

# THE RECORD



Volume 115, No. 2

A Publication of the Historical Society of Charles County, Inc.

May 2020

Ronald G. Brown, President

Mary Ann Scott, Editor

The Historical Society of Charles County  
*Please join us for a Field Trip to  
Patrick Henry's Scotchtown and Historic Hanover Tavern*

**Thursday, May 21, 2020**



9:00 am – Depart La Plata Courthouse  
Farmers Market Parking Lot

10:30 am – Tour of Patrick Henry's  
Scotchtown

12:30 am – Lunch at Historic Hanover  
Tavern, (lunch costs  
on your own)

2:00 pm – Tour of Historic Hanover  
Tavern

4:30 pm – Arrive back in La Plata



**\$26.00 per person**

(Scotchtown, Hanover Tavern and school bus)

Please r.s.v.p. to Carol Donohue by May 1, 2020

16401 Old Marshall Hall Road ~ Accokeek, MD 20607

*Please make checks payable to: The Historical Society of Charles County*

Please email Mike Mazzeo ([mjmazzeo55@gmail.com](mailto:mjmazzeo55@gmail.com)). Mike will send you the lunch choice to order ahead of time. Then Email your lunch choices back to Mike by May 1, 2020. Thank you!

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# *Extracts from the Journals of Three Ladies* *from Billerica, Massachusetts, In the Time of Our Civil War, 1864*

Billerica, v.1-12, June 1912-May 1913. Billerica Printing Company, Billerica, MA

*Continued from October, 2019, page 4*

After dinner we went to the barn anticipating much novel pleasure in hearing the colored preachers. Instead we had regular services, a sermon from Mr. Higginson and music by the band...

At supper we sat a long time at table hearing scraps of experiences from Yorktown, Gettysburg and the Peninsular campaign...

This has been our third Sunday in Camp Stanton. We are gaining an experience here that money would not buy, and we really have been deprived of nothing absolutely necessary to us.

(E.A.R.) After repeated experiments we have come to the conclusion that the only way to teach these men (the time was short) is to give them a primer, help them to pick up their letters as best they can, and then set them to spelling out easy words. Many of them will never learn to read, but they pore over their books so earnestly it makes it all the more pitiful. More than half will preserve and learn to read a little if they have anything of a fair chance.

(A.R.F.) Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Went from a.m. school direct to Benedict hospital. In one room where I spent more than an hour reading, writing, and showing men how to read, write, and spell names, was a very sick man. I thought he must be disturbed by reading...After reading a few minutes I went to him and asked him if reading disturbed him. 'I loves it,' he half whispered...

(E.R.) Thursday, Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>. The condition of the fugitives as they come in here for protection is very sad. One poor woman came in last night with two children, one of them a boy of ten years from whom she had been separated most of the time for four years. This morning another little baby was added to her cares.

Mrs. Birney has named it Stanton Freeman. We take quite an interest in it. How rich is our experience here! The information we gain here could not have been acquired in any other way...I shall always look back upon it with satisfaction.

Camp Stanton, Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>, Friday. Last night we received intelligence from the General that he brought orders from Washington for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> to march on Monday. We feel badly enough...

Only the 19<sup>th</sup> will be left...But the movements of the regiment are uncertain and we may leave any time. All will now be hurry and bustle for three days. They go from here to fortress Monroe; beyond that their destination is not known. Many of

the men must fall, for they are without doubt to go immediately into active service, and in all probability many of the officers will not return. They feel this and calmly talked of it this morning at table. They are all veterans and with the experience of Harpers Ferry, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, and many other perilous events they know what is before them. They say they will never be taken prisoners, but will conquer or die...

Saturday, Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>. We had no opportunity to teach until tonight for want of pupils. This being the general washing day, added to the preparations for moving, quite broke up our school.

At school tonight one of my men, who has been zealously trying to learn to write, seemed to feel quite badly that he should not come again and expressed much gratitude at the opportunity that had been given him. He was quite delighted when I told him that as soon as he had learned to write he must send me a letter away up to the North.

(E.R.) Sunday, Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>. I went to the hospitals in Benedict. I was afterwards joined there by Eliza, who had been to witness the presentation of a flag to the 7<sup>th</sup> by the colored ladies of Baltimore. Only the sickest of the men are left in the hospitals, the rest are returned to camp...

