Contee served in both.

Each of the twenty-one members, said to be "Charles Countians" was in a real sense connected with our County. Of course, some were more so than others. Eighteen of them were born in Charles County. Thirteen of them were county citizens when they died. Fifteen served in Congress while resident in Charles County and twelve were County residents all of their lives.

The Continental Congress continued for fourteen years, from September 5, 1774 when it met at Philadelphia until October 21, 1788 at New York City. It met at Annapolis, Maryland's capitol from November 26, 1783 until June 3, 1784. During this fourteen year period, Charles County was represented continuously from 1775 until 1785, except for the year 1783; but even then, John Hanson was a member from Frederick County.

Throughout these formative years, our three most important national documents were drafted and signed. Each of them bears the mark of Charles County. Thomas Stone was a Signer of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776. John Hanson assisted with drafting The Articles of Confederation which were adopted by the Congress on November 15, 1777. However, Maryland did not ratify them until March 1, 1781 when they were signed by John Hanson along with Daniel Carroll.

Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer was a member of the Constitutional Convention and was a signer of The Constitution of the United States on September 17, 1787.

Two other Charles Countians served in the Continental Congress. Probably the least well known was James Forbes who was born in Benedict. The other was Benjamin Contee who also served in the First Congress beginning in 1789.

### CHARLES COUNTIANS AS MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS

Beginning with Michael Jenifer Stone in the first Congress (1789-1791) and ending with Sydney Mudd the younger, in the 68th Congress (1923-1925), Charles County has sent eleven men to the United States House of Representatives.

William D. Merrick was the only member of the United States Senate to serve from Charles County. Born in Annapolis, October 25, 1793, he moved to Allens Fresh, Charles County after having served in the War of 1812. Winning the election resulting from the death of Joseph Kent, he assumed his seat in the Senate on January 4, 1838. He was re-elected to the full term beginning March 4, 1839 and served until March 3, 1845. He died in Washington on February 5, 1857 and was buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery there.

In addition to these twelve, five other members of the U.S. House of Representatives can be said to have been "Charles Countians", although they were not residents of the County while in office.

William Craik was born "near Port Tobacco" on October 31, 1761. Although he prac-

ticed law in Port Tobacco and Leonardtown, he served from Baltimore in the fourth through the sixth Congresses. After service in Congress, he was appointed Chief Judge of the Maryland fifth judicial circuit. He lived in Frederick where he died "prior to 1814."

Benjamin Contee was born at "Brookfield", near Nottingham, Prince Georges County in 1755. Prior to his service in the first Congress (1789-1791), he had been a member of the Maryland House of Delegates and a member of the Continental Congress (1787 and 1788). He was also an officer in the Revolutionary War. Refusing to stand for re-election to the 2nd Congress, he travelled in Europe, studied theology and was ordained into the Episcopal ministry, being appointed pastor of Christ Church, Port Tobacco. He served in this capacity and as presiding judge of the Orphans Court for Charles County until his death on November 30, 1815. He is buried at his home "Bromont", near Port Tobacco.

William Barton Wade Dent was born at Bryantown, Charles County on September 8, 1806. After graduation from Charlotte Hall School in 1823, he moved to Georgia. He represented Georgia in the House of Representatives during the 33rd Congress (1853-1855).

William M. Merrick, son of Charles County's only Senator, was born "near Faulkner" in Charles County, on September 1, 1818. He was a practicing attorney in Frederick County at the time of his election to the House in the 42nd Congress. He was buried at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Washington after his death on February 4, 1889.

Barnes Compton was born in Port Tobacco, November 16, 1830. He was a member of the House of Delegates in 1860 and 1861, and a State Senator in 1867, '68, '70 and '72. He moved to Prince George's County in 1880 and was later elected to the 49th through the 51st Congresses. During the 51st Congress, his election was contested, and Sydney Mudd the elder was awarded that seat. He died December 4, 1898 and is buried in Baltimore, at Loudon Park Cemetery.

Except for the 2nd Congress (March 4, 1791-March 4, 1793), Charles County was represented in the United States Congress for the first thirty years of our nation's existence; fifteen Congresses, from 1789 to 1819. In a sense, two members from Charles County were in each of the 1st, 4th, 5th, and 6th Congresses.