Monday, Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>. When we woke this morning ink and water were frozen, medicine bottles burst, and the air was whizzing about our ears with cutting severity. It was too cold at the barn for any more than could gather about the two fires. Finding my services would not be available there, I wrapped myself in as much clothing as I could carry and started for Benedict. I had the wind in my back, and got there very nicely. I went through every room of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, and about two o'clock, as I was in an upper back room, who should come in but Captain Post and his splendid dog, Charley. He said he feared I should perish on the plain, and he came for me with a thick shawl. The cold has increased so much that even with his help I thought I should freeze my hands and face.

(A.R.F.) Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>. Last night I had a new pupil, a great stalwart man. He had been 'detailed' for the bakery at Benedict and had seen e there. He had come back to camp to move with his regiment. He asked where they were going; then he says, 'But what shall we do about our wives?' I asked if he would like to have me write to his wife. I wrote by his dictation a touching letter. Among other things he says, 'Pray for me and believe that God will do all right. If I should not see you in this world, I trust to meet you in heaven. I have thought much of

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*Extracts from the Journals of Three Ladies, continued on page 3*

delivering you from the house of bondage. The colored people have a great privilege here in having teachers, and they are white ones too.' After concluding messages he says, 'Miss, make it as long as you please and as much like heaven, as I know you will know how.' ...A man named Azariah says to Eliza, 'If I had ten dollars all in gold I would give it to have the school remain.' He believes the Lord has led every step of his life. His trusting faith manifests itself in all his manner.

(E.R.) Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>. Today is equally cold and as wood is getting scarce we had but one fire at the barn and that only for a little while...I wrote two soldiers letters and taught whoever came...It is too cold to do anything. We have been pasting newspapers over the cracks and hope this evening to be a little more comfortable...We have no definite news tonight as to the arrival of the transports.

Camp Stanton, Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>. The weather is intensely cold and we have had no school. Eliza, Anne, and went to Benedict. We went to see Harriet Dorsey, a colored woman whose history has interested us greatly, and from there to the 9<sup>th</sup> hospital... Now that the troops are a bout to leave, great numbers of fugitives, women and children, come in and try to get a pass to Washington. This the General has no power to do officially, and it is very hard to tell them their only hope is to get to Washington as best they can by night. I am convinced that no stories that have ever been told of the sufferings of this people are half equal to the truth.

Monday, Feb. 22d. We resolved to have school if possible, today, but found there was no hope of that. I spent two hours at the hospital, as it is now confidently asserted that we shall depart on Wednesday. We shall try once more having a reception for our kind friends. They say we know very little of the pleasure it gives them to have a taste of civilized life once in a while.

(A.R.F.) Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>. This a.m. we received a most complimentary present from a man at the hospital. A rap at the door, which Cousin Eliza answered, and there stood a colored man with a waiter in his hand, on which was a plate of cake and a knife beside it, all neatly covered over with a new huck-a-buck towel. He said he had taken the liberty to bring the ladies a present all on his responsibility; they had been so kind in visiting the hospital so much he wished to show his regard for them. It was one of many touching appreciations of our slight efforts for a truly grateful people.

(E.A.R.) Sunday evening, Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>. I have been down to the hospital this afternoon. One of the nurses, Stephen Bailey, whom I am teaching to write, gave me something of his history. He is forty-six years old has left a wife and many children. He says he has had eleven 'head' of children, two are dead, nine are still living. He always fared well in his master's house, lived in the kitchen and had a plenty of food from his master's tables.

His wife was hired out as cook on a neighboring plantation and used to keep two of the youngest children with her. The others as soon as they were old enough were hired out. His wife was clothed, also the two children about ten or twelve dollars per year were paid for her services. The last year she had three children with her, so no money was given her. He said, though she was the mother of eleven 'head' of living children, her master never so much as gave a blanket or a Sunday dress, or even her head handkerchief to her. But he had always been able by working nights and holiday to keep them in Sunday clothes and have a little money in his pocket.

March 2d. After dinner I went to Benedict—found such a welcome there that I came home happy...As I reached the hospital, I saw for the first time a burial procession. Four soldiers walked with guns reversed preceding the coffin borne on the shoulders of four men... I turned to enter the 19<sup>th</sup> hospital. On the front piazza were four dead men wrapped in their blankets...I found only one room of sick men and some of these so sick that I would not stop in the room...I went into the 9th. In the first room I taught a group of men to play a game of picture cards. It was Eliza's suggestion that I take them, and a happy hit it proved.

Entering another room, one man was reading aloud from a Methodist Hymn Book. He stopped, but I asked him to proceed; after he had read, I read several hymns. He brought me his slate to write his named 'Levin Morris.' Then I recognized the man whose queerly compounded prayer had so interested me at meeting.

(A.R.F.) March 3d. We passed through the hospitals to see the half-sick men waiting beside the fire, knapsacks on the floor, all ready to be put on board the boat. I presume a score or more of them will find a quiet rest for their weary bones before the transport reaches Hilton Head.

Then we found a man, named Vernal Hawkins, in whose welfare we are much interested. He told us that his wife and five children had escaped from slavery two days before and he must go, doing nothing for them. He had given his wife all the money he had, and if we could do anything for them, he should be so grateful. We went to see her and told her to come to headquarters to see us. She came with three other women and we gave her what we had to spare and told her to pack her bundle and be in readiness tomorrow a.m. and if we could get her on board we would do so. At noon the General said there should be a boat tomorrow for Fortress Monroe and all the women and children we could get on board should go. So after dinner Eliza started for Benedict to spread the good tidings.

(E.R.) March 4<sup>th</sup>, Friday. Yesterday morning there were in the camp and connected with it at Benedict about three thousand persons; now there is not a person left in the campground.

The Kingston mansion, where we had lived, is vacant, ready for its rebel owner, who will doubtless take possession



## *A Tribute to George C. Dyson*

George Dyson, historian, preservationist and devoted member of the Historical Society of Charles County, passed away October 26, 2019. George was the Vice-President of the Historical Society from 1970 to 1978, then President from 1978 to 1982.



Born June 21, 1926, he was the fifth child of Elizabeth Bowie and George Conrad Dyson, Sr. in Marbury, Maryland but lived on the

family farm, "Poplar Springs Farm", located in Ironsides, since he was four.

George graduated from Nanjemoy School. After graduation in 1943, he began a job at the Naval Powder Plant in Indian Head, MD. In April 1944, he began attending college at Virginia Military Institute, but this was interrupted by his enlistment in the Army during World War II.



After the war in 1947, he returned to the Naval Powder Plant to the Engineering Department. He eventually became the facilities manager while earning his civil engineering degree from Benjamin Franklin University. After working 30 years for the Navy, he went to work for the Charles County Community College, again as facilities manager. Upon leaving this position in 1985, he worked as a consultant for local construction companies.

George served on the Charles County Board of Education from 1963-1969, as well as being on the Board of Trustees for the local college. He has been a Masonic member for 68 years, and also a member of the Eastern Star. He has worked

with the Charles County Fair Board and supervised the Farm Museum and the McConchie School House until no longer able to attend. He was also the chairman for Christmas in April from its beginning until 2000.



A lifelong member of Christ Church Durham, he served on the vestry for 40 years. He also served as a lay reader, teacher, and Sunday School Superintendent and cemetery caretaker.

He was a charter member and past president of both the Historical Society of Charles County and the Thomas Stone Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. He worked with the Maryland Historical Trust, the Charles County Tourism Committee and the Charles County Small Museum Consortium. He served as chairman of the Bicentennial Celebration Committee for Charles County. This committee initiated many projects including the reassembling of Friendship House on the college campus, the restoration of Catslide House in Port Tobacco, the Charles County Flag project, and the Historical Society's Cemetery Project.

George worked on many preservation projects through various historical organizations. He was instrumental in having Habre de Venture restored and declared a National Historic Site and Park. He also worked with the committee to develop a Maryland Veteran's Museum to showcase Maryland's involvement in our nation's conflicts.





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# Reverend Thomas Bray and His American Libraries

by Bernard C. Steiner

The American Historical Review. Vol. 2, No. 1 (Oct. 1896), pp. 59-75.