Michael Jenifer Stone, born at "Equality", his home near Port Tobacco in 1747, was elected to the First Congress after having served in the State House of Delegates and as a member of the Maryland convention to ratify the Federal Constitution. He died and was buried at "Equality" in 1812. He served simultaneously in the first Congress with Benjamin Contee. Neither of them served in Congress after that first term.

George Dent, born at "Windsor Castle", Mattawoman, Charles County in 1756, served in the third through the sixth Congresses (March 4, 1793- March 3, 1801). In the 4th, 5th and 6th Congresses, he served simultaneously with William Craik. He had served in both houses of the Maryland legislature in earlier years. After Congress, President Jefferson appointed him District Court Marshal for the Potomac District. He then moved to Georgia, near Augusta in 1802, and died there on December 2, 1813.

As is not surprising for Charles County, several incidents of family relationship appear among the County members of Congress. Nine of them are in direct line relationship, and it is more than probable that two others are blood relatives.

Frederick Stone served in the 40th and 41st Congresses (1867-1871). He was the grandson of Michael Jenifer Stone, and the great nephew of Thomas Stone, signer of the Declaration of Independence and member of the Continental Congress. Frederick was born on February 7, 1820, and was graduated from St. John's Annapolis in 1839. He practiced law at Port Tobacco and served in the House of Delegates in 1864 and 1865. After service in Congress, he was associate judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals from 1881 to 1890. He died on October 17, 1899, and is buried at Mount Rest Cemetery, La Plata.

Although research has not shown definitely, it is believed that George Dent and William Barton Wade Dent were related, perhaps grandfather and grandson. Both were born in Charles County, and both moved to Georgia and became prominent citizens.

John Grant Chapman and Andrew Grant Chapman were father and son. John was born in La Plata on July 5, 1798. He served in both houses of the State Legislature and practiced



law in Port Tobacco. He served in Congress from 1845 to 1849, the 29th and 30th Congresses. He was buried at "St. Johns", a family estate in Charles County after his death on December 10, 1856 at his sister's home, "Waverly" on the Potomac. He was later re-interred at Mount Rest.

Andrew Grant Chapman was born in La Plata on January 17, 1839. He was a member of the House of Delegates during six years, and on the staff of Governors Groome and Carroll. After serving in the 47th Congress (1881-1883) he died at "Normandy", his home near La Plata on September 25, 1892. He was buried at Mount Rest Cemetery, La Plata.

Senator William D. Merrick was also the father of William M. Merrick who served in the 42nd Congress.

Sydney Emanuel Mudd was the name of two Congressmen from Charles County. They were father and son, and their careers were similar.

Sydney, the elder, was born at "Gallant Green", Charles County, on February 12, 1858. He attended Georgetown University, St. Johns at Annapolis and the University of Virginia. He was a member of the State House of Delegates in 1879 and 1881, and again in 1895 when he was Speaker. He served in the 51st Congress after successfully contesting the election of Barnes Compton, and served from March 20, 1890 to March 3, 1891. He was later elected to each Congress from the 55th through the 61st (1897-1911). He was buried at St. Thomas Manor after his death in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on October 21, 1911.

Sydney, the son, was also born at "Gallant Green". He was graduated from Georgetown University law school and was a professor of criminal law there and also, later, assistant district attorney for the District of Columbia. He was elected to the 64th Congress through the 68th, and served from March 4, 1915 until his death on October 11, 1924. He is also buried at St. Thomas Manor.

Four other men have served in the House of Representatives from Charles County. In chronological order they are as follows:

John Campbell was born near Port Tobacco September 11, 1765. He practiced law at Port Tobacco and was elected to the 7th and the four succeeding Congresses, serving from March 4, 1801 to March 3, 1811. Later, after serving as judge of the County Orphans Court, he died at "Charleston" farm and was interred "in the private burying ground on the estate of Daniel Jenifer". Most probably the grave is also at Charleston farm.

Philip Stuart was not a native of Charles County. He was born at Fredericksburg, Virginia in 1760, but apparently moved to Port Tobacco as a young man. He served in both the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 from Charles County. He was elected to the 12th through the 15th Congresses (1811-1819). He died August 14, 1830, in Washington and is buried in Congressional Cemetery there.