Oxford University Press on behalf of the American Historical Association

The first great impulse towards forming public libraries in the southern colonies was given by Reverend Thomas Bray. Thomas Bray was born at Marton, in Shropshire, England in 1656, and died in London in 1730. Bray received his bachelor's degree from All Souls' College, Oxford, in 1678 and, having entered the ministry, was successful in several pastorates. He was selected commissary of Maryland in 1696. While awaiting his passage to Maryland, he sought out clergymen to be sent over with him. He found he could only get poor men who were not able to buy books for their libraries, and this determined him create a system of parochial libraries in Maryland. He insisted



that, if he served as commissary, the bishops must assist him in this plan, telling them that such libraries would be the best encouragement to studious and sober men to undertake the service.

His idea was that each parochial library should be strictly for reference and 'shall be affixed in a decent and large room of the Parsonage-House of

such Parish, there to remain to the sole use of the minister thereof for the time being, unto all future generations, and to be as unalienable as any other Rights and Dues of the Church'. To obtain books for these libraries, requests are to be made to the 'learned authors' now living, to give copies of their books, and to other, especially 'merchants to the foreign plantations,' to give money, of all of which there shall be a full account published.

Bray was very successful in collecting money and books. In 1697, he published *An Essay towards promoting all Necessary and Useful Knowledge, both divine and human, in all the Parts of His Majesty's Dominions, both at home and abroad*. In this work he puts forth 'Proposals to the Gentry and Clergy of this Kingdom for purchasing lending Libraries in all the Deanaries of England, and Parochial Libraries for Maryland, Virginia, and other of the Foreign Plantations.' He gives a catalogue of titles of books proper for such libraries, which fills six pages of the book, and includes a selection of books in all branches of literature; though, theology receives the greatest attention.

The first apostle of the free circulating library tells us that he no longer limits the usefulness of his libraries to the clergy; but hopes also to provide for the gentry of the country, and to allow them to carry the books to their homes. In this plan, the parochial library was to be mainly a 'standing' one, and the colonial library being the 'lending' one.

*The Design of Writing and Reading Bookes is to Improve Knowledge. And the Tendency of good Books is to Advance necessary and useful Knowledge. And Libraries, being a Collection of many Books written upon various Subjects, the End of them is to give Requisite Helps to Considerable Attainments in All the Parts of necessary and Useful Knowledge.*

*Now the Persons who Chief Business it is to be men of Knowledge are the Clergy, because they are to instruct others; and it is impossible they should be Able to Communicate to others, what they are not themselves first become Masters of.*

His first American library classification included the following:

## **Humane Sciences - Things**

- Ethicks
- Economicks
- Politics and Law
- History (geography, voyages, travels)
- Physiology and natural philosophy
- Medicine, Chemistry and Pharmacopy (anatomy and chirurgery)
- Mathematics (number, measures and proportion of things)
- Trade and Commerce

## **Human Sciences – Words**

- Elements, Regulation and Property of Language (rhetoric, poetry, logic)

His Catalogue of Books later included the following topics:

## **History**

- Ecclesiastical
- Civil

## **Geography and Travels**

- General
- Particular

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*Reverend Thomas Bray and His American Libraries,  
continued on page 6*

### **Theology**

- Apologetical
- General Bodies of Divinity
- Particular upon some of the more important subjects
- Sermons
- Controversies
- Humanity
- Towards the promoting of Natural Knowledge

In Maryland, Dr. Bray hoped to group each five parishes together, as a deanery, with a decanal library. News of the plan which Dr. Bray was advocating soon reached Maryland, and the governor, Francis Nicholson, who was ever a staunch friend of education, proposed to the assembly that ‘some part of the revenue given toward furnishing arms and ammunition for the use of the province be laid out for the purchase of books to be added to the books, which had been presented by the King, to form a library in the port of Annapolis and that a portion of the public revenue be applied to the enlargement thereof and that the library should be placed in the office and under the care of the commissary of the province, permitting all persons, desirous to study or read the books, to have access thereto under proper restrictions’.

Governor Nicholson did not succeed in obtaining an appropriation, but on June 11, 1697, the assembly passed resolutions of thanks to Dr. Bray for the libraries, which they ‘understand you are taking care to collect for us,’ and which they ‘are sensible will be the best inducement to pious and sober ministers to come, and live amongst us; and will be the cause of such education to be given, both to our own people, and native Indians, as will best promote the interest of religion and morality in this province.’

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### *Extracts from the Journals of Three Ladies, continued from page 3*

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as soon as the General is fairly out of sight. There are to be left at Benedict fifteen persons, too sick to be moved, in the care of one surgeon, and one company from the 19<sup>th</sup> is left to guard them.

The news spread like fire and all who wanted to go off came flocking in and were taken on board the *Cecil*. About twelve o’clock we moved away from Benedict and had our last look of the deserted place...Before starting we went on board to see how the men were stowed away. It was very pleasant to see the leased look of those who had been our pupils; they seemed so glad to see us once more. Colonel Shaw parted with his wife there, but the General and Lieutenant Purington went on with us to the mouth of the river, which we reached at five

In 1699 Bray formed a voluntary society whose objects included the libraries, charity schools, and missions, both to the colonists and the heathen. This was the beginning of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, now so venerable and well known. Bray’s success in getting contributions for his libraries had been marked and, in 1699, just before he sailed for Maryland, he wrote that his four years of labor had resulted in the sending of £2400 worth of books into the plantations, ‘whereby thirty libraries have been already advanc’d, and some of them to a considerable perfection’. Arriving in Maryland, he made himself acquainted with the state of things there; but soon felt he could do more for the establishing of the Anglican Church in Maryland if he returned home. He left the colony, never to return.

The provincial library at Annapolis numbered 1095 volumes and was then the most considerable public collection of books in British America. It was kept in the State House until that building was burnt in 1704 and was then removed to King William School. When St. John’s College was founded after the Revolution, and King William School was merged in it, the books passed to St. John’s College Library. In 1876 there were still to be found 188 folios and 210 quartos in the collection, and the number preserved there today about the same. As this library was certainly sent over before any other provincial one, we have in it probably the first free circulating library in the United States.

Nanjemoy Parish, in Charles County, had the only other library of which a catalogue is preserved. It contained twenty-five folios, five quartos, and twenty-nine octavos and duodecimos, which were sent over March 6, 1701, and apparently ten more of unknown size, sent over at an earlier date. In the later invoice were five historical works, two each on mathematical and philosophical subjects, and one each on

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### *Reverend Thomas Bray and His American Libraries, continued on page 7*

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o’clock. There the two boats came alongside, the last good-byes were said, and the General was off. The transport went down the bay bearing her freight of a thousand souls, and we came north. Handkerchiefs were waved until they were out of sight. It was a hard time for Mrs. Birney, but she bore it bravely. She is a wonderful woman.

I am very thankful for all we have seen and learned, and though our labors were cut short just as we were fairly established, yet everyone bears testimony that our coming has not been in vain. I cannot but feel that we have given these men a stimulus to future effort, and they have been so grateful for the interest taken in them. It is our plan now to be in Washington tomorrow night, remain there till Tuesday, and be at home sometime before Saturday.



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## St. Omer Exchange Student Visit

Charles County is honored to welcome and sponsor 30 high school students from St. Omer, France from October 8 to October 20, 2020. Members of the Historical Society are helping to plan tours for the students to include Charles County Historic Sites, Historic Annapolis, the Washington-Rochambeau trail, Mt. Vernon and Historic St. Mary's City.

The endeavor, led by Historical Society member Candice Kelly, has over 20 committee members working to host these students, provide meals and showcase our county and our region. The Port Tobacco Chapter of the DAR, the Charles County Garden Club, as well as our Historical Society are sponsoring and funding some of the activities, luncheons, dinners and exciting presentations.

In addition to history tours, these students will visit a local high school and attend a local high school football game;

enjoy a Southern Maryland BBQ, visit Georgetown University, the Secretary of State's Office for the Maryland Statehouse in Annapolis, as well as attend a reception in their honor at the French Embassy. All this takes planning, organization and funding.

### WE NEED YOUR HELP!

While the Historical Society is funding one of the box lunches for a day trip, we need sponsors to help these students tour Historic Mt. Vernon. Would you be willing to sponsor a student or students at \$20.00 each to go to Mt. Vernon? If so, please send a tax-deductible check to the Historical Society of Charles County and on the memo line indicate sponsor. Your generosity is greatly appreciated to help enhance this great experience in our historic area.