Daniel Jenifer served from Charles County in the 22nd and in the 24th through the 26th Congresses (March 4, 1831 - March 3, 1833) and March 4, 1835 - March 3, 1841). He was the nephew of Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, signer of the Constitution and member of the Continental Congress. He was born April 15, 1791, studied law and was a member of the House of Delegates prior to serving in Congress. He was U.S. Minister to Austria from August 27, 1841 to July 7, 1845 during the administration of President John Tyler.

He died on December 18, 1855, at "Mulberry Grove" on the Port Tobacco River, and was buried at "Charleston", his farm on the Wicomico River and Charleston Creek.

When Daniel Jenifer was defeated for the 23rd Congress, another Charles Countian defeated him. John Truman Stoddert, who was born at Smith Point, Nanjemoy on October 1, 1790 was a lawyer and graduate of Princeton University. After serving in the House of Delegates in Annapolis, he was elected to the 23rd Congress and served only that one term, March 4, 1833 - March 3, 1835. He returned to his home "Wicomico House" on his farm West Hatton. He died there at the age of 80 on July 19, 1870, and is buried on that farm.

Of course, there may be other men who served in the Federal Congress from other states or districts, but yet may be identified with Charles County. Some of those named above were born in the County, or lived in it during their service in Congress, or settled in the County after Congressional Service. Certainly there may be others. But they are not easily ascertainable from the form in which Congressional Biographies are available.

Source: Biographical Directory of the American Congress 1774-1961

## CHARLES COUNTIANS IN THE AMERICAN CONGRESS

NAME	CONGRESS	YEARS SERVED	WHERE BORN	WHERE BURIED	FAMILY RELATION	CITIZEN WHILE SERVING
1) Thomas Stone	Cont'l.	6	"Poynton Mnr."	"Habre de Venture"	Bro. (5) Grt Uncl. (16)	Yes
2) James Forbes	Cont'l.	2	Benedict	Philadelphia?		Yes
3) Dan'l of St. T. Jenifer	Cont'l	5	Charles Co.	Charles Co.	Uncle (11)	Yes
4) John Hanson	Cont'l	3	"Mulberry Grv."	"Oxon Hill"		No
5) Michael Jenifer Stone	1	2	"Equality"	"Equality"	Bro. (1) Grndfthr (16)	Yes
6) Benjamin Contee	Cont'l 1	4	"Brookfield" Prin. Georges	"Bromont"	Grndfthr (16)	No
7) George Dent	3-6	8	"Windsor Castle"	Augusta, Ga.	Probably (15)	Yes
8) William Craik	4-6	6	Port Tobacco	Frederick, Md.		No
9) John Campbell	7-11	10	Port Tobacco	"Charleston"		Yes
10) Philip Stuart	12-15	8	Fredericksbrg. Virginia	Washington, D.C.		Yes
11) Daniel Jenifer	22 24-26	8	Charles Co.	"Charleston"	Nephew (3)	Yes
12) John T. Stoddert	23	2	Smith Point	"West Hatton"		Yes
13) William D. Merrick	Senate	7	Annapolis	Washington, D.C.	Father (17)	Yes
14) John G. Chapman	29-30	4	Port Tobacco	"St. Johns" (reint) Mt. Rest	Father (18)	Yes
15) Wm. Barton Wade Dent	33	2	Bryantown	Newnan, Ga.	Probably (7)	No
16) Frederick Stone	40-41	4	Near La Plata	Mount Rest	Grt. Nephw (1) Grndson (5)	Yes
17) William M. Merrick	42	2	Faulkner	Washington D.C.	Son (13)	No
18) Andrew G. Chapman	47	2	Near La Plata	Mount Rest	Son (14)	Yes
19) Barnes Compton	49-51	6	Port Tobacco	Baltimore		No
20) Sydney E. Mudd	51 55-61	15	"Gallant Green"	St. Ignatius	Father (21)	Yes
21) Sydney E. Mudd	64-68	10	"Gallant Green"	St. Ignatius	Son (20)	Yes