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*Reverend Thomas Bray and His American Libraries,  
continued from page 6*

politics, education, language, and gardening. The rest were religious. A layman's library of 982 numbers was also sent to Nanjemoy.

After Bray's death in 1730, the interest in the libraries he had founded died out in England, and from that time to the Revolution but four new libraries were founded in the thirteen colonies. These new libraries numbered about fifty books each, and were situated in Virginia, North Carolina, and New Jersey.

The reports of the trustees would indicate that no books had been added to the libraries already established.

Reverend Bray's 'only comfort was, that the Libraries he had begun and advanc'd more or less in all the Provinces on the Continent, and in most of the Islands of America, as also in the Factories in Africa, did not only serve the then Ministers with whom they were first sent out, but by the care of some of the Governments, and by Acts of Assembly, settling the rules he had prescribed for their use and preservation, they might be also of advantage to many succeeding generations.'

# Friendship House Foundation

Friendship House sits proudly on the campus of the College of Southern Maryland. Please join the Historical Society of Charles County in contributing to the preservation of Friendship House for many generations to come.



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To donate, please make checks payable to the Friendship House Foundation, and mail to the Historical Society.



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Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr., *Chairperson*

Carol Donohue

#### Publications:

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#### Rich Hill Steering Committee:

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#### Friends of Stagg Hall Steering Committee

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Denise deLozier Grote

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Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr.

Elsie Picyk

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### EDITOR'S NOTE

If you would like future newsletters sent to you by e-mail, please send us your e-mail address. Articles of historic interest on Southern Maryland are requested for publication in future issues of *The Record*. Please send your articles and photographs to: The Historical Society of Charles County, Publications, *The Record*, P.O. Box 2806, La Plata, Maryland 20646.

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## Friendship House Committees

### Foundation

Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr., Chair  
Joyce Candland  
Alex Cobey  
Evelyn Karlsson Merritt  
John S. Morris, III

### Cellar Museum & Shop

James H. Berry, Jr.  
Mary Pat Berry

### Ways & Means

Ruby Dyson  
Sandra Mitchell

### Furnishings

Louise B. Turner



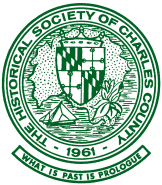
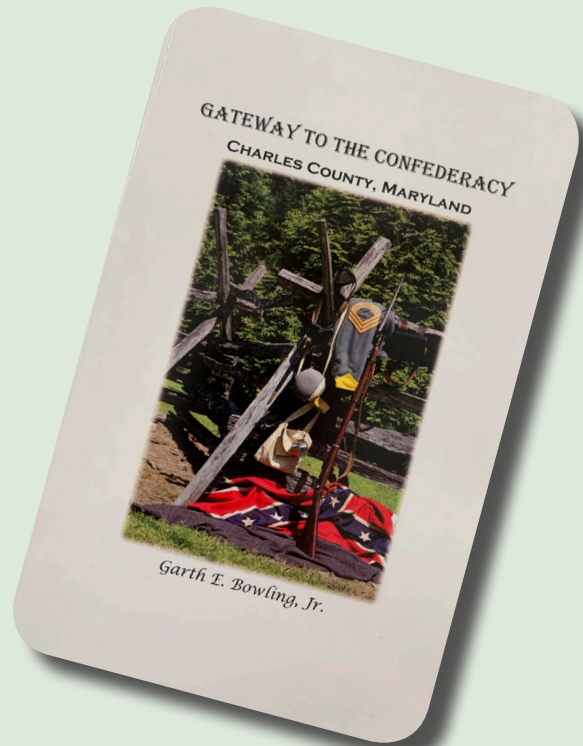
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## *Mark Your Calendar*

### **FALL DINNER MEETING**

Saturday, October 24, 2020 – 5:30 pm  
Maryland Veterans Museum

Garth Bowling will present his new publication:  
Gateway to the Confederacy: Charles County, Maryland



**THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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[www.charlescountyhistorical.org](http://www.charlescountyhistorical.org)